

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 FEBRUARY 2013

Recommendation to Council from the Executive meeting held on 5 February 2013

E/12/123 **Budget 2013/14 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2013 to 2017**

Prior to consideration of the report, and in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Public Participation, the Executive received a statement from Mr Konstantinidis relating to the Budget and the Capital Programme 2013/14. Mr Konstantinidis referred to the cost of borrowing to fund the Capital Programme and the use of competitive tendering for the Council's contracts.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources explained that the Council had saved in excess of £50m over the last four years and that the Government grant had reduced by a third over this period. The Bedfordshire Energy and Recycling Contract referred to by Mr Konstantinidis was designed to save money. A significant contribution to the increase in the Council's borrowing was the new self-financing arrangements for local authority housing.

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that proposed the Council's spending plans for the medium term and Council Tax rate for 2013/14 with indicative figures for future years. A budget for 2013/14 had been prepared reflecting changes in funding, including a substantial overhaul of the Council Tax Benefit and National Non-Domestic Rate regimes. Cost pressures and efficiencies, including the impact of those commenced in 2012/13 had been revisited and incorporated into the proposals. There would be no increase in Council Tax for Central Bedfordshire Council purposes and the commitment to harmonise rates across the area with effect from 1 April 2013 would be achieved.

In response to questions, the Deputy Leader and the Chief Financial Officer confirmed that General Fund reserves were at a prudent minimum level.

Reason for decision: To agree a balanced budget for 2013/14 and identify resource requirements for the Medium Term.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- (a) that the response to consultation with Overview and Scrutiny as set out in paragraph 38 and the response to consultation with the public stakeholders as set out in Appendix A to the Executive report, be noted;***
- (b) that the Revenue Budget for 2013/14 and the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2013/14 to 2016/17 be approved;***

- (c) that the adjustments to the draft Budget as described in paragraph 24 of the Executive report be noted;**
- (d) that the Council Tax Base as set out in Appendix G to the Executive report be noted;**
- (e) that the allocation of £0.8m to Parish Councils as set out in paragraph 24 in the Executive report be noted;**
- (f) that a Band D Council Tax of £1,308.33 for residents of Central Bedfordshire be approved;**
- (g) that the fees and charges set out in Appendix J to the Executive report be approved; and**
- (h) that certain efficiency proposals identified in Appendix I to the Executive report will be subject to formal consultation and Equality Impact Assessment in the coming months and instructs the Corporate Management Team to propose alternative compensatory savings if it appears, following a review of the outcome of the consultation and Equality Impact Assessment, that any specific proposal cannot be delivered.**