

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CORPORATE AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK) held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 29 January 2008.

- PRESENT: Councillor J A Gray – Chairman.
- Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, K J Churchill, S J Criswell, J W Davies, P J Downes, D Harty and M F Newman.
- APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor R W D Bailey.
- IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor T V Rogers.

19. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 13th November 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

21. FINANCIAL STRATEGY, MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2009-2013 & BUDGET 2008/09

With the aid of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which appended in the Minute Book) the Panel reviewed the Financial Strategy, Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2009-2013 and the Budget and level of Council Tax for 2008/09 in advance of their consideration by the Cabinet and final determination by the Council.

By way of introduction Councillor Rogers, Executive Councillor for Finance, reminded Members of the process involved in developing the Financial Strategy in the current year. The Director of Commerce and Technology outlined the Government's grant settlement and its approach to Council Tax levels. Particular attention was drawn to the Government's continued retention of grant from the Council to mitigate against grant losses elsewhere and which, in 2008/09, would result in a loss of £804,000 to which the Council was entitled under the Revenue Support Grant area cost adjustment.

In response to a question by a Member, Councillor Rogers outlined Executive Councillors' involvement in developing the proposals contained in the report. He also referred to the rationale for changing the procedure for approving the release of funding for individual schemes from the MTP which the Panel endorsed.

With regard to the proposed level of Council Tax for 2008/09, the Panel discussed the Government's expectation in terms of council tax levels and capping and the likely approach taken by other councils. Following discussion on the mechanism by which the Council's grant was determined, Members expressed support for Option B explained in the report, which represented an increase of 4.99% in Band D equivalent Council Tax in 2008/09. Having discussed a number of other suggestions for inclusion in the budget, Members also expressed support for the proposed Budget and MTP. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Cabinet be informed of the Panel's support for the proposed Budget, MTP and Financial Plan as submitted; and
- (b) that the Cabinet be informed of the Panel's support for an increase of £5.48 (4.99%) in Band D equivalent Council Tax for 2008/09.

Chairman