

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL – 15th FEBRUARY 2010**CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Michael Lager****CABINET PORTFOLIO: Efficiency & Resources**

Portfolio covers:-

- Financial and Treasury Management Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Exchequer (Council Tax and Benefits)
- Business Efficiency Programme
- Business Systems inc. performance
- Procurement Strategy
- Information Technology
- Risk Management/Business Continuity
- HR and Organisational Development
- Health and Safety

REPORT COVERS ACTIVITY DURING PERIOD COMMENCING 2nd DECEMBER 2009 AND ENDING 2nd FEBRUARY 2010**Financial and Treasury:**

I continue to receive LGA Reports on the realisation of claims against the Icelandic banks, with little movement recently. The government have refused to allow our losses to be charged to capital reserves in spite of the problems this will cause in 2011-12. Interest rates remain unattractive although hardening slightly..

Council Tax and Benefits:

The council tax collection rate to end December 2009 is virtually identical with the position a year ago, while business rates show a small fall. New benefits claims and changes are being processed to target at 18 and 6 days respectively. The volume remains high and the temporary staff taken on will remain for a further period, the cost being covered by government grant.

Business Efficiency Programme:

The PIE programme board has identified a need to look at the way the Council's business is carried on in the light of the many initiatives elsewhere to transform ways of working by collaboration in a number of ways, and a report is anticipated for the March meeting. BDC is already working jointly with Colchester BC and Uttlesford DC in parking and refuse handling, and runs a procurement hub for several councils. We are probably near the limit of savings that can be made without a more radical shift in how we operate.

Budget:

The lengthy period of consultation has closed with spending proposals presented to Cabinet on 1st February 2010 for decision by Council together with the tax levy. Feedback has been that this year's consultation was among the best yet, with quality responses which led to changes in the original proposals. Although the budget for 2010-11 is balanced, we need to take a further £800,000 from running costs in 2011-12 to 2013-14 to live within our means.

Assets:

Work identifying improvements to Causeway House and ensuring a profitable future from owning Mayland House commences shortly.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING:**Cllr Michael Lager – 01376 513747; cllr.mlager@braintree.gov.uk**

