

STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL 11 DECEMBER 2012.

Over the last 2 months Portfolio Holders and Chief Officers have been working hard to produce a budget for the year 2013/14. Like any other business, outgoings must be tied to income. In order to balance the books some authorities reduce the level of service and sometimes the entire service goes. Here at Hambleton we don't have those constraints. We are still able to call upon the legacy from the sale of Council houses. However, over the last 10/12 years our reserves have fallen by approximately 45%. Because of the economic position the country is in, our reserves will start to fall even more quickly as we use them to bolster Council Tax and address the short fall required to maintain services.

Government funding is crucial, but huge uncertainties prevail. 2 years ago we had to manage a 28% cut and now we are being told to expect a possible 48% cut between 2013 and 2020. These figures are Government sourced. A further 30% cut for 2015 is also being speculated. Our outgoings continue to rise. This year we will spend approx. £1m on energy. Contracts entered into 4 years ago end shortly. Hopefully the buffer provided by such contracts can be renewed for a further 4 years. New bin lorries will soon be seen on the streets. The old vehicles were well past their sell by date. These are just two of the many examples of ever higher costs involved in providing services for our residents.

So what am I saying? Simply, our reserves will not last for ever and prudent planning in the next few years is necessary so that we do not end up going down the same path as some authorities. Cutting services is not a prospect I relish.

On a more enjoyable seasonal note

*I wish all residents, staff and members
HAPPY CHRISTMAS and BEST WISHES FOR 2013*