

**SELF REGULATION SELECT COMMISSION**  
**28th February, 2012**

Present:- Councillor Hughes (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Beck, Ellis, Foden, J. Hamilton and Sharman.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Currie, Donaldson and Swift.

**56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest to report.

**57. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

**58. PROPOSED REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX FOR 2012/13**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Jahangir Akhtar - Deputy Leader, Martin Kimber - Chief Executive and Andrew Bedford - Strategic Director of Resources, to the meeting. He began by commenting on the process for scrutinising of the budget and agreed to allow Councillor Sue Ellis to make a short statement, on behalf of the Select Commission. A meeting with the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chief Executive and Strategic Director of Resources would be sought to discuss how the scrutiny of the budget process could be developed further for future budget rounds.

The Chairman invited Andrew Bedford, Strategic Director of Resources, to give a short presentation on "Balancing the Budget – Tackling the Challenge" and then to introduce the report and appendices forming part of the agenda pack.

The presentation covered issues relating to:-

- Budget Proposals.
- Challenge 2012/13 – Initial Funding Gap.
- Directorate Specific Savings Proposals.
- Other Savings Opportunities.
- Provisions within the Budget Proposals.
- 2012/13 Savings as a Percentage of Present Policies Budget.
- Risks within the Budget.
- Risks that must be dealt with.
- 2012/13 Onwards.

The Select Commission raised a number of issues and discussed these at length relating to cost reduction costs, expressions of interest for voluntary redundancy and early retirement, current year budget pressures, mitigation measures on increasing fuel costs, consultation process and feedback analysis, responses from voluntary groups and partner agencies and opportunities to comment, impact of carrying forward budget pressures, function and value of the budget matrix, calculation and assessment of risk and monetary value of Council Tax increases.

The Strategic Director of Resources went on to introduce the report which proposed a Budget for 2012/13 based on the outcome of the Council's Financial Settlement, which provided details of:-

- The progress of the Budget process since July 2011 (including confirmation of the Local Government Financial Settlement).
- The ongoing principles reflected in the Budget and spending plans.
- The Council's recommended Revenue Budget for 2012/13.
- Savings proposals from Directorates.
- Precepts and levies made on the Council by other authorities.
- Proposed Council Tax levels for the coming financial year.
- Proposed future developments in the 3 year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2012/13 to 2014/15.

As required by legislation, the report also contained the Strategic Director of Resources' (the Council's Responsible Financial Officer) assessment of the robustness of the estimates included within the Budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the Budget provided.

In considering the specific detail of Directorate budget savings proposals put forward, totalling £9.768 million, the Select Commission raised a number of issues which were answered relating to the protection of prevention and early intervention services, reduced training budgets and redesigning of delivery, estimated Council-wide staff savings, risk analysis and impact assessments, renegotiation of contracts, reconfiguration of services to achieve efficiency savings, contributions from partner agencies, savings deferments, improved methods of working whilst maintaining outputs, efficiency improvements, service rationalisation, fees and charges and reduced premises costs through rationalisation of Council buildings.

Resolved:- (1) The General Fund Revenue Budget for 2012/13 of £213.290m to be allocated to services as set out in this report be noted.

(2) That the intention to have no increase (for a second year running) in the Council Tax in respect of this Council's own Budget giving an annual Band D Council Tax of £1,230.03 be noted.

(3) That the comments of the Strategic Director of Resources, provided in compliance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act, 2003, as to the robustness of the estimates included in the Budget and the adequacy of reserves for which the Budget provided be accepted.

(4) That the intention to include precept figures from South Yorkshire Police Authority, South Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority and the various Parish Councils and Parish Meetings of the Borough, when known, into the recommendation to the Council on 7th March, 2012 be noted.

(5) That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Select Commission seek a meeting with the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chief Executive and Strategic Director of Resources to discuss further development of the budget scrutiny process.

**59. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next scheduled meeting take place on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2012 at 3.30 p.m.