



Cabinet Member Report for Finance

Northampton Borough Council

10th March 2014

On 24th February the Budget was approved by Full Council, with the Council Tax report being adjourned until Full Council on 10th March due to an administrative error made by one of the parish councils.

The proposals balance the competing need to invest in our Town Centre, freeze Council Tax and improve our Council housing stock at a time when our funding from Government is reducing. We have also been able to increase investment that will support regeneration, local businesses and our local economy by making the Borough Council more efficient.

Whilst the Council has a balanced budget for 2014/15, we face further Government funding reductions over the medium term. This presents additional challenges and a widening funding gap which is forecast to last until at least 2018. We believe that the measures in this year's budget will help address this, and further work is underway to identify ways to increase our income and reduce our costs.

Work continues to monitor the transition to a separate LGSS Revenues and Benefits customer contact centre. This includes measuring the performance against prior years, where the net performance was across the generic centre. The Borough Council and LGSS are working closely, particularly as we enter the annual billing process, to ensure there is no disruption to customers during this busy period.

Wider plans for the new LGSS Revenues and Benefits service have been continuing in preparation for new partners joining the LGSS service. These plans will enable savings to be made whilst maintaining performance levels. Plans for the future wider shared service also aims to ensure that partners are well prepared for the welfare transitions underway. Performance across the service continues to be maintained despite increasing workloads and complexity. The work position is being monitored carefully.

Councillor Alan Bottwood
Cabinet Member for Finance