CABINET MEETING – 11th February 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Draft Council Tax Leaflet 2009/2010

Author(s):

Chief Executive and City Treasurer

Purpose of Report:

The report submits for consideration the draft Council Tax Leaflet for 2009/2010.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is requested to consider 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.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

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

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

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.

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? ~~Yes~~/No **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** ~~Yes~~/No	**Relevant Review Committee:** Policy and Co-ordination

Cabinet **11th February 2009**

Draft Council Tax Leaflet 2009/2010

Report of the Chief Executive and City Treasurer

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report submits for consideration the draft Council Tax Leaflet for 2009/2010.

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 2009/2010 will follow the same format as that successfully followed last year, updated to focus on actions for 2009/2010.

3.4 A full performance plan, providing actual performance information will be provided and made available by the statutory deadline of 30th June 2009.

3.5 A more detailed account of the council's performance in 2008/2009 and Budget information is outlined in the Corporate Improvement Plan and Revenue Budget 2009/2010, which are the subject of a separate report to Cabinet.

4.0 Proposal

4.1 The draft Council Tax Leaflet for 2009/2010 has been structured to reflect the five 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 2009/2010 (and, as was the case last year, an Annual Report will be produced in the Summer which will communicate the council's achievements during 2008 – 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 2009. 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 format of the document will be based on that used for the 2008/2009 document, a copy of which is attached to this report. Final sign off will be undertaken by the Leader of the Council in conjunction with the Chief Executive and City Treasurer.

5.0 Reasons for Decision

5.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires Local Authorities to produce a Summary of Financial Imformation 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 2009/2010 are provided for within the council's base budget.

Background Papers

Strategic Planning Guidance 2009/2010
Corporate Improvement Plan 2009/2010