**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – MARCH UPDATE**

**Council Tax for 2016/17** **– NHDC Budget**

At the full North Herts District Council meeting on 11 Feb the Executive Member for Finance, Terry Hone, presented his budget for next year (Apr 2016 – Mar 2017) for the District, later than usual as central government took a long while to decide on the financial settlement for local councils. The settlement for NHDC is £871,000 of Revenue Support Grant for next year and after that zero, i.e. from April 2017 NHDC’s expenditure (net of income received) has to be provided 100% by local Council Tax Payers. NHDC is one of only 15 local authorities in England to be facing a zero revenue support grant, which reflects the relative prosperity of the residents of North Herts. However, as a result of the response to the consultation on the financial settlement to local authorities’ additional central government funding has been provided. A so-called Transition Grant has been awarded to NHDC to ease the move to zero RSG. This amounts to £285,000 in total and will be received over the next two civic years.

The budget for 2016/17 results in the District component of Council Tax being set at the equivalent of £211.96 for a Band D property, an increase of 1.9% over the current year. For a Band D property, the charge for the cost of services provided by NHDC is therefore 58p per day, or just over £4 per week; the increase is only 1.1p per day. The recommendation to adopt the budget received all party support at the council meeting.

Of course, your Council Tax bill includes elements to fund services provided by the County Council, the Police and the Parish Council, so your total Council Tax bill will be considerably greater.

## **District-Wide Survey**

NHDC seeks to understand people’s satisfaction with the Council and its services. A North Herts District Wide Survey is a consultation exercise that takes place every two years. The survey consists of approximately 1,000 residents from across North Hertfordshire who are consulted via telephone interviews. These interviews are carried out by independent consultants.

The most recent survey was carried out in October and November last year. The report from this survey is expected to be presented to Cabinet next month, and will be available on the website from about mid-March.

As part of the District-Wide Survey new members of the Citizen’s Panel are selected. This is a group of residents who are regularly contacted about their views on Council performance, so that trends in satisfaction levels can be tracked on a more frequent basis than every two years.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss these or any other matters: **Steve Hemingway, Councillor for Knebworth on NHDC: steve@stevehemingway.com or phone 01438 940594 (please include STD code when dialling).**

Please contact Steve if you need his help or to share your comments, or be in touch directly with your County Councillor Richard Thake or your Member of Parliament Stephen McPartland:

* Richard Thake, Herts County Council: richard.thake@hertfordshire.gov.uk, 07973 157 605
* Stephen McPartland MP: stephen@stephenmcpartland.co.uk, Stephen McPartland MP, House of Commons, Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA