

**COUNCIL
7 FEBRUARY 2019**

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

**TITLE OF REPORT: ITEM REFERRED FROM CABINET: 29 JANUARY 2019 -
REVENUE BUDGET 2019/20**

Extract from the draft Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 29 January 2019

REVENUE BUDGET 2019/20

The Executive Member for Finance and IT and Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report of the Service Director - Resources which sought approval to recommend to Council the draft budget 2019/20 and the main factors which contribute to the determination of the North Hertfordshire district Council (NHDC) Council Tax level together with the appropriate level of Council Tax.

As part of a comprehensive debate by all Members of the Cabinet a number of amendments were proposed to the budget. Cllr Levett proposed that a sum of £15k be added to the 2019/2020 budget regarding electric vehicle charging points. The £15k would be used to engage suitable consultants in order to progress this element within the proposed action plan of the Parking Strategy.

Cllr Levett also proposed that in reference to Appendix B of the submitted report, 'Revenue Efficiencies and Investment Proposals' – that funding for the 'Area Wide Parking Reviews' (reference E2) not be removed from the budget for 2020/2021 onwards and it be updated to reflect that it will be used to undertake reviews of the transport implications of the town centre strategies. The saving in 2019/20 to be retained.

Cllr Levett further proposed that a one off sum of £50k be allocated in the 2019/2020 budget to enable a North Hertfordshire Transport Users Forum. The justification being that there was a need to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking which was reflected in the Council's emerging Local Plan, Transport Strategy (which supported the Local Plan) and Hertfordshire County Council's Transport Strategy LTP4. Currently there were a number of different User Groups within North Hertfordshire for bus users, rail users and cycling groups with little or no co-ordination between them. The establishment of a North Hertfordshire Transport Users Forum would unite the various groups and local authorities in a cohesive way.

Cllr Cunningham proposed that following a request from the North Hertfordshire Ethnic Minority Forum, having lost its core funding, a one off grant of £25k in 2019/20 be allocated to the Forum to allow for its restructure, subject to formal confirmation of its Terms of Reference.

Subsequently it was agreed that the Service Director – Resources reflect the inclusions and consequential amendments into the budget to be presented to Council.

Whereupon the Cabinet,

RESOLVED:

- i. That the expected Central Government funding levels be noted.
- ii. That the estimated position on the Collection Fund and how this will be funded be noted.
- iii. That the Council Tax increase for 2019/20 be in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- iv. That the position relating to the General Fund balance be noted and, that due to the risks identified, a minimum balance of £1.96 million is recommended.
- v. That the increase in the 2018/19 working budget of £116k be approved, the expected impact in 2019/20 of a £164k reduction in budget be noted.
- vi. That the requests for the carry-forward of budget of £41k from 2018/19 to 2019/20 be agreed.
- vii. That the inclusion of the efficiencies and investment be approved.
- viii. That the savings target in future years be noted.
- ix. That the Service Director – Resources reflect the following inclusions and consequential amendments into the budget to be presented to Council:
 - a. Electric Vehicle Charging Points - A sum of £15k be added to the 2019/2020 budget to engage suitable consultants in order to progress this element within the proposed action plan of the Parking Strategy.
 - b. North Hertfordshire Transport Users Forum – That a one off sum of £50k be allocated in the 2019/2020 budget to enable this Forum.
 - c. North Hertfordshire Ethnic Minority Forum – That a one off grant of £25k in 2019/20 be allocated to allow for its restructure (subject to formal confirmation of its Terms of Reference).
 - d. Regarding Appendix B of the submitted report, 'Revenue Efficiencies and Investment Proposals' – that funding for the 'Area Wide Parking Reviews' (reference E2) not be removed from the budget for 2020/2021 onwards and it be renamed to reflect that it will be used to undertake reviews of the transport implications of the town centre strategies. The saving in 2019/20 to be retained.

RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL: That the estimated 2019/20 net expenditure of £15.2 million, as amended, and as detailed in the amended Appendix A (see addendum report) be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To ensure that all relevant factors are taken into consideration when arriving at the proposed Council Tax precept for 2019/20.

To ensure that the Cabinet recommends a balanced budget to Council on 7 February 2019.