

Minutes

Ordinary Council Wednesday, 24th February, 2021

Attendance

Cllr Ms Sanders (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr Kendall
Cllr Aspinell	Cllr Laplain
Cllr Barrett	Cllr Lewis
Cllr Dr Barrett	Cllr McCheyne
Cllr Bridge	Cllr McLaren
Cllr Chilvers	Cllr Mrs McKinlay
Cllr Clarke	Cllr Morrissey
Cllr J Cloke	Cllr Mynott
Cllr S Cloke	Cllr Naylor
Cllr Mrs Davies	Cllr Nolan
Cllr Mrs Fulcher	Cllr Parker
Cllr Fryd	Cllr Mrs Pearson
Cllr Haigh	Cllr Poppy
Cllr Hirst	Cllr Mrs Pound
Cllr Mrs Hones	Cllr Reed
Cllr Hossack	Cllr Tanner
Cllr Jakobsson	Cllr Tierney
Cllr Keeble	

Apologies

Cllr Tumbridge

Officers Present

Phoebe Barnes	-	Corporate Finance Manager
Greg Campbell	-	Corporate Director (Environment & Communities)
Philip Drane	-	Director of Planning and Economy
Amanda Julian	-	Corporate Director (Law and Governance) and Monitoring Officer
Claire Mayhew	-	Corporate and Democratic Services Manager
Jonathan Stephenson	-	Chief Executive
Steve Summers	-	Strategic Director (Deputy Chief Executive)
Jacqueline Van Mellaerts	-	Corporate Director (Finance & Resources)

LIVE BROADCAST

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693. To appoint a Member to preside at the meeting if the Mayor nor the Deputy Mayor are present and able to preside

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4, 16.2, the Deputy Mayor - Cllr Miss Sanders - **MOVED**, Cllr Hossack **SECONDED** and it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Reed should act as Vice-chair for the duration of the meeting.

694. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Tumbridge.

695. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this stage.

696. Budget 2021/22 and Council Tax 2021/22

This report sets out all the relevant information needed by the Council to set the budget for the Borough.

The budget was considered by the Policy, Resources & Economic Development Committee on 3rd February 2021 and has been recommended to Ordinary Council for consideration and approval.

The fundamental principles of the Council's MTFS are to:

- (i) Maintain a sustainable financial position against a background of unprecedented financial uncertainty and reduced government funding, including the delivery of efficiency targets.
- (ii) Support the vision of our Borough through appropriate identification of resources required to deliver the key priorities outlined in the Corporate Strategy.
- (iii) Maximise opportunities and mitigate risks associated with the fundamental change to the way in which local government is financed.

This report considers:

- (i) The General Fund budget proposals for 2021/22 to 2023/24.
- (ii) The Council Tax Requirement for 2021/22

- (iii) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals for 2021/22 onwards.
- (iv) The Capital and Investment Strategy for 2021/22 including the Councils capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24
- (v) Fees & Charges
- (vi) Pay Policy Statement
- (vii) Section 151 Officers Assurance Statement.
- (viii) Council Tax Resolution 2021-22

The figures presented summarise the detailed service budgets, together with known adjustments including the impact of the central government grant funding.

The key elements of the proposed budget are:

General Fund

- 1) To reduce the previously forecasted General Fund budget gap of £1m to 2022/23 and increase working balances to sustainable levels above the minimum level of reserves.
- 2) 0% increase in Council Tax for 2021/22 for Brentwood Council services.
- 3) Increasing Earmarked Reserves to set aside appropriate balances to mitigate future financial risk.
- 4) Future uncertainty of Local Government Financing.

Housing Revenue Account

- 1) For 2021/22 a budget that delivers a small surplus of £434k.
- 2) Increase in rents of CPI plus 1% per annum; equating to 1.5%.
- 3) Continued investment in the delivery of Decent Homes and Development of Housing within the Borough.
- 4) Significant investment in the Strategic Housing Delivery Program ensuring the 30 year business plan is sustainable.

Capital

- 1) Total capital investment of £8.5 million in 2021/22
- 2) Subsequent investment of £2.4 million pa from 2022 to 2024.

Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Parker **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report.

Cllr Gareth Barrett had submitted and **MOVED** and Cllr Tim Barrett **SECONDED** the following **AMENDMENT**:

Research into the options for parking solutions within all in-Borough strategic property acquisitions that are designed to remove the negative impacts on resident parking and improve the delivery of said acquisitions, with funding from In-Borough Regeneration Reserve and/or Asset Development Capital Project depending if works are Capital or Revenue Expenditure.

Cllr Hossack **ACCEPTED** the **AMENDMENT**.

Cllr Gareth Barrett had submitted and **MOVED** and Cllr Tim Barrett **SECONDED** a second **AMENDMENT**:

An investment into Pepperell House, a long term Council owned asset that is effectively a gateway to our town centre image alongside the St Thomas a Becket ruins. For external refurbishment, redecoration and re-instatement. To be funded from Asset Management Capital Project and/or Asset Management Earmarked Reserve depending if works are Capital or Revenue Expenditure.

(The meeting was adjourned for 15 minutes)

Cllr Gareth Barrett had submitted and **MOVED** and Cllr Tim Barrett **SECONDED** a third **AMENDMENT**:

That the Council Reviews optional discounts including but not limited to Second Home Discount and Empty Homes Discount, reviewing whether targeted schemes (such as for example discounts for properties empty due to catastrophic incidents, rather than in general empty homes allowance) would be more efficient and brings forward suggested approaches to a meeting of the Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee. Any decided to have merit then to be consulted on, in line with standard process, and any opportunities identified put to Councillors an Ordinary Council.

Cllr Hossack **ACCEPTED** the **AMENDMENT**.

(Cllrs Mynott declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of an Independent Trustee for Brentwood Community Transport and did not taken part in the debate and was therefore unable vote on this item and Cllr Parker declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of the Council's Outside Representative Outside Representative on Brentwood Community Transport did not taken part in the debate and was therefore unable vote)

Returning to the **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION**, following a full discussion a recorded vote was taken in accordance with Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2014).

Members voted as follows:

FOR: Cllrs Bridge, J Cloke, Hirst, Mrs Hones, Hossack, Jakobsson, McCheyne, Mrs McKinlay, McLaren, Nolan, Mrs Pearson, Poppy, Mrs Pound, Reed, Ms Sanders, Tanner and Mrs Tierney (17)

AGAINST: (0)

ABSTAIN: Cllrs Aspinell, Barrett, Dr T Barrett, Chilvers, S Cloke, Mrs Davies, Fryd, Ms Fulcher, Haigh, Keeble, Kendall, Laplain, Lewis and Naylor (15)

(Cllr Morrissey was not able to take part in the vote, this was due to her absence at the beginning of the debate).

The Motion was **CARRIED** and it was **RESOLVED** to:

- R1. Approve the General Fund Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendix A.**
- R2. Approve that there is no increase to Council Tax for 2021/22 and that the charge for Band D property remains at £193.63. The complete Council Tax Bandings (Brentwood Council Only) are included in Appendix A (Table 9), Page 24 of the Appendix.**
- R3. Approve the HRA budget 2021/22 including the 30-year HRA Business Plan within Appendix B (Table 6 and Table 11), Page 14 and Page 23 of Appendix B.**
- R4. Approve an increase to rents for 2021/22 by CPI plus 1%, a total of 1.5%.**
- R5. Approve the Capital and Investment Strategy in Appendix C including the Capital Programme (Table 4 & 5) pages, 16&17 of Appendix C.**
- R6. Approve the Fees & Charges Schedule in Appendix D.**
- R7. Approve the Pay Policy Statement in Appendix E.**
- R8. To note and approve the Section 151 Officers Assurance Statement in Appendix F.**
- R9. The formal resolutions to set the Council Tax level for 2021/22 be made as set out in Appendix H (page 4 to 8) are approved.**
- R10. Delegated authority is given to the Section 151 Officer to set the overall Council tax level for 2021/22 should there be any changes**

that effect Table 2, 3, 6 & Table 7 in Appendix H, once all formal precept demands have been received from all authorities.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. Effective financial management underpins all of the priorities for the Council and will enable the Council to operate within a sustainable budget environment.
2. The Council is required to approve the Budget as part of the Budget and Policy Framework

697. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 9.22pm
