

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 17 February 2016

Councillor Mike Cheshire: Leader's Report

Corporate Strategy, Finance and the Combined Authority Corporate Strategy

Finance

The budget setting process completes with Council's approval of the annual budget and setting the Council Tax this evening. The budget proposal maintains support for front-line services despite a further £700,000 reduction in central government funding.

We still face considerable budget challenges over the next few years as we play our part in the Government's target to eliminate the deficit in the Country's current account. However the Council's Corporate Strategy, set this time last year, anticipated the general direction of the Comprehensive Spending Review announced in the autumn and we are in a strong place to continue to cope with these challenges.

The new finance system went live in October 2015 and is helping to drive forward the changes in working practices which will build on the cost control work that has been ongoing. It will improve our understanding of cost drivers so that we can price services appropriately and ensure best value for our residents.

Corporate Strategy 2015 - 2020

The Corporate Strategy remains the cornerstone of everything we do, and remains extant.

Devolution and the Combined Authority Bid

In addition to the NORSE and the 05 x Council's initiatives, we still have the Devolution /Combined Authority debate moving forward. This initiative involves a partnership of 19 organisations within Hampshire and the IOW. The Combined Authority has an economic output of around £47bn which is similar to that of Wales.

The Combined Authority is keen to move forward on the Devolution bid, and Members will be aware of the areas of concern between Government and Local Authorities. Regular updates have been sent out to members, seminars have been provided to disseminate information, 3 x Councillors have been working with me to help with the dissemination of that information, and the coffee room has been updated with reading material on this subject matter. I will continue to give updates on this issue as and when appropriate.