

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 12th February 2009
REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Financial Services
SUBJECT: Draft Budget 2009/10
WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To recommend to Council the budget, capital programme and council tax for 2009/10.
- 1.2 At the time of writing the report, the Cheshire Police and Fire Authorities had not set their budgets and council tax precepts. The Fire Authority precept will be reported verbally to the Executive Board and will be incorporated in the recommendation and also shown on the Council summons. However, the Police Authority are not expected to set their precept until after the meeting of the Executive Board. In that case, a further report will be made to Council showing the Total Council Tax.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Council adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A, which includes setting the budget at £105.467m and the Band D Council Tax for Halton (before Parish, Police and Fire precepts) of £1,116.69.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Medium Term Financial Strategy

3.1 The Executive Board approved the Medium Term Financial Strategy at its meeting on 20th November 2008. In summary, a funding gap of around £6m in each of the next three years was identified. The Strategy has the following objectives:

- Prioritise investments in the five priority areas
- Avoid excessive Council Tax rises
- Deliver a balanced and sustainable budget
- Achieve significant cashable efficiency savings to enable this to happen

Budget Consultation

3.2 In November 2007 a survey was undertaken on the Council's budget using the Halton 2000 citizens panel. The results of the survey were reported to the Executive Board on 7th February 2008 and are summarised in Appendix B. These are still valid although in the current

economic downturn perhaps job creation may feature more highly. Nevertheless they should be taken into account when considering the 2009/10 budget.

Review of the 2008/09 Budget

- 3.3 The Executive Board Sub-Committee receives regular reports summarising spending in the current year against the budget. As part of the Budget Strategy each Directorate was to manage its budget to generate underspend of £500,000 each. This would generate £2m to be transferred to the Invest to Save Fund. The latest report indicates that this will be achieved. It is anticipated that balances at 31st March 2009 will be around £6.6m broadly as planned when the budget was set last year.

2009/10 Budget

- 3.4 The Executive Board considered the level of growth and savings at its Away Day meeting on 8th January 2009 including the impact on the Council's priorities and service users. The proposed savings are shown in Appendix C. It was agreed to consult the Policy and Performance Boards and Area Forums and any comments will be reported to and considered by the Executive Board at the meeting.
- 3.5 The departmental analysis of the budget is shown in Appendix D. Incorporating the proposed savings it totals £105.467m, an increase of £3.572m. The major reasons for change from the current budget are shown in the following table.

	£000
Inflation	
Pay	1,445
Prices	3,775
Income	(1,980)
Increments	1,020
Previous Budgets	1,010
Capital Programme	1,494
Loss of Income	444
Waste Disposal	680
Other	191
Contingency	1,000
Budget Savings	(5,507)
	3,572

- 3.6 The budget continues the policy of utilising £350,000 from the windfall gain arising from the commutation adjustment in 2004/05. This is the last year that the windfall gain is available to support the budget. After taking account of the windfall gain the budget requirement is £105.117m.

- 3.7 It is considered prudent for the budget to include a contingency of £1.0m. This should be sufficient to cover the potential for pay and price changes, increases in demand led budget such as out of borough placements, as well as a general contingency for uncertain and unknown items.
- 3.8 The Local Government Act 2003 places a requirement on the Chief Financial Officer to report on the robustness of the estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides. In my view the budget setting process and the information provided should be sufficient to allow the Council to come to an informed view regarding the 2009/10 budget, capital programme and council tax and balances and reserves should provide sufficient resilience to meet the financial consequences of any unforeseen events.

Budget Outlook

- 3.9 It is very difficult to forecast spending over the next two years, given the uncertainties caused by the current economic climate. The following table updates the medium term financial forecast reported to the Executive Board on 20 November 2008 and reflects falling inflation and interest rates.

	Year on Year Change	
	£000	
	2010/11	2011/12
Inflation		
Pay	1,131	789
Prices	2,626	2,688
Income	(1,607)	(1,548)
Increments etc	1,000	1,000
Previous Budgets	2,603	-
Waste Disposal	795	480
Capital Programme	1,854	2,086
Contingency	1,500	2,500
	<u>9,902</u>	<u>7,995</u>

- 3.10 The Government have announced the provisional settlement for 2010/11, which gives a 2.4% increase for Halton. However, there is a great deal of uncertainty about grant levels for 2011/12 and the outlook assumes a 1% increase.
- 3.11 After taking account of the grant the resultant funding gap is forecast to be in the region of £6m to £7m in each year. The budget impact of the Efficiency Programme is not yet known, and would therefore reduce this figure considerably. However, it is likely that service reductions will be necessary to balance the budget.

Local Government Finance Settlement

- 3.12 The Government has recently announced the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2009/10. This is the second year of a three year settlement and is unchanged from the provisional figures announced in November 2008. For Halton Formula Grant totals £62.459m made up of £11.713m revenue support grant and £50.746m as the Council's share of national non domestic rates. Formula grant totals £63.969m for 2010/11.
- 3.13 As far as the non domestic premises are concerned, the rate is fixed centrally by the Government, and for 2009/10 has been set at 48.5p in the £, and 48.1p for small businesses and represents increases of 5%. The Council merely acts as tax collector, paying over the full proceeds of the business rate to the Government, which is paid back to authorities as part of the Formula Grant.

Halton's Council Tax

- 3.14 The tax base (Band D equivalent) has been set at 38,200 and the combined effect of the budget, government support and council tax base gives a Band D Council Tax for Halton of £1,116.69, an increase of £36.72, or 3.4%.
- 3.15 The Government still retains reserve capping powers, and it has made it clear that they expect Local Authorities to limit council tax rises to an increase of substantially less than 5%. It is expected that the recommended increase in council tax would avoid the prospect of capping.

Parish Precepts

- 3.16 The Parish Councils have set their precepts for the year as shown below, and together with the precepts for the two new parishes the resultant additional Council Tax for a Band D property being as follows:

	Precept	Additional Council Tax	Basic Council Tax
	£	£	£
Hale	15,412	21.14	1,137.83
Daresbury	3,000	21.28	1,137.97
Moore	4,200	12.17	1,128.86
Preston Brook	4,164	12.00	1,128.69
Halebank	7,000	12.30	1,128.99
Sandymoor	10,000	10.95	1,127.64

Average Council Tax

- 3.17 In addition, it is also necessary to calculate the average Council Tax for the area as a whole. This is the figure required by Government and used for comparative purposes and for a Band D property is £1,117.84.

Police Precept

- 3.18 The Police Authority have set their precept on the Council at £?????m which is £????? for a Band D property, an increase of £????? or ?????%. The figures for each Band are shown in Recommendation 4 in Appendix A.

Fire Precept

- 3.19 The Fire Authority set their precept on the Council at £?????m which is £????? for a Band D property, an increase of £????? or ?????%. The figures for each Band are shown in Recommendation 5 in Appendix A.

Total Council Tax

- 3.20 Combining all these figures will give the total Council Tax for 2009/10, and these are shown in Recommendation 6 in Appendix A. The total Band D Council Tax (before Parish precepts) is £?????.
- 3.21 It is expected that Halton's Total Council Tax will continue to be amongst the lowest in the north west. Given that nearly half of all properties in the Borough are in Band A, and also 85% of properties are in Bands A-C, most households will pay less than the "headline" figure. In addition, many households will receive reduced Council Tax bills through Benefits or Personal Discounts, and these adjustments will be shown on their bills.
- 3.22 A complex set of resolutions, shown in Appendix A, needs to be agreed to ensure that the Budget and Council Tax level are set in a way which fully complies with legislation.

Capital Programme

- 3.23 The Government has issued the single capital pot spending guidelines. These total £11.099m and are supported either through the Formula Grant system or by capital grant. Relevant Directorates will report detail spending proposals to the Executive Board separately.

3.24 The following table brings together the exiting capital programme with the single capital pot and other funding streams and shows how the capital programme will be funded.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<u>Spending</u>			
Existing programme	25,843	17,441	32,225
Single Capital Pot	11,099	10,876	-
Playbuilder	400	400	-
Sure Start	593	595	-
Disabled Facilities Grant	453	-	-
	38,388	29,312	32,225
Slippage between years	1,005	908	- 291
	39,393	30,220	31,934
<u>Funding</u>			
Borrowing and Leasing	14,814	16,981	30,000
Grants and External Funds	13,205	9,866	306
Capital Reserve	11,374	3,373	1,628
	39,393	30,220	31,934

3.25 At the end of the period the Capital Reserve is forecast to be £3.188m. This is only marginally above the long established minimum value for the reserve of £3m set out in the Reserves and Balances Strategy. Consequently, there are little funds available for new capital starts unless external funding is available.

Prudential Code

3.26 The Local Government Act 2003 has introduced the Prudential Code which provides a framework for the self-regulation of capital expenditure. The key objectives of the Code are to ensure that the Council's:

- capital expenditure plans are affordable;
- external borrowing is within prudent and sustainable levels; and
- treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice.

3.27 To demonstrate that Authorities have fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code sets out a number of indicators which must be used. These are included in the Treasury Management report elsewhere on the Board's agenda. The prudential indications are monitored throughout the year and reported as part of the Treasury Management quarterly monitoring reports to the Executive Board Sub-Committee.

School Budgets

- 3.28 Schools are now fully funded by Government Grants, primarily the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which is mainly used to fund the Individual School Budgets. This is allocated to schools by way of a formula in accordance with the Local Management of Schools Financial Scheme and primarily based on pupil numbers.
- 3.29 The Government have announced the indicative DSG allocations. For Halton this amounts to £80.165m and represents an increase of 2.8% in cash terms and 3.6% per pupil. During March schools will be informed of their funding allocation in accordance with the Financial Scheme. Each school will receive a minimum increase of 2.1% per pupil, known as the minimum funding guarantee. The final DSG allocations will be announced in June.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The budget will support the Council in achieving the aims and objectives set out in the Community Plan for Halton and the Council's Corporate Plan and has been prepared in consideration of the priorities listed below.

- 4.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**
- 4.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**
- 4.3 **A Healthy Halton**
- 4.4 **A Safer Halton**
- 4.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 5.1 The budget is prepared in accordance with detailed guidance and timetable to ensure the statutory requirements are met and a balanced budget is prepared that aligns resources with corporate objectives.
- 5.2 A number of key factors have been identified in the budget. These will be closely monitored throughout the year and the contingency and Reserves and Balances strategy should mitigate the risk.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 6.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising directly from this report.

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Local Government Finance Report (England) 2009/10	Municipal Building	Nick Finnan

DRAFT

**DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR SUBMISSION TO THE COUNCIL
AT ITS MEETING ON 4th MARCH 2009**

RECOMMENDATION: that the Council adopt the following resolution:

1. The policies outlined in this paper be adopted, including the Budget for 2009/10, the growth and savings set out in Appendix B, the Capital Programme set out in Appendix C, and Prudential Indicators set out in Appendix D.
2. That it be noted that at the meeting on 17th December 2008 the Council agreed the following:
 - (a) For 2009/10, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 and with regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, a Council Tax Base of 38,200 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax Base for the year, and
 - (b) For the Parishes, the Council Tax base for each Parish for the year 2009/10 be set as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	729
Daresbury	141
Moore	345
Preston Brook	347
Halebank	569
Sandymoor	913

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which special items relate.

3. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (Sections 32 to 36), the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2009/10 and agreed as follows:
 - (a) £????? – being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (e) of the said Act.

- (b) £????? – being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the said Act.
- (c) £105,160,606 – being the amount calculated by the Council for the year 2008/09 in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as its budget requirement for the year.
- (d) £62,459,271 – being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates (£50,746,357) and Revenue Support Grant (£11,712,914).
- (e) £1,117.84 – being the amount at 3(c) above less the amount at 3(d) above all divided by the amount at 2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- (f) £43,776 – being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, each individual Parish precept being:

	£
Hale	15,412
Daresbury	3,000
Moore	4,200
Preston Brook	4,164
Halebank	7,000
Sandymoor	10,000

- (g) £1,116.69 Local Government Finance Act 1992, as the basic amount of Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.
- (h) Part of the Council's Area

	£
Hale	1,137.83
Daresbury	1,137.97
Moore	1,128.86
Preston Brook	1,128.69
Halebank	1,128.99
Sandymoor	1,127.64

being the amounts given by adding to the amounts at 3(g) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(i) Part of the Council's Area

Band	Hale	Daresbury	Moore	Preston Brook	Halebank	Sandymoor	All other Parts of the Council's Area
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
A	758.55	758.65	752.57	752.46	752.66	751.76	744.46
B	884.98	885.09	878.01	877.87	878.11	877.06	868.54
C	1,011.40	1,011.53	1,003.43	1,003.28	1,003.54	1,002.34	992.61
D	1,137.83	1,137.97	1,128.86	1,128.69	1,128.99	1,127.64	1,116.69
E	1,390.68	1,390.85	1,379.71	1,379.51	1,379.87	1,378.22	1,364.84
F	1,643.54	1,643.74	1,630.58	1,630.33	1,630.77	1,628.82	1,613.00
G	1,896.38	1,896.62	1,881.43	1,881.15	1,881.65	1,879.40	1,861.15
H	2,275.66	2,275.94	2,257.72	2,257.38	2,257.98	2,255.28	2,233.38

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3(g) and 3(h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

4. It is further noted that for the year 2009/10 the Police Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Authority, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

A B C	£
D	
E F G H	

5. It is further noted that for the year 2009/10 the Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Authority, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

A B C	£
D	
E F G H	

6. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3(i), 4 and 5 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2009/10 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band	Hale	Daresbury	Moore	Preston Brook	Halebank	Sandymoor	All other Parts of the Council's Area
A B C	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
D							
E F G H							

being satisfied that:

- (a) The total amount yielded by its Council Taxes for the said financial year will be sufficient, so far as is practicable, to provide for items mentioned at 3(a) to (d) above; and, to the extent that they are not, to be provided for by any other means.
 - (b) Those amounts which relate to a part only of its area will secure, so far as is practicable, that the precept or portion of a precept relating to such part will be provided for only by the amount yielded by such of its Council Taxes as relate to that part.
7. The Operational Director – Financial Services be authorised at any time during the financial year 2009/10 to borrow on behalf of the Council by way of gross bank overdraft such sums as he shall deem necessary for the purposes of this paragraph, but not such that in any event the said overdraft at any time exceeds £10m (£1.5m net) as the Council may temporarily require.

RESULTS OF HALTON 2000 SURVEY**Select 3 Areas to Prioritise**

Community Safety	55.3%
Activities for Teenagers	32.4%
Recycle and Manage Waste	32.1%
Cleaner Streets	29.4%
Create Jobs	28.8%
Invest in Schools	27.6%
Services for the Elderly	26.7%

Level of Council Tax

Maintain Services/Increase Council Tax	24.8%
Reduce Services/Minimum Council Tax Increase	23.3%
Raise more money by introducing charges	19.5%
Raise more money by increasing charges	17.6%
Improve Services/greater increase in Council Tax	13.7%

Spend More on the Following Services

Crime Prevention	70.3%
Community Safety	56.9%
Services for Older People	49.9%
Recycling Facilities	42.1%
Home Help and Home Care	41.9%

Spend the Same on Services

Refuse Collection	79.2%
Libraries	75.8%
Road Safety/School Crossing Patrols	74.2%
Parks and Open Spaces	71.3%
Environmental Health Inspections	70.4%

Spend Less on Services

Tourism Promotion	48.5%
Arts and Culture	31.2%
Planning Applications	28.1%
Town Centre Management	26.5%
Car Parking	18.9%

APPENDIX C

SAVINGS OPTIONS

Service Area	Financial Consequences		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
All Directorates			
Efficiency Programme (first year only).	500,000	-	-
Increase Staff Turnover savings	200,000	200,000	200,000
5% reduction in office expenditure and conferences	340,000	340,000	340,000
Priorities Fund – unspent monies from previous year	357,000	-	-
LPSA Reward Grant	250,000	-	-
TOTAL	1,647,000	540,000	540,000
Corporate and Policy Directorate			
ICT Contracts	125,000	125,000	125,000
Repairs and Maintenance (One Year Only)	250,000	-	-
Training	25,000	25,000	25,000
Reduction in Caretaking Service	15,000	15,000	15,000
Review of Security Contract, Halton Lea	10,000	10,000	10,000
Introduction of telephone technology to automatically route calls to officers	40,000	40,000	40,000
Restructure of Creditor Section	9,000	9,000	9,000
Further savings on office supplies	12,000	12,000	12,000
Additional income from BIDS	10,000	10,000	10,000
Internal Audit	20,000	20,000	20,000
Revenues Staffing	40,000	40,000	40,000
Benefits Staffing	60,000	60,000	60,000
Policy Team Staffing	25,000	25,000	25,000
Promotion of the Borough	20,000	20,000	20,000
Town Twinning	10,000	10,000	10,000
Design and Print	20,000	20,000	20,000
Recruitment advertising	10,000	10,000	10,000
TOTAL	701,000	451,000	451,000
Children and Young People			
Commissioned School Improvement Consultancy Work	30,000	30,000	30,000
Relocate Murdishaw and Woodlands Play Centre Services	100,000	100,000	100,000
Contracts	100,000	100,000	100,000

Service Area	Financial Consequences		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Transport Services for Children's Services	20,000	20,000	20,000
Reduction in Business Support Service	18,000	18,000	18,000
Direct Payments	10,930	10,930	10,930
Increase Income	35,525	35,525	35,525
Agency/Budget	36,000	36,000	36,000
Youth Service	20,000	20,000	20,000
Harnessing Technology	120,000	120,000	120,000
Reduction Primary and Secondary strategy Funding	130,000	130,000	130,000
TOTAL	620,455	620,455	620,455
Environment			
Delete Post (Technical Officer (Information and Engagement)	23,000	23,000	23,000
Delete Post Building Control Officer (From Sept 08)	42,000	42,000	42,000
Area Planning Officer (Dev Control) Part Time – Reduced by 20%	23,000	23,000	23,000
Area Planning Officer (Dev Control) Part Time – Reduced by 20%	10,000	10,000	10,000
Delete attendants' posts at Widnes Town Centre public toilets	22,000	22,000	22,000
Cease Trade Waste	NIL	NIL	NIL
School and Building Cleaning	50,000	50,000	50,000
Delete post of Nature Conservation Officer	35,000	35,000	35,000
Reorganise litter picking in Neighbourhood Areas	100,000	100,000	100,000
Reorganise Posts (Waste)	85,000	85,000	85,000
Graffiti Team	72,000	72,000	72,000
Pest Control	35,000	35,000	35,000
Delete post of Trees and Woodlands Officer	40,000	40,000	40,000
Divisional Manager EHO/BC	70,000	70,000	70,000
Senior Technical Officer Pest Control (Part Salary)	25,000	25,000	25,000
Technical Officer	20,000	20,000	20,000
Divisional Manger Major Projects (Part Year)	30,000	30,000	30,000
Divisional Manger (Business Development)	74,000	74,000	74,000
Inspectors Post	20,000	20,000	20,000
Minor Repairs Budget	12,000	12,000	12,000
Street Lighting Pilot	50,000	-	-
Minor restructuring of department	150,000	150,000	150,000
Supported Buses	32,000	32,000	32,000
TOTAL	1,020,000	970,000	970,000

Service Area	Financial Consequences		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Health and Community			
Home Care Re-ablement	450,000	450,000	450,000
Increasing Income within Housing Supported Network	79,000	79,000	79,000
Re-letting of domiciliary contract	100,000	100,000	100,000
Grant hold back (managed underspend) non recurring (One Year Only)	100,000	-	-
Cease grant to Groundwork (net of Environment SLA)	20,000	20,000	20,000
Bridgewater Day Centre	20,000	20,000	20,000
Continuing Care	200,000	200,000	200,000
Supporting People	550,000	-	-
TOTAL	1,519,000	869,000	869,000
GRAND TOTAL	5,507,455	3,450,455	3,450,455

APPENDIX D

DEPARTMENTAL BASE BUDGETS

	£000
Children and Young People	
Specialist Services	13,648
Business Planning and Commissioning	5,575
Preventative Services	6,160
Universal and Learning Services	4,714
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	30,097
Corporate and Policy	
Legal, Organisational Development and HR	2,253
Policy and Performance	3,695
Exchequer and Customer Services	5,002
Financial Services	6
ICT Services	10
Property Services	859
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	11,825
Environment	
Environmental and Regulatory Services	13,709
Highways and Transportation	15,156
Major Projects	1,192
Regeneration	1,673
Stadium, Catering and Cleaning	2,114
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	33,844
Health and Community	
Culture and Leisure Services	13,210
Health and Partnerships	3,596
Adult Services	14,649
Older People	15,100
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	46,555
Departmental Base Budget	<hr/>
	122,321
Financial Arrangements	(11,347)
Base Budget	<hr/>
	110,974
Less Savings	<hr/>
	(5,507)
Total Budget	<hr/>
	105,467