

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 14 December 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Nunn (Chair); Councillor Larratt (Deputy Chair); Councillors Eldred, Hadland, Hibbert and King

APOLOGIES: Councillor Hallam

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Hallam.

2. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE

There were no items to be heard in private.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hadland declared a personal non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust.

5. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were none.

6. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2017 - 2018

Councillor Beardsworth addressed Cabinet and commented that she understood the need to increase Council Tax but expressed her disappointment that some of the revenue would go towards paying off the loan to the Football Club and noted that she did not want the service levels lost.

Councillor Stone commented that she had some concerns of the impact on the base budget and noted that there would be potential increases to parish precepts and people may struggle. She questioned what advice and support was to be offered to residents who were in financial difficulties and struggling to pay Council Tax and further expressed concern that there appeared to be a growing gap between spending and revenue.

Councillor Eldred, as the Cabinet Member for Finance, submitted a report and elaborated thereon. He highlighted the summary of movement in the tax base and noted that the tax base would increase due to the growth of the Town partly given to the amount of regeneration that was occurring in the Town and that the amount of investment was also positive. It was noted that the non-collection rate of council tax had increased by 0.1%.

The Deputy Leader commented that it was a very positive statement report and thanked the officers and Cabinet Member for their hard work.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That Council be recommended to approve the tax base for 2017/18 at 65,709.29 Band D equivalent properties and associated parish tax bases within this report.

	2016/17	2017/18	Change
Billing	2,626.96	2,678.57	51.61
Collingtree	513.97	513.75	-0.22
Duston	5,447.94	5,471.83	23.89
Great Houghton	287.50	288.21	0.71
Hardingstone	782.38	795.44	13.06
Upton	2,617.14	2,993.14	376.00
Wootton, Wootton Fields & Simpson Manor	2,927.45	2,940.72	13.27
East Hunsbury	3,412.11	3,408.98	-3.13
West Hunsbury	1,624.70	1,645.76	21.06
Hunsbury Meadow	505.36	501.41	-3.95
Northampton (Unparished)	43,612.52	44,471.48	858.96
Total tax base	64,357.94	65,709.29	1,351.35

- 2.2 That authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance to make any technical adjustments necessary arising out of the Local Government draft settlement which impacts on the tax base, and to confirm, and inform the relevant authorities, the estimated surplus/deficit on the Collection Fund and how much would be attributable to each council, including NBC, after the statutory date of the 15th January 2017.
- 2.3 That the detailed breakdown of how the tax base and the associated parish tax bases were calculated, shown as a band D equivalent in appendix 1 of the report be approved.

7. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

Councillor Beardsworth commented that she was disappointed with the recommendations. She reported that when the council tax reduction scheme had first been applied, it was at a rate of 8% and increasing it to 35% would impact on the most vulnerable. She further commented that she considered it a step too far and that some people were already having to decide between eating and heating and that there should be more effort made to target non-collection.

Councillor Smith reported that she had concerns about the responses that had been received as part of the consultation. She voiced her concerns that the language that was used in the consultation document was quite complex and that had been noted by a respondent and asked that consideration be given to acknowledge that. She reported that the increase in CTRS would affect the most vulnerable and that people were having to make dire choices between spending money on heating or on food and this could potentially exacerbate their financial difficulties further.

The Deputy Leader concurred with some of the comments made with regards to the language that had been used in the consultation.

Councillor King commented that there had been numerous drop in sessions during the consultation process and that there had been information provided at forums.

Councillor Eldred, as the relevant Cabinet Member, commented that he would take on board the feedback given with regards to the language used in the consultation document. He noted that there had been many opportunities for people to feed into the consultation and explained that there had only been 32 respondents who were against it. He commented that as a result of more people being in work, more people were achieving an income that meant that CTRS was not a necessity. Councillor Eldred reported that the favoured option had been an increase of 8% but that it considered that a 6% increase was achievable and noted that Kettering Borough Council had raised theirs to 45% and that measures would be put in place to assist those most vulnerable.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That the proposed amendment to the scheme from a 29% reduction in Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) in 2016/17 to a 35% reduction in 2017/18 be approved.
- 2.2 That the CTRS amendment be recommended for approval at Council on the 23rd January 2017.

8. DRAFT GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2017/18 - 2021/22 AND DRAFT BUDGET 2017/18

Councillor Stone stated that she had concerns that the Council would be going to be running into severe financial difficulties over the next 4 years and questioned why some expenditures appeared to have been rolled over. She further commented that she considered there seemed to be a lack of ideas about how further income could be generated.

Councillor Eldred, as the relevant Cabinet Member commented that for the past 5 years there had been a freezer on council tax but that it was necessary now for an increase. He noted that there would be significant savings and efficiencies in a number of areas, including the contribution to Waste Partnership. Cabinet Members spoke of the various investments including parks/allotments and cemeteries and the commitment to re-investing in the museum which had been made possible by the sale of Sekhemka. Councillor Hibbert also thanked the Cabinet Member for the increase in funding of the Disabled Facilities Grant which would help those who struggled.

The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member and stated that it was a very good budget and that it gave the administration the opportunity to invest in some very good projects.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That the draft General Fund Revenue budget 2017/18, as summarised in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for public consultation.
- 2.2 That the proposed growth and savings options set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved for public consultation.
- 2.3 That the proposed Council Tax increase for 2017/18 of £5 a year per Band D property be approved for public consultation.
- 2.4 That the draft General Fund Capital Programme and Financing 2017/18 to 2021/22, as detailed in Appendix 3, be approved for public consultation.

2.5 That the draft Treasury Management Strategy be approved for consultation.

9. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET, RENT SETTING 2017/18 AND BUDGET PROJECTIONS 2018/19 TO 2021/22

Councillor Eldred, as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and elaborated thereon. He commented that it was good news for residents and noted that there was a continued commitment to exploring new ways to increase the housing stock through investments in the HRA.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget including charges and rents as detailed in Appendices 1 and 5 of the report be approved for public consultation.
- 2.2 That the draft HRA Capital Programme and financing, including bringing the housing stock up to the Northampton Standard, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report be approved for public consultation.
- 2.3 That the draft Total Fees proposed for NPH to deliver the services in scope be noted.

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified