

STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

24 February 2015

Subject to Council approval today

For the fifth year in a row Council Tax will be frozen, with no increase in fees or charges despite grant cuts equating to £2.4m.

At the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in September 2014 the Auditor, Deloitte, stated that the Council is in one of the best financial positions of any council in the UK. Since that meeting the Council's financial standing has been improved significantly, with anticipated balances in 2024/25 increasing by £6.780m from £13.309m to £20.089m, an increase of 50.9%. This places the Council in a remarkable and unique financial position which, unlike many other authorities, guarantees its financial viability well beyond the next decade.

The Financial Strategy for the next 10 years shows this Authority to be in a strong position to drive forward delivery of significant projects throughout the District. To this end £10m has been allocated to the Economic Development Fund.

The purchase of the former prison site will allow this Authority to ensure that the Northallerton Masterplan is delivered.

At February Cabinet approval was given to appoint a Funding and Investment Officer. This person will help to secure external investment to enable this Council achieve maximum value for money for its investments.

**Councillor Mark Robson
Leader of the Council**