

# **TOUGH CHOICES PROGRAMME**

## **LOCAL DELIVERY**

**CONSULTATION WITH PARISH COUNCILS**

**25 JULY 2007**

# Where is the North Dorset Council Tax spent?

Dorset County Council	£1,049
Dorset Fire Brigade	£53
Dorset Police	£156
North Dorset District Council	£92
<b>Total Council Tax</b>	<b>£1,350</b>

**(Per Band D equivalent property)**

North Dorset District Council collects all Council Tax

# How does £92 District Council Tax compare?

- Average national District Council Tax is £152
- North Dorset District Council Tax is the 6th lowest in the country
- Our expenditure is below average (Audit Commission)
- We provide about 50 services

# What has the Government chosen to do?

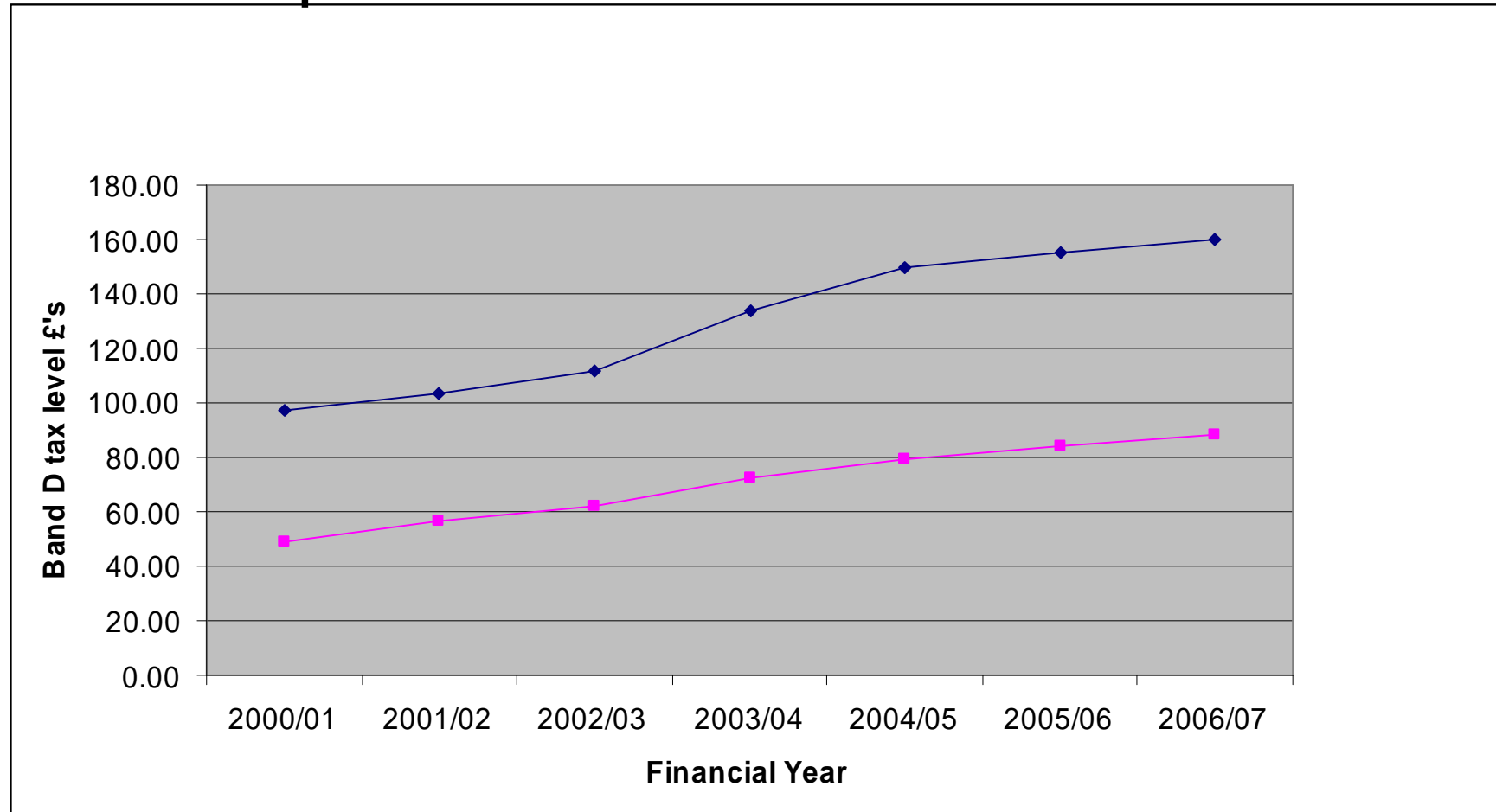
- Impose strict limits on Council tax increases for all Councils (5% a year)
- Provide low grant support to Dorset
- Impose new services on Councils (e.g. Licensing, recycling, single status)

# Why is that a particular problem at NDDC?

- NDDC tax levels are very low
- For many years Council Tax was supported by investment income and, more recently, reserves
- Reserves reduced also as capital programme is spent

# Mind the gap!

**Council Tax level if not supported by reserves and investment income compared with actual Council Tax**



# **What did the District Council plan to do to meet the gap?**

- **To increase its Council Tax over 4 years**
- **Public consultation demonstrated support**
- **The Council lobbied Government**
- **But, in summer 2005, the Government “capped” the District Council Tax**

# What does this mean for North Dorset?



- **“Capping” Council Tax increases will continue**
- **The District Council has low overhead costs, all services except Planning cost less than average (Audit Commission).**
- **Since 2004, the Council has made £2.2m efficiency savings**
- **Savings of £2.1m from the net budget of £8.3m needed over next 4 years**
- **Non-statutory, discretionary services will not be able to be funded by the District Council**

# What is the District Council doing about this?

- **Lobbying Government**
- **Keeping to its vision:**
  - “Where thriving and balanced communities in our market towns and surrounding villages build economic prosperity while safeguarding our unique and diverse environment”.

# The Council has a three part strategy to “meet the gap”

## 1. Local Delivery

- Supporting local communities to take ownership of services that matter to them

## 2. Focused Resources

- Work jointly with other Councils to reduce costs, do less but do what we do well

## 3. Business Transformation

- Making best use of the Council’s investment in ICT through increased efficiency, improving access

# Savings to be made 2008 - 2012

**LOCAL DELIVERY**

**£1.1 million**

**FOCUSED  
RESOURCES**

**£0.6 million**

**BUSINESS  
TRANSFORMATION**

**£0.4 million**

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**£2.1 million**

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**In 2007/08 we exceeded  
our targets**

# What is Local Delivery?

## Aim:

**“To retain local discretionary services, where there is explicit local support, through alternative funding or different service provider/s”.**

**To secure services for the community despite withdrawal of £1.1m District Council subsidy.**

# Why Local Delivery?

- **Stronger working with Town/Parish Councils and Community Partnerships to secure important local services**
- **Community planning model is recognised as national good practice (MCTI)**
- **Matches the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper: the devolution of services and assets, strengthening of neighbourhoods/communities and Quality Councils**
- **Submitted to Government as a Pathfinder for improved multi-tier working**



**These are the services at risk across North Dorset and the dates that District Council subsidy is timetabled to end:**

- |                                     |                 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Amenity areas                     | March 2009      |
| • Arts funding                      | March 2011      |
| • Citizens Advice Bureau grants     | from March 2009 |
| • Countryside Ranger Service        | March 2009      |
| • Environmental initiatives         | March 2008      |
| • Gillingham Leisure Centre         | March 2008      |
| • Public conveniences               | March 2008      |
| • Sports development                | March 2008      |
| • Sturminster Newton Leisure Centre | March 2008      |
| • Shaftesbury Leisure Centre        | March 2009      |
| • Blandford Leisure Centre          | March 2010      |
- **The role of the Community Development Workers (Dorset Community Action) is considered essential for support of community planning and the Local Delivery project.**
  - **Town Councils have expressed street cleansing as a priority.**
  - **The District Council needs to retain income, for example, from car parking charges.**

# Discretion, Choice and Commitment

- District Council discretion effectively removed
- Local choice
- Test viability
- Commitment and budget provision

## Phase I – 2007/08

- Councillors: Webb, Roake, Milsted
- Transfer of services not possible by April 2007
- Town, Parish and District Councils worked together to secure alternative funding
- Consultation during autumn 2006 (role DAPTC)
- Financial commitment for 2007/08 only
- Local discretion exercised
- In principle agreement October 2006

- Budget setting December 2006
- Service Level Agreement March 2007
- Secured £235,000 of funding from Town and Parish Councils (mainly precepts)
- District Council committed to provide services (governed by SLA) in 2007/08
- Supports community planning in North Dorset
- Recognised by GoSW (in line with Strong & Prosperous Communities White Paper)
- Presented as a Pathfinder bid (alongside Dorset wide bid)

# Phase II – 2008/09

- Town/Parish funding for 1 year only
- Transfer or alternative funding of services from April 2008
- Town Councils have highlighted their priority services
- Town Councils and community partnerships co-ordinating with Parishes
- Priorities matched with District Council Medium Term Financial Plan
- Savings target for 2008/09 £470,000
- In principle agreement by end September 2007

# Project Framework

- Local Delivery Working Group (Towns, Parishes, community partnerships, DAPTC)
- Town based groups (Town Council, community partnership)
- Service specific action groups
- Decision making
- Role of Community Development Workers

# Gillingham Leisure Centre and Community Leisure Centre

- NDDC subsidy (£270k) withdrawn April 2008
- Phase I has secured for 2007/08 only
- Existing leisure centre unsustainable (revenue and capital investment)
- Supporting 3RP in new Community Leisure Centre
- £3m capital investment and £260k revenue pa
- Consulting with Town/Parishes/County
- Focus on new CLC
- NDDC up to £4m capital earmarked

# Sturminster Newton Leisure Centre

- NDDC subsidy (£111k) withdrawn April 2008
- Consulting with Dorset County, school, SturQuest, Town Council
- Option to transfer to County for school use
- Trust to operate fitness suite and community use

# Agreement in Principle

- By end October 2007 agreement must be reached on level of service, service provider and funding of services at risk, for 2008/09 budget setting.
- At that stage, any shortfall of provision will translate to firm plans for service reductions and any redundancy notices that may be necessary.

# Timetable

- Agreement in principle end September 2007
- Transfer of services agreed October 2007
- Draft budgets December 2007
- Budgets approved February 2008
- Service transferred/funding secured/funding ended April 2008