

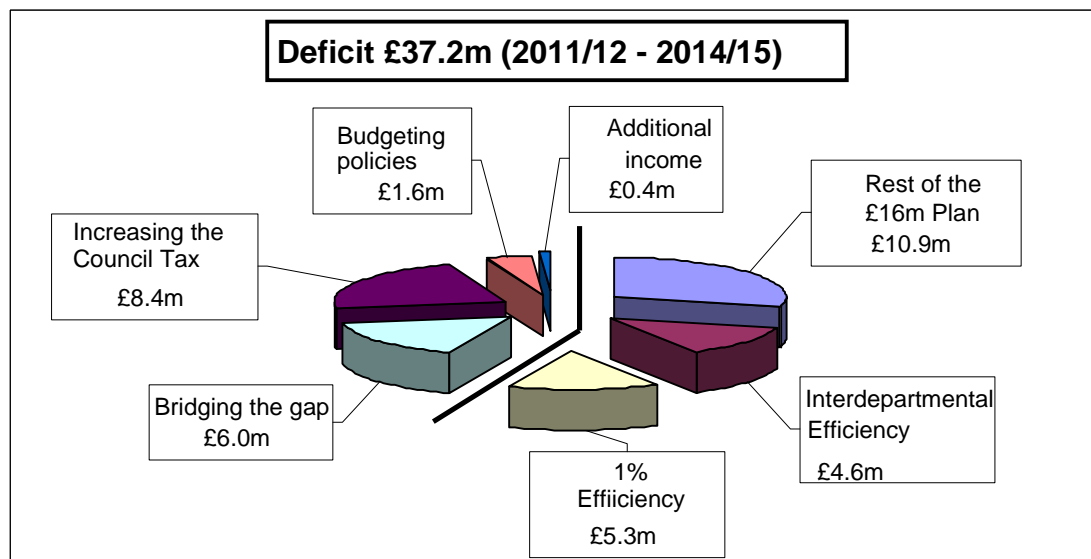
MEETING	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBJECT	Resources to Support Members' Work
DATE	11 September 2012
PURPOSE	Draw the Democratic Services Committee's attention to the fact that it will be impossible to realise one of the savings schemes while continuing to give necessary support to Council Members
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Ioan Thomas
AUTHOR	Geraint George Head of Democratic Services

1. Background

1.1 One of this Committee's core responsibilities is to ensure that sufficient staff and resources are provided to support members and, in that context, there is one issue which requires the Committee's attention in terms of the level of support to the bulk of Council Members.

2. The Requirement to Make Savings

2.1 The "Financial Strategy 2012/13 – 2014/15" as agreed by the Council on 1st March 2012 is connected to realising a number of different financial streams to meet the budgetary deficit of approximately £37m between 2011/12 – 2014/15 as seen in the table below.



2.2 As part of the package of Efficiency Savings proposed by the Council's Departments which corresponded to 1% (£5.2m) of all the departmental

budgets over the 3 years 2012/13 – 2014/15, one of the schemes proposed by the Democracy and Legal Department to be realised in 2013/14 was:

“Democratic Services – In accordance with the expectations of the Local Government Measure (Wales) 2011 the Council will be required to restructure the democracy services (committees, members’ support and scrutiny) so that they are all accountable to one officer who is the head of democracy.” (The Scheme was intended to realise a saving of £54,000)

- 2.3 At the time there was some ambiguity regarding the situation and the support required, and as a result the scheme was submitted with a reality achievement assessment of “Amber”, meaning that there were some risks to its achievement.
- 2.4 In establishing the new Democracy Services following the elections, a number of steps were taken to try to meet these new requirements within existing resources. This was undertaken as part of a package of savings which I developed when restructuring my department, a package that will produce approximately a further £75,000 of savings over-and-above any targets that were set.
- 2.5 By now, having established the Members’ Services under the new arrangements, I suggest that the situation in terms of the requirements is now clearer, and that it is now evident that the posts that provide political support must continue. As a result, it is not possible to realise the proposed scheme that would have achieved a saving of £54,000 in the Democracy and Legal Department’s budget.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 To accept that this comparatively minor scheme cannot be realised while addressing the need of giving Council Members the necessary support. It is therefore suggested that a request is made to the Cabinet Member (Resources) that the Savings Strategy be revised to recognise this.