



Report of: **Chair of Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting of:	Date	Agenda item	Ward(s)
Executive	12 February 2015		

Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non-exempt

## SUBJECT: Council Budget 2015/16

### 1. Synopsis

- 1.1 The Committee considered the Budget proposals. The Executive Member Finance and Performance, Councillor Andy Hull was present to respond to questions from the Committee, together with the Leader of the Council, Councillor Richard Watts and the Director of Finance and Property Services, Mike Curtis.

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the comments of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee, set out below, be forwarded to the Executive

### 3. Comments of Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Noted that Council funding from the Government had reduced by £100m since 2010, which equated to £1000 per household in the borough

The Council had to make savings of £37m in 2015/16 and Islington had suffered the ninth largest reduction in Government funding in the country

.Despite this the Committee noted that GCSE results had improved significantly, 1800 new affordable homes had been built in the borough, services for those with moderate needs had been maintained, and there had been a large fall in youth unemployment

Noted that it was proposed to raise the Council Tax by 1.99%, which equated to a 40p per week increase in Band D Council Tax bands. Islington Council Tax, despite this moderate increase, would still be lower than the London average and those of neighbouring inner London Boroughs

Congratulated the Executive Member on the income generation proposals being considered and were pleased that the Committee had been able to contribute to these by the proposals that it had put forward in relation to photovoltaic solar panels and it was noted that medium/longer term proposals for income generation would be submitted to the Executive at a later date

Welcomed that the LLW was paid to 98% of Council and its contractors staff

Whilst it was noted that regrettably because of the Budget reductions 211 posts were being deleted, 50% of these were either vacant posts or staff wishing to take voluntary redundancy. £1m had also been

saved in reductions to senior management

Welcomed that front line services such as Libraries, Children's Centres etc. had been retained

The Committee noted that there was likely to be further reductions in Local Government spending in future years that would result in funding reducing to levels not seen since the introduction of the NHS

The Committee congratulated the Executive and in particular, the Executive Member Finance and Performance, on the Budget proposals that retained services for the most vulnerable at a time of severe Government funding reductions

Noted that 'roadshows' to discuss the Budget had taken place with residents and that they had not previously understood the extent of the Budget reductions that the Council faced and were likely to face in the future. Residents spoke highly of services that they were in receipt of

There was a need to develop a strategy to lobby the Government about the effects of future funding reductions in Local Government

It was noted that there had been concern expressed over the proposal to impose a diesel charge however the Council felt that this was an appropriate measure environmentally given the evidence of the dangers of diesel pollution on health

The Committee welcomed the provision in the budget for the continuation of the Resident Support scheme given that the Government had made no provision for Local Welfare provision from 2015/16 The Committee noted that this had been part funded by reducing the number of refuse collection vehicles required by moving towards a communal kitchen waste and green waste collection service

## 4. Implications

### 4.1 Financial implications:

These are contained in the main report

### 4.2 Legal Implications:

These are contained in the main report

### 4.3 Environmental Implications

These are contained in the main report

### 4.4 Equality Impact Assessment:

These are contained in the main report

## 5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 The comments of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Review Committee are forwarded to the Executive for consideration

**Background papers:** (available online or on request)

- None

Final report clearance:

**Signed by:**

Chair Policy and Performance Scrutiny  
Committee

Date

**Received by:**

Head of Democratic Services

Date

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