



Report of : Councillor Caroline Russell

Meeting of	Date	Ward(s)
Council	25 February 2015	All
Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non-exempt

## AMENDMENT TO BUDGET PROPOSALS 2016-17

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report amends the 'Budget Proposals 2016-17' report on the main agenda with proposed changes to the 2016-17 General Fund budget and medium term financial strategy (MTFS).

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. To agree the 'Budget Proposals 2016-17' report subject to the following, as set out in section 3 of the report;
- i. To cease the production of Islington Life
  - ii. To allocate the funding saved to Bright Sparks

### 3. REVISED GENERAL FUND BUDGET PROPOSALS 2016-17 GENERAL FUND REVENUE SAVINGS PROPOSALS To stop the production of Islington Life

- 3.1. The Council currently spends approximately £56,400 on the printing and distribution of Islington Life, although we receive £19,800 in advertising income, leaving a net cost of £36,600. It is published 4 times a year. By ceasing its production, the net cost would be saved. This would not affect staffing numbers in either the Communications Team or in Print Services.

- 3.2. As part of the move to becoming a more digital Council, the online offer of information is being improved and will be able to replace the need for a hard copy magazine.

### **GENERAL FUND REVENUE GROWTH PROPOSALS**

- 3.3. The saving of £36,600 could be allocated to Bright Sparks. The service was previously funded by the Council at £250k per annum but this has now been cut and, from 15/16, the service receives no grant support. This funding would ensure the ongoing operation of Bright Sparks, a reuse and repair service, which provides good quality essential household items to low-income residents, thereby saving the council money and diverting significant amounts of material from landfill. An integral part of the organization's work is the provision of apprenticeship and training opportunities for local people, many of whom have found full-time paid work as a direct result. This aspect of the project could be safeguarded with a relatively small input of financial support from the council.”

#### **Medium-Term Financial Strategy**

- 3.4. The overall budget requirement for 2016-17 would remain balanced.

## **4. MATTERS TO CONSIDER IN SETTING THE BUDGET**

### **COMMENTS OF THE SECTION 151 OFFICER**

- 4.1. The Council when determining the budget and thereby the level of council tax must take into account the report of its Section 151 Officer. The report must comment on the robustness of the estimates included in the budget and parallel consideration on the adequacy of the Council's proposed reserves. This section of the report includes consideration of these specific areas and enables the authority to discharge its duty to take account of the statutory report under section 25(2). **These comments are provided in addition to those in the substantive report 'Budget Proposals 2016-17' and relate to the proposals within the Opposition Budget.**
- 4.2. It is the opinion of the Section 151 Officer that the estimates for 2016-17 have been prepared on a robust basis, and further that where there are uncertainties, for instance on the levels of service demand, that these can be covered by the corporate contingency.
- 4.3. The Section 151 Officer is required to report to the authority, when it is making the statutory calculations required to determine its council tax, on the estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves the budget provides for. The level of general balances is set in the context of the prevailing financial climate within local government, the level of risk facing the authority and also the sustained improvement in our financial standing in recent years.

### **COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

- 4.4. In considering whether to adopt the amendments to the budget proposals contained within this report, members should have regard to the considerations set out in the main budget report.
- 4.5. That being said, these proposals would, if adopted, be lawful.

## **5. RESIDENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. The Equality Act 2010 sets out the requirement for the Council to pay due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 5.2. A Resident Impact Assessment (RIA) of the 2016-17 budget is set out at Appendix F. to the 'Budget Proposals 2016-17' report. It is supplemented by detailed RIAs of major proposals at departmental level. These demonstrate that the Council has met its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Child Poverty Act 2010.
- 5.3. This amendment does impact on the original Resident Impact Assessment report at Appendix F to the 'Budget Proposals 2016-17' report so the original assessment is still considered valid. The proposal to remove Islington Life would remove one method used by residents to receive information from the Council. Those groups with limited access to the internet may be adversely affected. The additional funding to Bright Sparks could assist them in providing additional recycled equipment to those residents in need of such equipment.

**Background papers:** None

Final Report Clearance

Signed by

Councillor Caroline Russell

24 February 2016

Responsible Officers : Mike Curtis, Corporate Director of Finance and Resources

Report Author : Steve Key, Assistant Director of Finance