

ESTIMATES TIMETABLE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members are requested to consider and agree the timetable for the estimates and setting of the Council Tax for 2003/04. Members also need to programme a date for meetings with the Chamber of Trade and to deal with the wider consultation with representatives who pay National Non-Domestic Rates.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The preparation of estimates begins at the start of October with staff within Financial Services preparing the draft estimates. These are then considered by the Heads of Service and their staff and an agreed basis for the estimates established. Within the estimates, there are many specialist areas such as Housing Benefit payments, grants, subsidies and repairs and maintenance etc. These are prepared separately and brought together within the draft estimates. The draft estimates are considered by Corporate Management Board and Heads of Service to ensure that corporate issues are dealt with and that initial priorities are established.

3 MEMBERS

- 3.1 At the Finance and Procedures Overview Scrutiny Committee to be held on 26 November 2002, a summary of the draft estimates position will be submitted. At this stage, the detailed estimates will not be submitted but a summary of the key issues that have arisen during the preparation of estimates. These include:-
- The projected net expenditure for both revised estimates 2002/03 and 2003/04 together with movement to key reserves.
 - The three year Budget Strategy showing the anticipated Council Tax increase over the 3 years together with the use of reserves.
 - An overview of the Capital Programme
 - Key elements for the determination of fees and charges.
- 3.2 For the Finance & Procedures Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 12 December 2002, it is anticipated that the information on the actual level of Government support will be available. Therefore the broad financial strategy that was discussed on 26 November 2002 can be reviewed and any further action identified.

- 3.3 It is at this Meeting that it would be appropriate to meet with the business community, as sufficient information should be available to undertake the consultation. Also there is time for the business community to respond and for their response to be fed into the main meeting to discuss the budget. Members are reminded that although the statutory meeting is termed NNDR Consultation, the meeting is to discuss Council Tax. It is planned that Members of this Committee will be meeting the business community on the 22nd October. Final arrangements can therefore be made at that meeting.

4 COUNCIL 28 JANUARY 2003

- 4.1 At this Meeting of Council, the Council Tax for Rochford District and the detailed draft estimates will be considered and approved by Members. The Capital Programme and Schedule of Fees and Charges will also be approved.
- 4.2 Prior to the consideration of the estimates, Members will have considered the responses of the Business Community and the Housing Tenants representatives on rent issues and estimates in respect of the Housing Revenue account.
- 4.3 In addition political groups will have the option to request appropriate officers attend their meetings so that all issues relating to the proposed budget and Council Tax can be discussed. These meetings will be held prior to the 28th January.

5 COUNCIL – 25 FEBRUARY 2003

- 5.1 At this Meeting of Council, the total Council Tax for the District will be set. This brings together the tax for Rochford District Council, the requirements of Essex County Council, Essex Police, Rayleigh Town Council and the various Parishes within the District.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- (1) To agree the budget timetable as outlined above. (HFS)

D Deeks

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Background Papers:

None

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