

## **COUNCIL, 30 JANUARY 2013**

The following report is submitted with the agreement of the Mayor as an urgent matter pursuant to Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**SUBJECT: COUNCIL TAX MEETING – possible adjustments to meeting timetable**

The Department for Communities and Local Government has indicated that the financial settlement for local government will have to be revised following the discovery of errors in the formula calculations for 2013/14 and beyond, consideration has been given to the impact of the late announcement on the timetable and procedure for dealing with the budget and Council Tax setting.

Currently, a meeting of Cabinet is due on 13 February and the Council Tax meeting of the Council is due on 27 February. It is understood, however, that the revised settlement calculations will not be available before 11 February and may well not be available until toward the end of that week. Clearly, it is probable that the new calculations and details will not be available for a Cabinet meeting held on the currently scheduled date of 13 February.

Depending on when exactly the new settlement figures for Havering become available – and, indeed, how they impact upon the proposed budget – it might be possible to prepare any necessary revisions to the draft budget and either continue with the currently scheduled Cabinet meeting or for a re-scheduled Cabinet meeting during the week beginning 18 February to still deal with the budget and Council Tax at Council on 27 February in the normal way. Alternatively, it may be necessary to hold an additional Cabinet meeting and either adjourn or postpone the Council meeting for a short time, which may mean that the Council Tax meeting is held in early March.

At this stage, it is impossible to forecast exactly what arrangements might become necessary.

The Council Procedure Rules for the Council Tax meeting set out a specific timetable for submission of amendments to the budget. That timetable is based on the assumption that the Cabinet meeting at which the budget and Council Tax are considered takes place two weeks before the Council meeting. If that proves not to be the case, clearly the normal timetable becomes impossible.

Accordingly, authority of the Council is now sought by the Mayor in consultation with Group Leaders (a) to postpone if necessary the 27 February Council meeting and (b) for the timetable for that meeting to be adjusted so far as necessary to accommodate

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timely setting of the budget and Council Tax, whilst enabling amendments to them to be proposed and considered. This may require the Mayor to agree to changes to the Council Procedure Rules for the Council tax setting meeting.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1 That, having regard to the expected late announcement of the revised financial settlement by the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government, the Mayor (in consultation with the Group Leaders) be authorised:**
  - (a) to agree if necessary a revised date for the Council Tax meeting of the Council; and**
  - (b) to agree such adjustments to the timetable for the submission of motions and amendments as may be necessary to secure the proper consideration of those motions and amendments.**
- 2 That so far as necessary to achieve the objective of recommendation 1, Council Procedure Rules be suspended.**

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