

## **THE CABINET**

### **MEETING, 11TH FEBRUARY, 2013**

Councillor Morris	Executive Cabinet Member
Councillor Mrs Thomas	Executive Cabinet Member
Councillor Peel	Executive Cabinet Member
Cabinet Members	
Councillor Adia	Human Resources, Organisational Development and Diversity
Councillor Bashir-Ismail	Public Health
Councillor M. Connell	Adults
Councillor D. Burrows	Community Safety and Police
Councillor Peacock	Sports, Libraries, Youth and Culture
Councillor Murray	Looked After Children ,Safeguarding and Early Years
Councillor Chadwick	Highways and Transport
Councillor Sherrington	Waste and Recycling
Councillor J. Byrne	Economy, Housing and Skills
Councillor McKeon	Schools
Councillor Zaman	Neighbourhood and Community Services

#### Other Members in Attendance

Councillor Francis  
Councillor Jones  
Councillor Greenhalgh  
Councillor Morgan  
Councillor Ashcroft  
Councillor Mrs Fairclough  
Councillor Hayes

Officers

Mr. S. Harriss	Chief Executive
Mr. S. Arnfield	Deputy Chief Executive
Ms. M. Asquith	Director of Children's and Adults Services
Mr. K. Davies	Director of Development and Regeneration
Ms. W. Meredith	Director of Public Health
Mrs. H. Gorman	Borough Solicitor
Mr. J. Livesey	Assistant Director Children's and Adults Services
Ms. D. Ball	Assistant Director of Environmental Services
Mr. J. Rowlands	Assistant Director
Mr. A. Jennings	Democratic Services Manager

Councillor Morris in the Chair.

**69. MINUTES**

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

**70. MINUTES OF THE AGMA EXECUTIVE AND  
COMBINED AUTHORITY – 25<sup>th</sup> JANUARY, 2013**

The Chief Executive submitted a report that detailed the key decisions taken by the AGMA Executive Board and Combined Authority on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2013.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

## **71. MANAGED WEEKLY COLLECTION – RESPONSE TO CALL - IN**

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report that reminded members that the Cabinet's decision regarding the managed weekly collection, taken at its last meeting, had been called in by Councillor Greenhalgh for consideration by the Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2013. The Committee had agreed that the matter be referred back to the Cabinet in order for members to consider a further proposal as submitted by the Conservative Group.

The original report had set out proposals to achieve the required saving of £2.6m via a review of the waste collection frequencies within Bolton which in turn left the Council able to achieve large disposal savings and the Cabinet was reminded of its original decision and the reasons for such.

The report provided details of the proposal submitted by the Conservative Group, (Appendix 1), together with the associated costs, and members of the Conservative Group presented the proposal in more detail to the Cabinet for consideration which involved a weekly collection of a 140 litre grey bin and the current fortnightly collection of the 240 litre burgundy, beige and green bins, in conjunction with the introduction of a food waste bin.

The report submitted by the Director analysed the key difference in cost / savings and the recycling rate between the two options and explained that the disposal savings had been calculated to take into account the difference in capacity between the two proposals and the alternative option resulted in a savings shortfall of between £895,805 and £1,108,532 per year compared to the Managed Weekly Collections proposal.

With respect to the one off investments the report analysed the alternative and it was recognised that there was the potential for up to £190,000 to be saved on the future purchase of recycling bins as a result of new lids being placed on the 10,000 bins. However, the alternative option would require an

additional investment of £2,298,408 compared to the Managed Weekly Collections proposal.

The report also highlighted the following for consideration by the Cabinet:-

- Greater waste disposal savings would be achieved with the introduction of Managed Weekly Collections when compared to weekly collections of a 140 litre grey bin as this encouraged greater behavioural change. This was due to the weekly system offering the equivalent of 280 litres of capacity over the fortnight period, greater than the 240 litres offered under the alternate weekly proposal (Appendix 2 provided details);
- A full and comprehensive reporting process had already taken place for the Managed Weekly Collection proposal, with opportunity for scrutiny at every stage. Additional public and staff consultation on any new proposal would be in the region of £20,000.
- The cost of delaying any decision would result in a loss of saving each month of £220,000.

The Conservative Group's proposal referred to the Weekly Collection Support Scheme offered by the Government whereby local authorities were invited to bid for funding in order to retain or maintain weekly residual waste collections. Members were reminded that the Council had submitted a bid based on retention of a weekly residual collection for a 5 year period which was a clear specification of the grant. The costs were accurately calculated at £21m to maintain the service for a 5 year period. It was explained that, whilst applying for a £5m bid may have led to greater success of achieving the funding; it would have left a continued deficit in the savings target as the alternative option left a potential gap in funding year on year. It was also explained that other councils that had submitted

smaller bids could find it difficult to avoid increased disposal costs for the full 5 year period.

The Cabinet considered the alternative proposal submitted by the Conservative Group.

**Resolved – That the Cabinet reiterates its original decision taken on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 and that the managed weekly waste collection proposals, as set out in the report submitted to the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2013, be approved for implementation in May, 2013 (approximately 1 month after the introduction of food waste collections), together with the waste policies outlined in Appendix 7 of said report.**

## **72. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14 TO 2015/16**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report that set out the capital programme, a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy and capital prudential indicators for the next four years.

The Appendix to the report set out the proposed capital programme, including identified slippage and the report explained the resources available to fund such.

The budget had been prepared on the basis of a MRP calculation of 4% of opening debt for non HRA services. Appendix 3 set out the capital investment approved on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2012 and funded from one-off resources.

**Resolved – That the Cabinet agrees the following for submission to the Council:-**

**The Capital Programme for 2013/14 to 2015/16 as set out in Appendix One to the report;**

**The MRP policy as set out in Section 5 of the report;  
and**

**The Capital Prudential Indicators as set out in Section 6 of the report.**

### **73. 2013/14 to 2014/15 BUDGET REPORT**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report that;-

- consolidated Service Budgets to provide the Council's overall 2013/14 and 2014/15 Budgets;
- considered the options to balance the 2013/14 and 2014/15 Budgets;
- showed the transactions on the Collection Fund; and
- reported on the Financial Arrangements Account for 2013/14

The report also included a review of Reserves and presented options for the use of available Reserves; a range of budget saving options and outlined the potential choices and implications of a range of Council Tax options.

The Government had announced its proposed Revenue Support Grant for Local Government and this year the Grant Settlement had been more complicated than in any previous year because of the introduction of the Local Council Tax Benefit Scheme, the introduction of the "Local" Business Rates and changes to the overall Government grant arrangements.

Overall the figures published by the Government meant that the total savings required over the next two years would amount of £43.6m or £8.0m more than was forecast in September 2012. Members were reminded that the controllable budget from which the majority of savings would have to be made was £178m. The savings of £43.6m would therefore have a significant impact on the Council's controllable budget.

The report provided an updated assessment of the likely changes in income and expenditure facing the Council.

The report explained that meeting the savings gap of £8.8m and considering the situation in its wider strategic context, three elements needed to be considered by the Cabinet:-

- Review and use of resources;
- Options around the level of Council Tax; and
- Savings options and the impact on Services

Appendix D provided a full analysis of the Council's Reserves and a review of the Reserves had identified £16m as available for alternative uses. Of this, £6m was required to add to the Reserves to meet the one-off costs of redundancy, severance and pensions with £10m being available for one-off investment by the Council.

The Cabinet considered the use of reserves and the report indicated that there were two options; viz

- that £8m be allocated to the budget which was a contribution of £2m in each of the 4 years of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. This would leave £2m for further one-off investment; or
- that £10m be allocated to support one-off investment initiatives.

In terms of one-off investment there was a range of potential resources that could be available for one-off investment as follows:-

	£m
Balance of earmarked Capital (£14m identified in September with only £11m allocated)	3.0
Waste Disposal distribution in 2012/13	2.0
Additional Capital Receipts, above the £2m planned, in 2012/13 (latest forecast)	0.6
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	5.6
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The above could be supplemented by all or part of the available reserves that were not used to support the Revenue Budget. Examples of the sorts of initiatives that one-off resources could be used for were included in Appendix H.

Members were reminded that the Council initially set out a Medium Term Plan with an assumed 2.5% per year increase in Council Tax. However, that situation had to be reconsidered in the light of the Government's announcement of a lower referendum limit of 2% and the offer of a Council Tax Freeze Grant of £1m (which would be paid in each of the next 2 years). In 2011/12 the Government offered a 2.5% grant but only for one year.

The rules around the Referendum limit were considered complicated but effectively applied to the Council's own directly controlled spend excluding the Waste Disposal and Transport Levies. In practice this gave the Council four broad options in terms of the overall Council Tax level (including Police and Fire Precepts and Transport and Waste Levies) of:-

- 0.7% this equated to a 0% increase, excluding Police and Fire and would attract the Council Tax Freeze Grant;
- 2.4% this equated to a 2% increase, excluding Police and Fire, in line with the published Referendum Limit;
- 3.5% this was the overall increase in line with the maximum Council Tax level included in the Autumn consultation exercise; and
- 3.85% this was the maximum that the Council could set before requiring a Referendum.

The table in the report set out the impact on the Council's Budget of the potentially different levels of Council Tax increase and the potential impact on Council Tax payers.

In considering the potential increases in Council Tax, the Cabinet was reminded of the feedback the Council received in the public consultation on the budget during the autumn.



The Cabinet, at its meeting in January, 2013, had requested the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive to identify options to meet the £8.8m funding gap in the Council's budget. Following discussions with Service Directors a range of budget options had been identified for consideration (Appendix C) and to help in determining priorities an initial assessment of the options into the following three categories had been made.

- Difficult – whilst these savings were not easily achieved and they would have an impact on services, they were recommended to be taken as the first element of meeting the £8.8m shortfall. Total £4.4m;
- Harder Savings – these had a more significant impact on many key priorities of the Council. Whilst deliverable they needed to be considered against the alternative of increasing Council Tax. Total £2.5m; and
- Very hard – these options hit hardest at the Council's priorities and it was recommended that they should only be considered if Council Tax was frozen and no reserves were used. Total £3.7m.  
Whilst only £1.9m would be required to meet the full £8.8m saving requirement, all the options identified by Directors had been included in Appendix C in order to provide the Cabinet with some choice over the savings to be taken should any savings from the category be required.

Once the Cabinet and the Council had agreed the additional options to be taken forward, formal consultation with staff and Trade Unions would be undertaken on the options and the staffing impact

With respect to the level of balances to be maintained Appendix G provided the detail including an identification of financial risks. The advice was summarised as follows.

Currently it was estimated that available balances as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 would be £10.3m. The Deputy Chief Executive recommended, as minimum, balances of £10 m or higher should be maintained based upon his understanding of the risks and financial issues facing the Council over the next 4 years and the proposals around the budget, as identified in the report. The position would be re-evaluated following the recommendations by Cabinet on the overall Budget and a revised report would be submitted to the Council on the 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2013.

On the basis of a total budget requirement of £233.365m (i.e. total expenditure less Direct Schools Grant, Council Tax Freeze Grant, New Homes Bonus and Public Health funding) the balance to be raised from Council Tax was £84.113m. Members were reminded that the Council had agreed a council tax base for tax setting purposes in 2013/14 of 69,053 band D equivalent properties.

A full Equality Impact Assessment had been undertaken in line with legislation and was considered by the Cabinet in its deliberations.

The Cabinet agreed to consider Appendix C in the presence of the press and public as the proposals had been discussed with those affected and the trade unions. The Chief Executive informed the Cabinet that a meeting of the JCC had discussed the budget report and the proposals in Appendix C and a further letter from the joint trades unions had been tabled at this meeting.

The Leader submitted a series of recommendations for consideration and informed members that the options in the Budget report presented a series of difficult choices, all of which would have an impact on the people of Bolton. The Leader explained that it had been necessary to strike a balance between the reductions in services to clients and the impact on households of increased Council Tax Bills.

The reductions in funding to the Council had resulted in the Council having to consider cutting services and benefits to

vulnerable adults and children. The Leader explained that in the recommendations he was making to Council he had aimed to balance the extent to which the Council was able to protect services to vulnerable people with the extent to which the public would be asked to contribute to the overall funding gap through an increase in Council Tax.

Consequently, the Leader recommended an increase in Council Tax in order to avoid making more reductions in the services, particularly for those who were most vulnerable. He also reminded members that the Council had sought to minimise the impact of the 10% cut as a result of Council Tax Benefit localisation, thereby not increasing Council Tax further for those least able to pay.

The Leader concluded by explaining that, if the recommendations were agreed, the Council would still be making savings of over £40m which impacted on services, whilst asking the majority of Council Tax payers to contribute an additional 54p per week, with over 83% of Council Tax payers paying less than an additional 85p per week.

**Resolved – (I) That £8m of the £10m “available” reserves be earmarked to support the Revenue Budget over the next 4 years, (i.e. £2m a year, which will provide a £2m contribution to the 2013-15 Savings Target).**

**(ii) That the Council be recommended to set its element of the Council Tax, (i.e. excluding Waste and Transport Levies), at an increase in 2013/14 of 1.2%, being within the 2% limit set by Government above which a Referendum would be required, meaning an overall increase in Council Tax bills of 3.5%, including the Waste (8.3%) and Transport (5.6%) levies and precepts from Police (3.46%) and Fire (9.48%), thus raising an additional £1.7m.**

**(iii) That in order to meet the balance of the savings requirement that the following savings be agreed:**

**£000**

**All the savings in the “Difficult” list in Appendix C**

**4,370**

Reduced spend on Area Forums/Neighbourhood Management	200
Review of the Council Tax Support Scheme in 2014-15	100
Reduced Funding for “one-off events”	50
Reduced Leisure Subsidies	50
Savings in Highways not impacting on road maintenance	100
Reduced Play Service	150
Reductions in in-house Adult Social Care (including extra care, reablement etc)	150
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<b>Additional Savings Total</b>	<b>5,170</b>

(iv) That by using an element of reserves (resolution (i)) and increasing the Council's element of the overall Council Tax Bill by 1.2% the following Budget Options will not now be taken forward-

- Full removal of the Area Forum/Neighbourhood Management Budgets and staffing;
- Full removal of the Leisure Subsidies for free swimming, targeted lessons and over 60's free leisure use;
- Further significant reduction in Neighbourhood and Community Services, i.e. grass cutting, street sweeping, maintenance of parks etc;
- Further significant reduction in Highways, i.e. reduced maintenance of footpaths and roads and delays in the replacement of damaged signs, lighting etc.;
- Reduction in Disabled Children's Services;
- Changes in Leaving Care Management;
- Further reduction in Personal Advisor services (Careers advice) to young people to the minimum to deliver the Council's statutory responsibilities;

- Further reduction in in-house Adult Social Care
- Libraries reduced hours across the network or alternatively the closure of some libraries;
- Review of front line Housing Services;
- Significant review of the Council Tax Support Scheme impacting on all non-pensioner claimants;
- Significant reduction in the Children's Services Early Interventions Team which provides preventative services to support children and families who are dis-engaging from education;
- Closure of a number of Children's Centres; and
- Closure of a Children's Bungalow that provides respite care to parents of children with disabilities.

(v) That the one-off resources available for the next 4 years of £8.1m, which includes an additional £2m from the "available" reserves and the extra £0.5m New Homes Bonus distribution announced by the Government in the final Settlement, be allocated as follows:-

	£m
Additional investment in Housing Private Sector	
Renewal	2.0
Investment in Sporting/Leisure Facilities	1.5
Support for the Economy	2.0
Transitional Fund for Voluntary Sector	0.1
Anti-Poverty Strategy	1.0
Retain to meet unforeseen and/or future needs	1.5
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<b>Total</b>	<b>8.1</b>

(vi) That the Chief Executive submit proposals for consultation relating to the Council's pay and grading structure that will see an increase in the lowest pay rate paid to Council staff with a view to broadly restoring the gap that existed when the new pay rate was introduced in

**2009 between the Council's lowest pay rate and the minimum wage and that such proposal be self-financing from the overall costs of employment.**

**(vii) That consequent to the recommendations detailed in (i) to (vi) the Council be recommended to approve the Budget for 2013/14 and the outline Budget for 2014/15.**

**(viii) That the views of the Councils Scrutiny Committees, as now submitted, on the various budget matters be noted.**

#### **74. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGIES FOR 2013/14 TO 2015/16**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report that outlined the Council's prudential indicators for 2013/14 – 2015/16 and set out the expected treasury operations for this period.

The report fulfilled two key legislative requirements:-

The treasury management strategy statement which set out how the Council's treasury service would support the capital decisions taken at Minute 72 of this meeting, the day to day treasury management and the limitations on activity through treasury prudential indicators. The key indicator was the Authorised Limit, the maximum amount of debt the Council could afford in the short term, but which would not be sustainable in the longer term. This was the Affordable Borrowing Limit required by S3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and was in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management; and

The investment strategy which set out the Council's criteria for choosing investment counterparties and limiting exposure to the risk of loss. This strategy was in accordance with the CLG Investment Guidance.

The strategy for 2013/14 covered:-

- the current treasury position;

- treasury indicators which limited the treasury risk and activities of the Council;
- prospects for interest rates;
- the borrowing strategy;
- policy on borrowing in advance of need;
- debt rescheduling;
- the investment strategy; and
- creditworthiness policy.

These elements covered the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the CIPFA Prudential Code, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and CLG Investment Guidance.

**Resolved – That the Cabinet agrees the following for submission to the Council:-**

**The Treasury Management Strategy 2013/14 to 2015/16 and the treasury limits on activity contained within the report;**

**The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator; and**

**The Investment Strategy 2013/14 contained in the treasury management strategy.**

## **75. BUSINESS RATES CHARITABLE DISCRETIONARY RELIEF**

Further to Minute 47 of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2012 the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report that sought Members' approval for changes to Business Rates discretionary relief in respect of 2013/14 for new claims and 2014/15 for existing recipients, following consultation.

Members were reminded that there were two types of Charitable Rate relief, namely;

- Mandatory - granted when the ratepayer of a property was a registered charity or one exempted from

registration and the property was used wholly or mainly for charitable purposes. Relief amounted to 80% of the rates payable on its property and was funded totally by Central Government. There were currently 389 organisations in Bolton that had been granted mandatory charitable relief.

- Discretionary - The Government had issued guidance notes to assist Local Authorities with setting up a framework for granting discretionary relief. Consideration had to be given to the contribution that the organisation made to the local community at large, not just its own members or beneficiaries. Each application was considered on its individual merits and entitlement was reviewed annually.

There were 2 types of charitable discretionary relief, as follows;

Top Up - granted to charities in respect of all or part of the remaining 20% rates payable not covered by mandatory relief.

Local Authorities had to contribute 75% of the cost of any top up relief that it granted with the remainder being funded by the national business rates pool. Bolton currently granted this relief to the majority of accounts where occupation was by a charity including opted out schools, some administrative offices and charity shops.

In practice, where top up relief was granted, it was always for the full 20% of the rates payable not covered by the mandatory relief. Out of the 389 organisations receiving mandatory relief, 250 also received the top up relief.

Discretionary - Local Authorities could also grant discretionary relief to non-profit making organisations that were not entitled to mandatory relief. This was on the basis that use of their premises was for educational, social, sporting, and artistic or welfare purposes. Using the same criteria as top up relief, a percentage of between 1% and 100% could be granted. Local Authorities had to contribute 25% of the cost of this relief.



In many cases non-profit making organisations were also entitled to small business rate relief, awarded before any discretionary relief. As the Government had temporarily increased the level of small business rate relief the cost of discretionary relief to the Council had reduced. This temporary increase was due to end on 1st April, 2013 resulting in an increase in the level of discretionary relief given under the current scheme.

The report proposed a savings proposal that meant only giving top up relief to Bolton charities for the following reasons:-

- Bolton charities must have been set up with the sole purpose of assisting Bolton residents, the majority of their work must be carried out in Bolton and must mainly benefit the citizens of Bolton.
- This would save the Council approximately £100,000 per annum.
- Unless exceptional circumstances applied, no top up relief should be granted to national charities in respect of charity shops or other premises.
- For existing cases, any changes to top up relief could only be implemented after twelve months' notice was given. Therefore, it was proposed to give this notice before the end of March, 2013 so that the relief could be cancelled with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2014. For new applications the changes could be implemented immediately.
- For the discretionary relief to "not for profit" organisations that were not registered charities, because these were all locally based organisations, it was not proposed to make any changes.

A full Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) had been undertaken in line with legislation and was considered by the Cabinet in its deliberations.

**Resolved – (i) That the criteria for awarding relief be based on the Framework at appendix 2, which will award relief to charities which have been established with the sole purpose of assisting Bolton residents, the majority of their work being carried out in Bolton and mainly benefiting the citizens of Bolton.**

**(ii) That the Framework applies to all new applicants from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.**

**(iii) That for existing cases the relief currently given to non-Bolton Charities be cancelled from 1/4/14 and that a re-application must be made and this application will be considered against the approved Framework (appendix 2)**

**(iv) That as part of the implementation of the changes a right of appeal be introduced for any ratepayer impacted by this change and that the Assistant Director, in consultation with the appropriate Executive Member, be authorised to consider such appeal.**

## **76. BOLTON CARERS STRATEGY 2013/15**

The Director of Children's and Adults Services submitted a report that detailed the outcomes of a consultation exercise with carers and other stakeholders on Bolton's proposed Carers Strategy and sought approval of the final strategy document.

The report reminded members that Carers looked after family members; partners or friends in need of help because they were ill, frail or had a disability. Figures from the 2011 Census showed that there were over 30,500 carers in Bolton, up more than 2000 on a decade ago.

The new Carers Strategy addressed the key priorities and outcomes for the next three years for individuals and families in

Bolton who had caring responsibilities. It set the focus for the Council, partner organisations and carers to work on a range of realistic improvements during the next three years. It also reflected the national priorities in 'Recognised, valued and supported - next steps for the carers' strategy' (Department of Health, 2010). The strategy's overall vision was:

To promote greater awareness of the vital role of carers, to build strong networks of support for them and for public services to work creatively alongside carers to enhance their quality of life and ensure the best possible care and support for their loved ones.

Progress on the strategy's priority outcomes would be reported through regular updates for the new multi-agency Carers Impact Group, and an annual review report to the Council.

Development of the Carers Strategy involved engagement with local carers during last summer and the ideas and issues raised by carers helped to set the Strategy's themes and priorities. NHS partners, carers' groups and other community organisations were asked for their views and presentations were made to relevant groups and partnership meetings.

The Carers Strategy implementation plan included a number of areas for immediate development, including some activity which was already under way. The strategy would also provide the strategic backdrop to the proposed Carers' Support Grant Scheme, which was linked to the Carers Strategy priority outcomes.

It was proposed that the Strategy be published and circulated to carers' organisations and partners and that plans be made for the official Launch of the Strategy and more widespread publicity to carers and local residents during Carers Week, which took place from Monday 10 to Sunday 16 June 2013 across the UK

A full Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix A2) had been undertaken in line with legislation and was considered by the Cabinet in its deliberations.

**Resolved – That the final Carers Strategy 2013-2015 be approved.**

## **77. CARERS' SUPPORT GRANT – FINAL SCHEME**

The Director of Children's and Adults Services submitted a report that (a) detailed the results of a consultation exercise on proposals to establish a new scheme for the award of grants to voluntary and community organisations providing support to carers; (b) sought approval to implement the new scheme from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013; and (c) to reduce the annual budget for the carers grant scheme from £250,000 to £200,000.

Members were reminded that the Executive Cabinet Member – Deputy Leader had approved a report setting out draft proposals for the procurement of a range of commissioned adult social care services which included proposals to establish a new carers grant scheme and to reduce the amount of discretionary funding provided by the Council to support voluntary and community sector organisations, provide information, advice and support to carers.

The current annual budget for carers' support services was £250,000 which was discretionary expenditure and the Council was not statutorily obliged to procure these services.

Contracts for the existing voluntary and community sector providers of carers support were due to expire on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013 and a reduction of £50,000 was proposed with the introduction of a grants scheme linked to the outcomes in the new Bolton Carers' Strategy 2013-15. Aligning the grant funding to the priorities and outcomes of the new strategy would ensure that the limited resources that remained available to the Council were spent strategically and on the support which was most valued by carers in Bolton.

The Appendix set out the responses received from individuals and organisations during the consultation and presented the response to each from the Council.

During the consultation period, a number of suggestions and comments were made. The following areas of the proposed scheme had been altered as a result:-

- The £750,000 upper asset limit had been removed from the scheme criteria in order to allow larger voluntary organisations to apply for funding;
- An upper limit of £50,000 had been set for any individual grant awarded under the scheme;
- The guidance documentation would include specific examples of what was required and workshops would be provided for bidders to provide face to face support where required; and
- A new requirement had been introduced such that organisations must be able to demonstrate a track record of delivering carers support, preferably in Bolton.

A full Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) had been undertaken in line with legislation and was considered by the Cabinet in its deliberations.

**Resolved – (i) That the Cabinet notes the results of the consultation and agrees the new Carers' Grant Scheme for implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2013, together with a reduction in the annual budget of £50,000.**

**(ii) That the Director of Children and Adult Services be authorised to develop the grant application process.**

## **78. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved - That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt**

**information as specified in paragraphs 1 and 4 (staffing and labour relations matters) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act; and that it be deemed that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in their exemption outweighs the public interest in their disclosure.**

## **79. REVIEW OF HOUSING SERVICES – POST CONSULTATION PROPOSALS**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report that set out the results of the consultation on proposals to remodel and restructure Housing Services and sought the Cabinet's approval to implement the final proposals.

Appendix 2 set out responses to the issues raised during the consultation process.

The final proposals include some changes and Appendix 1 set out in detail the reasoning behind some key areas where the proposed structure should be amended.

A full Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 4) had been undertaken in line with legislation and was considered by the Cabinet in its deliberations.

**Resolved – That the final proposals, as now detailed, be approved and that the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Leader, agrees to delegate implementation of the new structure, including details of voluntary redundancy arrangements and consequential redundancy selection, to the Chief Executive and the Director of Development and Regeneration.**