Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: ***C-062-2020/21***
Date of meeting: **11 February 2021**

Epping Forest District Council

Portfolio: **Finance and Economic Development – Cllr J. Philip**

Subject: **Final Budget Proposals 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Plan Update**

Responsible Officer: **Andrew Small** **(07548 145665).**

Democratic Services: **Adrian Hendry** **(01992 564246).**

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) To consider the Final Budget proposals as set out within the Supplementary Agenda item, together with the comments received from Stronger Council Select Committee and after making any amendments that Cabinet consider necessary; and

(2) Recommend to Council

a. the Budget for 2021/22 and the updated Medium Term Financial Plan, and;

b. The level of Council Tax increase for 2021/22.

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The report sets out the Cabinet's Final Budget Proposals for 2021/22 and the Medium Term Financial Plan. If approved by Cabinet, these will then be Recommended to Council for consideration at the Budget Setting meeting on 25th February 2021.

1.2. Stronger Council Select Committee considered Cabinet's Draft Budget Proposals at their meeting on 19th January 2021. The Committee's comments are attached as Appendix A, in the form of an extract from the draft minutes of that meeting. Cabinet are requested to consider the comments made by Stronger Council and also consider whether any amendments are required to the Final Budget proposals before these are recommended to Council.

1.3. As has been previously stated, the development process has been exceptional this year, in that Covid19 is having and will continue to have a massive impact on many areas of the Council's budget. It is expected that this impact will continue into the next financial year, with lasting impacts thereafter, but there is little certainty as to the extent and scale of the continued impact. This has made preparing a robust budget exceptionally challenging and medium term planning even harder.

1.4. As a consequence, the budget has been developed in an environment of ongoing uncertainty and this has meant many significant assumptions have had to be made for next year.

1.5. This has meant that the budget is less well developed than would normally be expected, and publication deadlines have been squeezed in order to achieve greater certainty whilst ensuring a reasonable trade-off between refinement and time for due consideration.

1.6. Consequentially, in order to provide a few more days to develop the Final budget, the budget paper will be issued as a Supplementary paper ahead of the meeting.

2. Resource Implications

2.1. These are contained within the attached report

3. Legal and Governance Implications

3.1. None contained within this report.

4. Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications

4.1. None.

5. Consultation Undertaken

5.1. None

Background Papers