

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 MAY 2015

Statement from: Councillor M S Jones – Executive Councillor for Finance and Property

Finance Matters

Outturn of Accounts and Financial Statements for year ended 31 March 2015

Work is presently underway to finalise the outturn position for the Council's budgets for last year. Based on budget monitoring reports this is likely to show an underspend on the revenue budget for the year. The detail will be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 7 July and recommendations on the treatment of under and overspends will come to the September meeting of the Council for approval. The draft financial statements of the Council will be scrutinised by the Audit Committee in early July prior to their review by the external auditors. The auditors will report upon their opinion on the accounts to the September meeting of the Audit Committee.

Financial Challenges Beyond 2015/16

The March 2015 Budget Statement from the Chancellor confirmed that restraint on public spending is likely to continue until 2018/19, after which it is scheduled to grow in line with the underlying economy. The incoming Government is expected to undertake a Comprehensive Spending Review this summer with the outcome reported to Parliament in the autumn. This should set public spending totals for most or all of the rest of the new Parliament. Despite the good work done as part of our 2014 fundamental budget review which identified savings of around £65m in the four years to 2018/19, our estimates are that we still need to find a further £55m in that period. This will be a significant challenge and work is now underway to consider how this best can be achieved. It is our intention to keep the relevant Scrutiny Committees briefed on progress.

Corporate Property Rationalisation Programme

We have continued to rationalise our office property portfolio; this year nearly 20% of the workforce have moved to more efficient office space and, as a result of this, we are well on our way to achieving £1m worth of savings.

The property services contract has been re-procured, VINCI mouchel were the successful bidder and the contract will save £2m in the first 5 years.

We have invested £23.4 million in schools properties over the last 12 months, helping to meet and improve the educational needs of our children.

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