

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

Monday, 17 December 2007

**PRESENT:** Councillor Woods (Chair); Councillor Glynane (Deputy Chair); Councillors Beardsworth, Church, Hoare and Mildren

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillor T Crake.

### 2. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

**RESOLVED:** (1) That Mr M Littlewood, Mr C Grethe and Mr C Swinn be granted leave to address the Cabinet in respect of item 5 "Council-Wide Revenue Budget 2008/09 – 2010/11 – Consultation"  
(2) That Mr C Swinn be granted leave to address the Cabinet in respect of item 6 "Draft Corporate Plan Priorities for Consultation".

### 3. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007 were signed by the Chair.

### 4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were none.

### 5. COUNCIL WIDE REVENUE BUDGET 2008/09 - 2010/11 - CONSULTATION

Mr M Littlewood, UNISON Joint Branch Secretary, addressed the Cabinet referring to the amount set out in Annex B3 of the Draft Budget for the Pay and Grading review. He stressed the importance of this item of expenditure and expressed his concern that insufficient funds had been set aside for the implementation of the review and subsequent pay claims. He warned of the potential demoralisation of the workforce that could lead to sickness, stress, a decline in services and lower productivity. On behalf of Trade Unions and employees of the Council, he asked the Cabinet to reject this Draft Budget to ensure that the Council met its equality obligations and properly funded the Pay and Grading project.

Mr C Grethe then addressed the Cabinet requesting that funding for the Voluntary Sector be maintained in view of the valuable support given to disabled and other vulnerable groups. He hoped that the consultation process would be adequately accessible for disabled people so that they could have their say.

Mr C Swinn addressed the Cabinet, welcoming the reinstatement of park rangers. He then mentioned the large number of trees in the Borough and an apparent shortfall of funding for their maintenance. He was also concerned that Government funding did not take into account the rapid growth in the town's population.

Councillor Mildren as the Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the Draft Budget report to Cabinet. He explained that this was a stabilising budget and that there was limited funding available to maintain current levels of service. Moreover, the final Local Government Settlement would not be confirmed until February, at which time the budget would be represented. Consultation with the people of Northampton was now underway and would continue until the end of January. People's views would be considered and officers were

available to assist with more specific information. He was confident that the Council was now in financial control with regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet.

The Chair confirmed that there were no proposals to cut services and options were being considered to invest in new areas and reinstate some previously suspended services.

Cabinet members were happy to accept the draft consultation leaflet as a basis for the process and any changes to the design and content was to be approved by Councillors Mildren and Woods.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- 1 Note the details of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.
- 2 Approve for public consultation the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2008/09 and indicative budgets for 2009/10, and 2010/11 as summarised in Annex A and detailed in Annex B and supporting annexes of the published report, and proposed council tax increase of 4.95% for 2008/09 and the indicative 4.95% for 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- 3 Note the potential receipt of any Local Authority Business Growth Incentive monies received.
- 4 Approve the budget consultation leaflet and give delegation to Councillor Mildren and Councillor Woods to approve any required changes.
- 5 Approve the proposed contribution to and level of reserves as set out in the report.

## **6. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITIES FOR CONSULTATION**

Mr C Swinn addressed the Cabinet suggesting that more detailed information was needed as to the timescale of Northampton Borough Council's rise through the star ratings for improvement to the point where it would become a Beacon Council.

The Chair, as Portfolio Holder for Improvement and Strategic Partnership, introduced the document, which he felt was clear and well-focussed, incorporating as it did, initial consultation with customer panels and other partners. Below this document hung the more detailed service and improvement plans that would reflect the personality and priorities of Northampton. The Chair then referred to Appendix 2 of the report that outlined the full consultation process with focus groups and forums.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- 1 Note the outcomes of the initial consultation work which has informed the development of priorities for 2008/ 11.
- 2 Agree the draft corporate plan and priorities for consultation during December and January as detailed in Appendix 2 to the published report.

The meeting concluded at 18.45