Agenda Item No: **10**

Cabinet recommendations for consideration by Council at the Council Meeting on Monday, 20 February 2012

Cabinet – 8 February 2012

125 Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2012/2013 to 2014/2015

The Cabinet considered Report No 28/12 relating to the proposed Treasury and Investment Strategies for 2012/2013 to 2014/2015, determination of the Council's 2012/2013 authorised borrowing limit, its 2012/2013 Investment Strategy and the method of calculating its Minimum Revenue Provision.

A copy of the draft Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2012/2013 to 2014/2015 was set out at Appendix 1 to the Report. It provided the background to the Council's treasury management activity both in terms of the wider economy and its current and projected financial position. It further provided the approach which would be taken to borrowing and the investment of cash balances, explained the risks which were inherent in treasury management and how they would be mitigated.

The draft Strategy Statement also specified the Prudential Indicators which were to be set as well as a Minimum Revenue Provision Statement which defined the approach that the Council would take to make prudent provision for debt redemption. The draft document also proposed a policy for the separate management of General Fund and Housing Revenue Account borrowing.

The content of the draft Strategy Statement followed the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's revised Code of Practice and had been prepared with the support of the Council's treasury advisers, Arlingclose.

The Audit Committee had considered a draft of the Statement at its meeting on 23 January 2012, which was in line with the Code of Practice's recommendation that the annual Treasury Strategy should be subject to scrutiny. However, that Committee's review had not encompassed the

Prudential Indicators, many of which were subject to calculation pending the finalisation of the draft Capital Programme and further consideration of the borrowing options that were available to finance the housing reform payment which was scheduled to take place on 28 March 2012.

The Director of Finance drew Cabinet's attention to paragraph 3.1.1 of the Report and stated that, since its preparation, the Department for Communities and Local Government had confirmed that the national self-financing reform for housing required the Council to pay £56.673m to the Government on 28 March 2012. Such sum needed to be funded by borrowing however, the amount of new debt that was taken on could be reduced by utilising cash balances that were currently invested.

The Audit Committee had made specific recommendations in respect of the credit rating criteria which should underpin the Council's Investment Strategy in 2012/2013, further details of which were set out in paragraph 3.1.2 of the Report. That Committee's recommendations had been incorporated in the Strategy Statement which was set out at Appendix 1 to the Report.

Paragraph 3 of the Report drew Cabinet's attention to several areas of Treasury Management activity in which the approach to be followed during the period covered by the draft Strategy Statement differed from the current position.

Recommended:

125.1 That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2012/2013 to 2014/2015, as set out at Appendix 1 to Report No 28/12, be adopted; DF (to note)

125.2 That the Council's Prudential Indicators for the year be those set out at Appendix C to the Strategy document; DF (to note)

125.3 That the Council's level of affordable borrowing, determined in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, be subject to the following limits: DF (to note)

	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
Authorised limit for external debt	£72.5m	£72.5m	£72.5m;

125.4 That the Council's approach to allocating debt and associated costs between the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund, be as set out in Paragraph 9 and at Appendix B of the Strategy Statement; and DF (to note)

125.5 That the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision be calculated as set out in Paragraph 15 of the Strategy Statement. DF (to note)

It was further

Resolved:

125.6 That the lending list, as set out on page 24 of the Strategy Statement, be approved. DF

Reasons for the Decisions:

The Council has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice on Treasury Management. In accordance with that Code, Cabinet approves an Annual Treasury Strategy Statement before the start of each financial year. This includes an Investment Strategy for the year ahead (which Government guidance notes should be adopted by full Council) as well as 'Prudential Indicators' which are required to be set in order to comply with the 'Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities' (The Prudential Code). The majority of these indicators are an essential element of an integrated treasury management strategy.

In compliance with the Code of Practice, the Council has agreed a number of Treasury Management Practices, one of which required an updated counterparty list to be submitted to Cabinet for approval each year at the same time as the Strategy Statement is considered.

The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 placed a duty on local authorities to make a prudent provision for debt redemption. Guidance had been issued by the Secretary of State on determining 'Minimum Revenue Provision'.

† *The Recommendations, and not the Resolution, in the above Minute are for consideration by Council.*

Councillors are requested to bring with them to the meeting Report No 28/12 which was circulated with the agenda papers for the meeting of the Cabinet on 8 February 2012. If you require a further copy of the document please contact Trevor Hayward, Committee Officer, on e-mail trevor.hayward@lewes.gov.uk or telephone 01273 484122

126 Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2012/2013

The Cabinet considered Report No 29/12 which set out the latest financial position in respect of the Housing Revenue Account and presented the estimates for 2012/13.

2012/13 was the first year of operation of the national Housing Revenue Account self-financing system. The former Housing Subsidy system would no longer be operated which would result in all generated income being kept locally and available to fund the maintenance and management of the housing stock, service debt and acquisition and provision of additional social housing.

The estimates set out in the Report had been prepared on the basis of the national Housing Revenue Account Accounting Code of Practice and incorporated Rent Restructuring, Supporting People and Service Charges.

The Housing Revenue Account estimates 2012/13 were in line with that Account's Business Plan and current Council policy on rent restructuring. Those estimates included a contribution to finance the capital programme of £2,030,000 and showed a balance in hand for the year of £429,920. The increase in average dwelling rents amounted to 7.31%.

No allowance had been included for pay awards. Annual increments had been provided for where appropriate, together with a 0.40% increase in the employer's pension contributions.

Inflation had been provided to cover known price changes, such as utility and contractual commitments. Furthermore, the items which were detailed in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.5 of the Report had also been provided in the budget.

The planned and responsive maintenance estimates for 2012/13 allowed for increases of £36,540 (3%) and £46,000 (3%) respectively.

In return for reduced insurance premiums, the Council had accepted responsibility for some public liability risks and higher excesses. A provision of £53,000 had been included in the estimates for 2011/12 in order to cover known claims. A further £25,000 for 2011/12, and £50,000 for 2012/13, was included in the estimates for potential claims. Additionally, a further provision was included in the estimates of £10,000 for 2011/12 and £10,000 for 2012/13 for minor claims, which were not handled by the Council's insurer.

A sum of £260,000 for 2012/13 was included in the revenue estimates for capital projects that were not traditionally funded from borrowing or the Major Repairs Reserve.

The budget layout complied with national accounting requirements and included explanatory notes within the body of the estimates. An explanation of items included within the expenditure headings was set out in paragraph 4.1 of the Report.

The introduction of the self-financing model for the Housing Revenue Account would result in the existing Housing Subsidy System being ceased on 31 March 2012, further details of which had been previously reported to Cabinet. The draft financial settlement with the Government was the subject of consultation and the final details in respect thereof were scheduled to be published by the Government in late January 2012.

The self-financing model was based on each authority "buying" itself out of negative housing subsidy. On 28 March 2012, the Council was scheduled to pay the Government £57,064,000 to fund the transition by a combination of taking on external loans and internal borrowing.

Further information relating to the budgets was set out in the Report and in the Appendices thereto.

An integral part of the budget process was constructive dialogue with The Tenants of Lewes District Group (TOLD). During the current year, the Council had been engaged in ongoing discussions with TOLD in respect of the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

The representative of TOLD who was attending the meeting reported the views of that organisation in respect of issues that were set out in the Report. In particular, he requested that the Council undertake improved consultation with TOLD, and provide it with a greater knowledge, in respect of matters relating to the Capital Programme insofar as it related to the Council's housing stock. At the invitation of the Chair, the Corporate Head of Housing Services confirmed that such request would be implemented for 2013/2014. CHHS

The Cabinet had, under a separate Agenda Item, received the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 January 2012 which, in Minute 39 entitled "Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2012/2013", set out that Committees views in respect of those Estimates, rent setting and service charges.

Resolved:

126.1 That the comments of the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 19 January 2012 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account Estimates, rent setting and service charges, be noted.

It was further

Recommended:

126.2 That the Housing Revenue Account Estimates for 2012/13, as set out in Appendices 1 to 6 of Report No 29/12, be approved; DF (to note)

126.3 That an average dwelling rent increase of 7.31% be approved and be effective from 2 April 2012 which is in line with the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and current Council policy on rent restructuring, as detailed in paragraph 10 of the Report; DF (to note)

126.4 That the progression to year two of the transition to full market rents for garages be approved and be effective from 2 April 2012, as detailed in paragraph 12 of the Report, which is in line with the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and current Council policy on garage rentals; DF (to note)

126.5 That an increase of 5.6% in Private Sector Leased Property rents be approved and be effective from 2 April 2012, as detailed in DF (to paragraph 13 of the Report; and | note)

126.6 That the implementation of revised service charges, as detailed in paragraphs 14 to 19 of the Report, be approved and be effective from 2 April 2012. | DF (to note)

Reason for the Decisions:

To enable the Council to fulfill its legal obligations to produce a balanced Housing Revenue Account for 2012/13.

† *The Recommendations, and not the Resolution, in the above Minute are for consideration by Council.*

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127 The Capital Programme

The Cabinet considered Report No 30/12 relating to the revised 2011/2012 Capital Programme, the 2012/2013 Capital Programme and the associated Prudential Indicators.

As part of the annual budget cycle, Cabinet considered what level of capital support to allocate to its Policy Programme. It also considered the medium term position in relation to likely capital needs and available resources.

The capital planning process took account of the Council's Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan as those key documents had a direct influence on the allocation of resources. The Council's Constitution required Cabinet to make a recommendation to Council on the level of the Capital Programme budget.

Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003 had introduced a new system for local authority capital expenditure and financing namely, the Prudential Capital Finance System, further details of which were set out in paragraph 3 of the Report. The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003, which defined that System, required local authorities to follow the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (The Prudential Code) when taking their decisions. That Code required authorities to set a number of 'Prudential Indicators' before the beginning of each financial year, further details of which were set out in paragraph 7 of the Report.

The Revised 2011/2012 Capital Programme was set out at Appendix 1 to the Report. Lines 44 and 47 of that Appendix showed a total allocation of £322,500 to fund environmental and energy efficiency improvements at the facilities which were owned by the Council and operated by Wave Leisure Trust. Of that allocation, £186,500 had been used to fund the installation of photovoltaic panels and voltage optimisation equipment. It was proposed to commit £100,000 of the remaining balance to the installation of low energy lighting across all four Wave Leisure sites for which feasibility studies had already been undertaken.

A new item had been added at line 71 in respect of coastal defence works. An unexpected funding opportunity had arisen to gain Environment Agency "grant in aid" in order to study options for the future of groynes 18 and 19 which were the last two easternmost groynes in the cliff foot coast defences at Peacehaven and were pivotal to the defences which protected many cliff top properties in that town. However, the groynes had been degraded badly by wave attack over the years and were currently in a poor state of repair, further details of which were set out at Appendix 2 to the Report.

The Council had recently completed critical repairs to groynes 1 to 17 and the seawall in Coastal Unit 13B, Peacehaven, which had been supervised by its consultant coastal engineers, Mouchel Consulting Ltd, whilst Dean and Dyball Ltd had undertaken the works. The repairs had been fully funded by grant in aid from the Environment Agency's national programme.

That Agency was currently expecting an under spend on the 2011/12 financial year funding that had been allocated to coast defence projects generally across the south of England. It aimed to utilise such under spend in a manner which provided an effective use of public money.

In response to an invitation from the Agency, the Council had submitted a proposal for up to £25,000 "grant in aid" to fund an options study to ascertain the best approach to the longer term management of groynes 18 and 19 and the end wall of the promenade. The Agency's Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager had agreed the Council's proposal, final approval of which was awaited from the Agency's National Director of Finance.

As the money was in respect of under spend that had occurred in the financial year 2011/12, it was imperative for the works to be completed by 31 March 2012. Therefore, the Council's Officers had liaised with the appropriate Cabinet Member namely, Councillor Smith, and agreed that, in order to undertake the option study within the limited time available, it was preferable to employ Mouchel Consulting Limited which could start work before the end of February 2012. The Council's Contract Procedure Rules required that details of such action be reported to the next available meeting of Cabinet. Further details relating to the works were set out in paragraph 4.2 and at Appendix 2 to the Report.

Details relating to a projection of the resources which would be available to fund capital expenditure at 1 April 2012 were set out in paragraph 5 of the Report.

The Prudential Code required local authorities to plan their capital expenditure programme for at least three years ahead which corresponded with the time scale covered by the Council's Capital Strategy. The recommended Capital Programme for 2012/2013 to 2014/2015 was set out at Appendix 3 to the Report. However, the information for 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 was provisional, the reasons for which were set out in paragraph 6.1 of the Report.

The Cabinet had, under a separate Agenda item, received the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 January 2012 which, in Minute 40 entitled "2012/2013 Budget", set out that Committees views in respect of the Capital Programme.

Resolved:

127.1	That the addition of up to £100,000 to the Wave Leisure Service Fee for the installation of energy efficiency lighting, as set out in paragraph 4.1 of Report No 30/12, be approved; and	DF
127.2	That it be noted that Mouchel Consulting Limited have been engaged to undertake an Option Study for the coast defences at Groynes 18 and 19, Friars Bay, Peacehaven, together with the circumstances in which this appointment has been made, as set out in paragraph 4.2 and Appendix 2 to the Report.	

It was further

Recommended:

127.3	That the revised 2011/2012 Capital Programme in the sum of £8,996,180, as set out at Appendix 1 to the Report, be approved;	DF (to note)
127.4	That the 2012/2013 Capital Programme in the sum of £6,993,500, as set out at Appendix 3 to the Report, be approved;	DF (to note)
127.5	That the outline Capital Programme 2013/2014 to 2014/2015 in the sum of £14,347,000, as set out at Appendix 3 to the Report, be approved; and	DF (to note)
127.6	That the Prudential Indicators in respect of the Capital Programme, as detailed in paragraph 7 of the Report, be approved and adopted for 2012/2013.	DF (to note)

Reasons for the Decisions:

As part of the annual budget cycle, Cabinet considers what level of capital support to allocate to its Policy Programme. It also considers the medium term position in relation to likely capital needs and available resources. The capital planning process takes account of the Council's Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan as these key documents have a direct influence on the allocation of resources. The Council's Constitution requires Cabinet to make a recommendation to Council on the level of the Capital Programme budget.

Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003 introduced a new system for local authority capital expenditure and financing namely, the Prudential Capital Finance System. The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003, which define this system, requires local authorities to follow the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (The Prudential Code) when taking their decisions. The Prudential Code requires authorities to set a number of Prudential Indicators before the beginning of each financial year.

† *The Recommendations, and not the Resolutions, in the above Minute are for consideration by Council.*

Councillors are requested to bring with them to the meeting Report No 30/12 which was circulated with the agenda papers for the meeting of the Cabinet on 8 February 2012. If you require a further copy of the document please contact Trevor Hayward, Committee Officer, on e-mail trevor.hayward@lewes.gov.uk or telephone 01273 484122

128 General Fund Revenue Budget 2012/2013

The Cabinet considered Report No 31/12 relating to the 2012/2013 General Fund Revenue Budget on the basis of the Council Tax freeze that it had previously announced.

On 20 October 2010, the Coalition Government had announced its challenging national deficit reduction plan which set out national spending totals for the four years to 2014/15. Those proposals had been revised in the Autumn 2011 Budget Statement in light of inflation being much higher, economic growth more sluggish and, as a result, Government borrowing being higher.

That Budget Statement set out that the Government would:

- set plans for a further two year's restraint in public spending in 2015/16 and 2016/17 in line with the trend reductions over the Spending Review 2010 period; and
- Set public sector pay awards from April 2013 at an average of one per cent for each of the two years after the current pay freeze came to an end in March 2013.

Details of where further public spending adjustments in 2014/15 and 2015/16 would arise, or which parts of the public sector would be affected, had not yet been announced. However, the general direction was that the deficit reduction programme would be extended through to the end of 2016/17.

There was a strong possibility that any burden affecting local authorities might be brought forward to 2013/14, the year in which two major structural changes were to occur to local government finances namely, The Business Rates Retention Scheme and Localising Support for Council Tax combined with a 10% reduction in the current government funding stream for such service, further details of which were set out in paragraph 1.6 of the Report.

Local authority capital funding had been cut by the equivalent of 45% over the spending review period, compared with 29% over the whole of the public sector.

Cabinet had set Financial Principles and Objectives in its Medium Term Financial Strategy which were used as part of the framework to guide estimate preparation and compilation of the Medium Term Budget Outlook. Details of those Principles and Objectives were set out at Appendix A to the Report.

The Report recommended that it was essential that Cabinet carefully controlled the recurring base budget. The Working Balance and reserves could be used as a short term measure in order to manage the pressures that were arising from lower income, rises in demand for statutory services and a Council Tax freeze in 2012/13. However, there was less opportunity than ever before to replenish the Working Balance and reserves which, therefore, should be used with great care.

Current and medium term pressures required the recurring base budget to be significantly reduced. Non recurring needs could be met where specific earmarked reserves had been established.

Paragraph 8 of the Report set out details of the Usable Reserves Estimate. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 contained the statutory duty on the Chief Finance Officer to report to the authority on the robustness of the estimates it made when calculating its budget requirement and on the adequacy of its proposed financial reserves.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy had issued updated guidance in November 2008 in respect of reserves and balances which had been taken into account in the preparation of the Report.

The Council's reserves and balances needed to cover all significant identified risks and operational service needs. As part of the annual budget and closing of accounts processes, the Council reviewed and approved the position on its reserves which was a mandatory requirement. A statement relating to the Council's General Fund Revenue Reserves which were projected through to 31 March 2013, was set out at Appendix F to the Report.

The Collection Fund Balance was a key component of the Council Tax setting process. A principle of the Medium Term Financial Strategy was to achieve a zero balance, or as close as was possible, each year. A review of the likely Collection Fund position at 31 March 2012, which included a review of the provision for doubtful debts, meant that a surplus of £375,000 could be utilised during the 2012/2013 budget setting process.

The Medium Term Budget Outlook 2012/13 to 2016/17 was set out at Appendix E to the Report. It built upon the estimate for 2012/2013 and incorporated assumptions for inflation and government support at lines 1 and 2. In line with the objectives contained in the Medium Term Finance Strategy, it would deliver a sustainable recurring base budget by 31 March 2015, with no call on the Working Balance. The Medium Term Budget Outlook made no provision at present for service enhancements such as food waste collections. Other assumptions that were implicit in the forecast were set out in paragraph 5.5 of the Report.

Delivering council tax freezes in each subsequent year beyond 2012/13 required further annual reductions in the recurring base budget of around £190,000 for each year of a freeze.

Paragraph 3.3 of the Report set out details relating to the Lewes and Seaford Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) which operated across the District. Its medium term business plan projected an ongoing annual deficit if it continued to operate at current levels.

In the current climate, more people were making use of the service and even more were expected to do so over the next few years. Therefore, the appropriate Cabinet Member had encouraged the development of a more sustainable funding solution between the Council and Town Councils which were the CAB's main funding partners.

A sustainable funding proposal had been suggested to, and embraced by, the CAB. It was based upon the Council matching the aggregate increase of all the Town Council's higher contributions and required a modest increase of £12,500 in the Council's annual commitment over and above the funding of £119,830 that it provided in the current years draft estimates. However, as such provision was a new commitment, it required approval for it to be included in the base budget. The Report recommended that, for 2012/13, it be funded from the Working Balance.

Paragraph 10.5 of the Report informed Cabinet that the Council required assistance from a suitably qualified Information Technology (IT) contractor to review existing IT provision and to advise on an appropriate strategy for the future. Contact with agencies had indicated that the Council's needs would best be met by extending the period of the current contractor who was helping to prepare for Agile Working due to the competitive arrangement already secured. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources had agreed such approach for a further 36 days for which a budget of £21,600 would be required, to be funded from the Working Balance in 2011/2012.

The calculation of the overall Council Tax requirement would be presented to Council at its meeting on 20 February 2012 when all precept details would be known. However, paragraph 2.8 of the Report reminded Cabinet that the Council's element of the Council Tax would be frozen in 2012/13 for which the Government was offering a grant in the sum of £186,086 for one-year only, which was equivalent to a 2.5% rise.

The Cabinet had, under a separate Agenda Item, received the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 January 2012 which, in Minute 40 entitled "2012/2013 Budget", set out that Committees views in respect of the General Fund Revenue Budget 2012/2013.

The Cabinet Member for Housing reported that, in December 2011, East Sussex County Council's Public Health Department had submitted a bid to the Department of Health in the sum of £254,000 under the Warm Homes Healthy People Fund.

That bid had been approved of which up to £48,000 was likely to be passed to the Council to assist with fuel poverty interventions. However, such work needed to be completed, and the money spent, by 31 March 2012.

Resolved:

128.1 That the detailed contributions to reserves and use of reserves, as set out in Appendices C, F, G and H to Report No 31/12, be approved; DF

128.2 That the Collection Fund balance to be returned to taxpayers in 2012/2013 be noted;

128.3 That the implications of the economic conditions and impact upon the Council's Medium Term Budget Outlook, be noted;

128.4 That the statutory report of the Director of Finance, as required by section 25(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 and as set out in paragraphs 8 to 12 of the Report, be noted;

128.5 That an increase in the core grant to the Lewes and Seaford Citizens Advice Bureau in the sum of £12,500, be approved and be funded from the Working Balance in 2012/13; DF

128.6 That the engagement of an Information Technology contractor at a cost of £21,600 to be funded from the Working Balance in 2011/12 for the reasons given in paragraph 10.5 of the Report, be noted; and

128.7 That the funding from the Department of Health, via East Sussex County Council, in the sum of up to £48,000, be added to the 2011/2012 revenue budget and be used to fund the Warm Homes Healthy People project that was being lead by East Sussex County Council. DF

It was further

Recommended:

128.8 That a Council Tax freeze be agreed for the Council's Taxpayers for 2012/2013 after setting a savings target of £735,620 and using £467,953 from the Working Balance and taking up the offer of the national Council Tax freeze grant. DF (to note)

In accordance with paragraph 17 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive consented to, and Cabinet agreed, that Resolution 128.7 above was urgent in order that the sum of up to £48,000 funding from the Department of Health, via East Sussex County Council, could be used to fund the Warm Homes Healthy People project which needed to be completed, and the money spent, by 31 March 2012 and, therefore, was not subject to the call-in procedure.

Reasons for the Decisions:

Cabinet is required to approve the estimates in accordance with the Council's Constitution. Report No 31/12 sets out the level of General Fund revenue resources needed to support the Council's priorities and services:

- in the Council Plan;
- for initiatives approved by Cabinet during the current year; and
- new duties arising in 2012/13.

The Council has a statutory duty to determine its level of budget requirement and Council Tax for the coming year. Cabinet makes a recommendation to Council on this matter having taken account of the Director's statutory report on the adequacy of reserves and balances.

† *The Recommendation, and not the Resolutions, in the above Minute is for consideration by Council.*

Councillors are requested to bring with them to the meeting Report No 31/12 which was circulated with the agenda papers for the meeting of the Cabinet on 8 February 2012. If you require a further copy of the document please contact Trevor Hayward, Committee Officer, on e-mail trevor.hayward@lewes.gov.uk or telephone 01273 484122

129 Revised Local Development Scheme

The Cabinet considered Report No 32/12 relating to a proposal to progress the procedure for adopting a Revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) which was a public document that sets out the programme for the preparation of planning policy documents by the Council as local planning authority. A copy of the Revised Scheme dated February 2012, was set out at Appendix A to the Report.

The production and publication of a LDS was a requirement for each local planning authority under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Such requirement had remained through the Localism Act, although the previous requirement for the Secretary of State to approve the LDS had been removed.

The LDS was of particular interest to developers and investors who had land interests in the District, as it provided them with a clear understanding as to when the documents which considered their development proposals would be undertaken.

The Council had adopted its most recent LDS in April 2009 since which some issues had arisen that meant that the document no longer reflected the current and anticipated planning policy work undertaken by the Council.

The revised LDS was considerably shorter and more simplified than the version that had been adopted in April 2009, the main reason for which was that its required content was a lot less prescriptive.

The two planning policy documents that were detailed in the LDS were the Core Strategy document and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies document. Whilst the 2009 version of the LDS had a programme which detailed the production of both documents, it did not recognise that the Core Strategy was being prepared jointly with the National Park Authority. Furthermore, it set a production timetable for both documents that was no longer considered to be realistic.

The Report suggested that the production timetables detailed within the new LDS were realistic, achievable and allowed for sufficient time to undertake effective engagement and consultation with key stakeholders and the community.

Recommended:

129.1 That the revised Local Development Scheme, as set out at Appendix A to Report No 32/12, be adopted and published on the Council's website. — DPES (to note)

Reasons for the Decision:

To update the current Local Development Scheme to ensure that it reflects the most accurate and up-to-date position concerning the production of the Local Development Framework, as well as changes to the planning system.

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