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## **Cabinet**

### **Report of the meeting held on 16th February 2012**

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#### **Matters for Decision**

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#### **56. BUDGET 2012/13 AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2013/17**

The Cabinet has considered the content of the 2012/13 draft budget, the Medium Term Plan for the period 2013/17 and the level of Council Tax for 2012/13. The details are contained in Appendix A to the report by the Head of Financial Services included as agenda item 4 on the Council agenda.

The final government grant figures have been published and Members noted that the Formula Grant has not changed but that the New Homes Bonus for 2012/13 is now £1.913m, an increase of £37k on the figure previously forecast.

In considering the views of the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being), Members concurred with the Panel that Council Tax levels should be increased by 3.5 % in order to meet unavoidable inflation and to preserve valued services as far as possible both this year and in the future.

On the subject of funding for the voluntary sector, the Cabinet confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) will be examining in detail the policies and mechanisms that are proposed between the sector and the Council as it falls under their remit.

The Cabinet noted the Council's level of revenue reserves, including its relativity to other District Councils, and confirmed that the level will be reviewed as part of the Council's financial forecast each September.

In discussing the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's (Economic Well-Being) reference to a saving not being included in a section's budget, the Head of Financial Services explained that the issue related to confusion as to whether a saving had been achieved, rather than to whether the budget had been reduced by the relevant savings target. He advised Executive Councillors that the final phase of the annual budget process when budgets are disaggregated to a lower level will hopefully clarify and resolve such issues.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Economic Well-Being) drew attention to the question of whether certain corporate budgets should be shown in the unallocated section rather than under the Head of Financial Services in Annex G. The Executive Councillor for Resources will discuss this with the Managing Director (Resources) before responding to the Panel.

Having noted the comments arising from the consultation with the business community on expenditure proposals and in expressing their thanks to staff for achieving the budget outcomes, the Cabinet

#### **RECOMMEND**

- (a) that the proposed budget, Medium Term Plan, budget and Financial Plan appended to the report of the Head of Financial Services be approved; and**
- (b) that a Council Tax increase of £4.34 (3.5%) representing a level of £128.51 for a Band D property be approved for 2012/13.**

#### **57. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2012/13**

Reproduced at Appendix B of the Head of Financial Services report at Agenda item No. 4 on the Council's agenda is the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2012/13. The strategy, which complies with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice, has clear objectives for the management of the Council's borrowing and investments. Having been satisfied that the strategy meets the requirements of the Code of Practice and Government guidance, the Cabinet

#### **RECOMMEND**

- (a) that the 2012/13 Treasury Management Strategy appended at Appendix B to the report of the Head of Financial Services be approved; and**
- (b) that the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2012/13 as set out in Appendix B of the report of the Head of Financial Services be approved;**

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#### **Matters for Information**

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#### **58. ROLL FORWARD OF CORE STRATEGY – LOCAL PLAN PROJECT PLAN**

Having regard to the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) (Item No.42 of their report refers), the

Cabinet has approved the content of the new Local Development Scheme for publication and commencement on 24th February 2012.

The Scheme outlines the proposed programme for the production of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and includes key milestones to inform people about opportunities to be involved in the process. Its development has arisen as result of amendments to the plan-making process in the Localism Act, the draft National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Regulations consultation.

**59. CASTLE HILL HOUSE – FORMER HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES – HIGH STREET, HUNTINGDON**

*(The following item was considered as a confidential item under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)*

Further to Item No.28 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 23rd September 2009, the Cabinet has been apprised of progress made to date on the marketing of Castle Hill House, Huntingdon. Executive Councillors were advised of details of an offer received for the former Council offices. Having requested further information on the options available to the Council and in acknowledging the need to involve the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), the Cabinet has agreed to defer consideration of the item to a future meeting.

J D Ablewhite  
Chairman