



Cabinet Member Report for Finance

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 7 March 2016

Finance

The Council will consider its Budget 2016-17 and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2016-21 at its meeting on 29th February 2016. The Council is in a good financial position at present with a balanced budget for 2016-17 and healthy reserves. However, as indicated in the MTFP there are significant financial challenges facing the council ahead, including bridging the funding gap in the General Fund which rises from around £3m in 2017-18 to over £7m in 2020-21 and the impact of a 1% rent reduction per annum within the Housing Revenue Account.

Recognising these challenges work has already commenced in managing our financial position. This includes seeking to raise our revenue streams through economic investment in the town, working with our partners and greater involvement with the community & voluntary sector. Progress will be reported to Cabinet later in the calendar year.

Revenues and Benefits

The service are currently preparing for the annual billing process in order to ensure that all of our Council Tax and Business Rates bills are issued in time for the start of the new financial year. In addition to any agreed increases in Council Tax from the Borough, County Council and Police Authority and this year the application of the additional 2% adult social care precept to the Council Tax Bill.

Aligned to the annual billing process the service are preparing to administer business rates collection from April 2016, as it transfers to the administration of LGSS. A project is well underway to manage the challenges of transferring the system to Northampton Borough Councils ownership, alongside recruiting and training staff to manage the service going forward. With the increased emphasis on the collection of business rates in the future, with 100% retention of the rates on the horizon, this is a very important stage for the Council and LGSS and as a result will be managed very carefully.

Performance remains good across the services key indicators and a service improvement plan has also been agreed, that focuses on increasing the current 82.94% to meeting the annual average target of 89.67% for responding to our customer, over the telephone. We do of course maintain a wide range of contact options for service users and demand for electronic communication continues to increase month on month.

Councillor Mike Hallam
Cabinet Member for Finance