

**FINANCIAL STRATEGY
(Report by Head of Administration)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report should be read in conjunction with the report by the Corporate Director, Commerce and Technology on the Council's Financial Strategy, that was considered by the Cabinet on 31st July 2003 (copy attached). The relevant minutes of that meeting are also attached.

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) considered the report at their meeting on 9th September 2003.
- 2.2 As a result of their discussions, the Panel expressed their concern at proposals for a substantial increase in Council Tax in 2008/09. The consensus of the Panel suggested that increases in Council tax should be implemented on a gradual basis to lessen the sudden impact upon tax payers' in a single year.
- 2.3 In relation to the Council's current expenditure levels, the Panel emphasised the need for the Cabinet to evaluate new initiatives on an ongoing basis and to review the need for a continuation of specific projects if these were not found to be justified.
- 2.4 The Panel also recognised the difficulty in reducing levels of service provision once these had been implemented and acknowledged that further expenditure increases might be forthcoming from future Government prescription or policy initiatives.

3. CONCLUSION

The Cabinet is invited to note the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel in formulating their recommendation to Council on the Financial Strategy on 24th September 2003.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 9th September 2003.

