

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 12th February 2010

Statement from: Cllr Martin Hill - Leader

Since the last meeting of the Council it is pleasing to note that the Council has been assessed as “Performing Well” by the Audit Commission under the new Comprehensive Area Assessment framework. This assessment is that the council manages its finances well, councillors and staff work together to make decisions, council leaders show good political leadership and councillors monitor the performance of services to ensure that their targets are met. That is due recognition of the progress we have made and the excellent work of staff and councillors over the last few years.

A substantive part of today’s meeting will be the debate on the Council’s revenue and capital budgets and this is set against the background of the severe and sustained recession and the prospects of deep cuts in public sector funding in future years. This will require the Council to work as efficiently as possible through the transformation of its services but will also require some difficult decisions on service priorities and service levels. These challenges have been recognised by all local councils and as part of this the Local Authority Employers have recently announced they will be seeking a pay freeze this year.

I have also attended a consultation meeting on the budget with business, union, health, other council and organisations representatives. The issues raised included the levels of investment via the capital programme (particularly the road infrastructure and maintenance and the energy from waste proposals), the level of council tax, public sector pay and pensions, the lack of adequate Government funding for the personal Care at Home and the Flood Management Bills and the need for greater planning and cooperation between organisations to deliver efficiencies.