

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 22 January 2015.

PRESENT: Councillor J D Ablewhite – Chairman.

Councillors S Cawley, B S Chapman,
D B Dew, J A Gray, R B Howe,
T D Sanderson and D M Tysoe.

61. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11th December 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

62. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

63. DRAFT 2015/16 REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (2016/17) TO (2019/20)

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) setting out the draft budget for 2015/2016 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2016/17 – 2019/20.

Councillor J A Gray, Executive Councillor for Resources, acquainted Members with details of the draft budget for 2015/16 and advised the Cabinet of its significance which had resulted in a net saving of £1.8m from the 2014/15 forecast outturn budget. Executive Councillors were also advised of the continuation of the Facing the Future programme, proposed Council Tax freeze at £133.18 for 2015/16 with its impact on reserves from 2016/17 to 2019/20 and assumptions based upon the New Homes Bonus allocation funding.

An addendum to the report was also circulated which outlined a further proposed £650k reductions in the budget and Councillor Gray paid tribute to Officer's contributions in achieving this result. The Head of Resources further explained the background to the process, including details of the Zero Based Budgeting exercise which had achieved the savings to the budget. Attention was also drawn to the inclusion of unavoidable growth expenditure and the impact of Central Government funding, with potential changes in the funding philosophy if there is a change in Government in May 2015. Executive Councillors summarised details of the further reductions in the budget which had resulted from the deletion of vacant posts and reduction in management costs and discussed the areas that needed further investigation.

Members' attention was drawn to the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and Councillor R Harrison, Chairman of the Panel, advised Members that the Panel had been encouraged by the savings that had been achieved to date and indicated the Panel's support of the general intention not to use reserves, together with the proposal to freeze Council Tax for 2015/16 and freeze over the period of the MTFS. Given the future uncertainty, the Panel supported the proposal to review the position next year and endorsed the proposal that reserves should not fall below £3m. In noting that the final budget would be reported to Members at their next meeting, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report now submitted be noted.

Chairman