

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET 2 DECEMBER 2014 FROM THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE PANEL HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2014**

### **RP89: CABINET REPORT: COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

In presenting the report, the Deputy Chief Executive reminded Members that Local Council Tax Support schemes were introduced from 1 April 2013. The national scheme of Council Tax Benefit was abolished and Central Government devolved responsibility to local authorities to design schemes to help residents on low incomes with the council tax costs. The funding for those schemes was also devolved and cut by 10%.

It was noted that in the first year of operation, 2013/2014, the Council determined to continue to operate a scheme similar to the old Council Tax Benefit Scheme as the Council received a transitional grant from Central Government to partly offset the loss of funding. In 2014/2015 the Council introduced a Council Tax Support Scheme that reduced the cost of the scheme to fit within the reduced funding from Government. Each financial year a billing authority must review the Council Tax Support Scheme and, by 31 January, adopt their scheme for the forthcoming financial year.

On 10 September 2014 Cabinet agreed that the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/2015, updated for changes in benefit legislation during 2014/2015 together with uprating of allowances and premiums for pension age claimants as the draft scheme for 2015/2016 would go to public consultation. The consultation period ran over a six week period from 19 September 2014 to 31 October 2014.

The Panel was advised that there were three responses to the consultation exercise which were noted in the report. It was therefore proposed that the Council adopted the draft Council Tax Support Scheme, approved on 10 September 2014, as the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/2016.

Members were invited to ask questions/comment on the report. There were no questions or comments from the Panel.

**RESOLVED:** That the Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

That the Council Tax Support Scheme as approved on 10 September 2014 be adopted as the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/2016.

RP90: **CABINET REPORT: BASE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Chief Financial Officer explained that the report updated the 2014/2015 revenue estimates and the projections for 2015 to 2017. Those figures would form the base on which the new Financial Plan 2014/2018 would be formulated for council tax setting purposes in February 2015.

The Panel's attention was drawn to the following sections of the report:

- The Revenue Estimates 2014/2015.
- Projections 2015 to 2017.
- General Fund Balance and Reserves.

In response to questions from Councillor C J Crofts regarding Internal Drainage Board levies, the Chief Financial Officer explained that the Borough Council had ongoing discussions with the Internal Drainage Boards who had confirmed that the levy would be held for 2015/2016 after that it was anticipated that there would be a small increase likely to be around 2% - 3%. The Deputy Chief Executive informed Members that the Borough Council had held meetings with the Chief Executive of King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board both last year and this year which had provided the Council with some certainty over its 3 year plan.

Councillor Gourlay asked how the £100,000 car parks saving had been achieved. The Chief Financial Officer explained that the car parks budget did not only relate to King's Lynn but other areas. She outlined the work the Borough Council was undertaking on behalf of other local authorities which sought to provide income to the Council not just to recover the costs, but to give the Council an income stream. The Deputy Chief Executive added that the Council considered any business opportunity that arose to sell the Council's expertise which in turn contributed to its overheads.

In response to questions from Councillor A Tyler, the Chief Financial Officer confirmed that there was no risk of reduced funding being available to undertake maintenance and repairs to the Council's car parks.

**RESOLVED:** That the Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

It is recommended that Cabinet approve:

- 1) The changes, transfers to/from reserves and revised revenue estimates for 2014/2015 as detailed in section 1 of the report.