

Cabinet

10th February 2010

Draft Council Tax Leaflet 2010/2011

Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Financial Resources

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report submits for consideration the draft Council Tax Leaflet for 2010/2011.

2.0 Description of Decision

2.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the contents of the draft Council Tax Leaflet, and, subject to the inclusion of financial and other information, once the Revenue Budget has been set, ask Council to approve it.

3.0 Background

3.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires all Local Authorities to produce a Summary of Financial Information to accompany the annual Council Tax bill.

3.2 Since approval at a Cabinet meeting in December 2003, the format of the Council Tax Leaflet to accompany the Council Tax Bill has been adapted to provide information on the progress the council is making in relation to its priorities and the council's finances. It was agreed that the chosen format represented a more effective and cost efficient method of communicating with local people and its circulation with the Council Tax Bill was seen as an example of best practice.

3.3 In view of this, it is proposed that the council's Council Tax Leaflet for 2010/2011 will follow the same format as that successfully followed last year, updated to focus on actions for 2010/2011 and to reflect the latest approach in respect of the presentation of the council's image.

3.4 A full performance plan, providing actual performance information will be provided and made available by the statutory deadline of 30th June 2010.

3.5 A more detailed account of the council's performance in 2009/2010 and Budget information will be outlined in the Corporate Improvement Plan 2010/2011 and Revenue Budget 2010/2011, which are to be the subject of separate reports to Cabinet.

4.0 Proposal

4.1 The draft Council Tax Leaflet for 2010/2011 has been structured to reflect the Strategic Priorities of the Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025, a format that has been identified as best practice by the Audit Commission and is comparable to the structure of previous years. The document focuses on demonstrable service improvements and developments that are planned to take place in 2010/2011 (and, as was the case last year, an Annual Report will be produced in the Summer which

will communicate the council's achievements during 2009/2010 – this will be the subject of a further report to Cabinet in due course). The document also takes account of Use of Resources Guidance and Communities and Local Government requirements regarding the inclusion of efficiencies information within Council Tax bills.

- 4.2 The document is in essence a summary of performance and financial information designed to be multi-purpose in that it can be posted to households, made available at public reception points and also be available on the council's website.
- 4.3 It is not possible to include the financial information and all of the related other performance information at this time. This will be incorporated into the document following Council approval at its Budget meeting in March 2010. Owing to the constraints of the production schedule a full copy of the document will not therefore be available for Cabinet prior to final printing taking place. The latest outline version of the document will be tabled at the meeting. Final sign off will be undertaken by the Leader of the Council in conjunction with the Chief Executive and the Director of Financial.

5.0 Reasons for Decision

- 5.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires Local Authorities to produce a Summary of Financial Information to accompany the annual Council Tax bill.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 As the Local Government Act Finance Act 1992 requires local authorities to produce a Summary of Financial Information to accompany the annual Council Tax bill, no alternative options have been considered.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The costs for printing and distributing the Summary of Financial Information 2010/2011 are provided for within the council's base budget.

Background Papers

Corporate Improvement Planning Framework 2010/2011
Service Improvement Planning Templates 2010/2011