

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

25 February 2016

COUNCILLOR N DAUBNEY - CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND LEADER

For the period 29 January to 16 February 2015

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Financial Plan 2015/2020

The Financial Plan 2015/2020 forms part of this Council agenda and we will vote on setting council tax at £112.87 for a Band D property in 2016/2017. This represents an increase of 0.8%. The increase is based on RPI as at September 2015 of 0.9% and is in line with our manifesto pledge to hold council tax increases at or below inflation.

On 8 February 2016 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government responded to consultation on the provisional local government finance settlement for 2016/2017. We are pleased that the Government has recognised the cost implications for rural areas and has responded positively with additional support through increased Rural Services Delivery Grant.

In presenting the Financial Plan 2015/2020 to Council we acknowledge that the funding assumptions, in particular with respect to business rates growth, include significantly more downside risk than at any time in recent years. I have asked officers to review these assumptions based on latest information and it is considered prudent to reduce the business rates growth figures as detailed in The Financial Plan 2015/2020 which forms part of this Council agenda.

We remain fully aware that the funding arrangements for local government continue to be challenging. We have a good track record on delivering quality services to the residents, businesses and visitors to the borough within our available resources and I am confident we will continue to do so.

My thanks to all of those involved in preparing the budget and those that have helped the Council to maintain our aim of sound financial management of the public finances.

Budget 2015/2016

The current year budget forms part of the Financial Plan 2015/2020 which is

on the Council agenda. The current year budget still remains on track with £40,000 of additional savings reported in the period to the end of December 2015. Our continued strong financial control means that I expect that we will end the year in March 2016 with a level of general fund balance available which will support the Financial Plan and cushion the impact of the challenges faced in our funding position in the period to 2019/2020.

Devolution

I have chaired joint meeting between Suffolk and Norfolk Leaders. Good progress was made towards agreement which will eventually be put to Council.

At that meeting, strong support was evident that we should continue to attempt the involvement of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Subsequently a meeting with Greater Peterborough Greater Cambridgeshire LEP was not encouraging.

However, I was then asked to attend a meeting with Cambridgeshire Leaders hosted by Greg Clark (Secretary of State) – and significant progress was made. We are now in active discussion with Cambridgeshire.

2 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Attended:

EU Funding Delegates, meeting in King's Lynn
Regeneration and Development panel
New Anglia Enterprise Network Briefing – Thetford
Norfolk Leaders Group
Cabinet
Press Launch – King's Lynn Innovation Centre
Staff Long Service Awards
COWA Corporation Finance Group
Norfolk Chamber of Commerce – MP's Briefing
Joint Norfolk Suffolk Leaders meeting
GCGP LEP Leaders meeting

Planned in next two weeks

Norfolk Leaders meeting
Cabinet Scrutiny Committee
LGA Community Board
Kings Lynn Festival Launch
Alive Leisure
Meeting re railway improvement