

## CABINET

16 December 2014

**Title:** Call-In of Decision Made by Cabinet on 18 November 2014 under Minute 49(xi) re. Employment of a Political Assistant and a Leader and Members' Services Manager

### Report of the Monitoring Officer

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### Summary

The Public Accounts and Audit Select Committee met on 2 December 2014 to consider a call-in, submitted by Councillors Mullane and Reason, in respect of Minute 49(xi) of the Cabinet on 18 November 2014, which related to the withdrawal of part of saving CEX/SAV/09 (presented to Cabinet on 7 October 2014) in order to recruit a Leader and Members' Services Manager and a Political Assistant in the Democratic Services section.

The Select Committee upheld the call-in on the following grounds:

- (a) Proportionality - the withdrawal of £100,794 from saving proposal CEX/SAV/09 was inappropriate in the context of the financial pressures currently faced by the Council and would have an adverse impact on front-line services;
- (b) Due consultation - there had been no prior consultation on the proposals, non-Cabinet Members were refused permission to ask any questions at the Cabinet meeting where the proposal was agreed and detailed information known at the time of the Select Committee's consideration of the original saving proposal on 29 October was not shared with Members; and
- (c) Clarity of aims and desired outcomes - there was a lack of openness and transparency.

The Select Committee acknowledged points made by the Cabinet Member for Finance regarding the need for the new leadership to be supported at the present time. Taking that into account, the Select Committee agreed the following recommendations to the Cabinet:

- (i) That the post of Leader and Members' Services Manager was unnecessary and unjustified in the context of the Council's current financial situation, and should not be recruited to; and
- (ii) That the recruitment of a Political Assistant was supported on the basis that the duties of the post should be expanded to take on responsibility for non-management elements of the Leader and Members' Services Manager job

description.

The relevant extract from the draft, unconfirmed minutes of the Select Committee meeting is attached at Appendix 1.

**Recommendation(s)**

The Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Note the outcome of the Select Committee's consideration of the matter; and
- (ii) Decide whether to amend its decision made under Minute 49(xi) in the light of the recommendations of PAASC or to confirm the proposal to recruit a Leader and Members' Services Manager and a Political Assistant.

**Reason(s)**

To accord with the Council's Call-In processes.

**Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:**

- Report to Cabinet, 7 October 2014, entitled "Budget Strategy 2015/16"
- Report to PAASC, 2 December 2014, entitled "Call-In of Cabinet Decision re. Leader and Members' Services Manager and Political Assistant posts"

**List of appendices:**

- **Appendix 1** – Extract from the draft, unconfirmed minutes of the PAASC meeting 2 December 2014