

Minutes

Ordinary Council Wednesday, 1st March, 2017

Attendance

Cllr Mrs Hones (Mayor)	Cllr Kerlake
Cllr Russell (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr McCheyne
Cllr Aspinell	Cllr Mrs McKinlay
Cllr Barrett	Cllr Mrs Middlehurst
Cllr Bridge	Cllr Morrissey
Cllr Clarke	Cllr Mrs Murphy
Cllr Chilvers	Cllr Mynott
Cllr Cloke	Cllr Newberry
Cllr Mrs Coe	Cllr Parker
Cllr Mrs Davies	Cllr Poppy
Cllr Faragher	Cllr Mrs Pound
Cllr Mrs Fulcher	Cllr Reed
Cllr Hirst	Cllr Ms Sanders
Cllr Hossack	Cllr Mrs Slade
Cllr Mrs Hubbard	Cllr Trump
Cllr Keeble	Cllr Tumbridge
Cllr Kendall	Cllr Wiles

Apologies

Cllr Barrell	Cllr Mrs Squirrel
Cllr Ms Rowlands	

Substitute Present

Also Present

Officers Present

John Chance	-	Finance Director (Section 151 Officer)
Ramesh Prashar	-	Financial Services Manager
Philip Ruck	-	Chief Executive
Jean Sharp	-	Governance and Member Support Officer
Lorne Spicer	-	Business Development and PR Manager
Steve Summers	-	Group Manager In House Services

Daniel Toohey - Monitoring Officer
Jacqueline Van Mellaerts - Principal Accountant

291. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Barrell, Ms Rowlands and Mrs Squirrel.

292. General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2017/18

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) considered by Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 29 November 2016 gave Members an update on the various significant changes that would impact on the Council's financial position. Particular issues highlighted, relevant to the General Fund and HRA, included the phasing out of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG), changes to the New Homes Bonus and the Business Rates Retention Scheme.

The fundamental principles of the Council's MTFP were 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 "Vision for Brentwood".
- (iii) Maximise opportunities and mitigate risks associated with the fundamental change to the way in which local government is financed.

The report considered:

- (i) The General Fund budget proposals for 2017/18 to 2019/20.
- (ii) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals for 2017/18 onwards.
- (iii) The Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2019/20.
- (iv) The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2017/18.

The Leader of the Council and Chair of Policy, Finance and Resources Committee, Cllr Mrs McKinlay, introduced the proposed budget for 2016/17 and **MOVED** the recommendations in the report which Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED**.

Cllr Aspinell, as leader of the major opposition group, responded to the Leader's statement.

Six amendments had been submitted in accordance with Rule 3.15 of the Council's Procedure Rules.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerlake **SECONDED** the **AMENDMENT** received from the Conservative Group which proposed two additional recommendations, 2.1b and 2.8, each referring to Table 8.1 which was included in the published amendment, and Cllr Mrs McKinlay **ACCEPTED** the amendment.

Cllr Barrett **MOVED** and Cllr Morrissey **SECONDED** the first proposed **AMENDMENT** submitted by the Labour Group, as follows:

For the financial year 2017/18 onwards Brentwood Borough Council removes its Second Home Discount (10%) from Council Tax and reduces the Empty Home Council Tax Discount (100%) from three months to two weeks.

This can be immediately implemented, as confirmed by advice from officers.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay did not accept the **AMENDMENT** however she expressed her interest in taking the proposal forward at a later date and invited Cllr Barrett to be involved in future related discussions.

Following a debate a vote was taken on a show of hands and the **AMENDMENT** was **LOST**.

Cllr Barrett **MOVED** and Cllr Morrissey **SECONDED** the Labour Group's second **AMENDMENT**, as follows:

Creating a revenue stream through early payment of invoices - the London Boroughs of Bexley and Croydon produce rebate income from early payment of invoices to achieve a return on procurement costs of around 0.1%. The income will be related to spending – and as such larger in years with greater capital spending.

There is a delay in implementation to find an appropriate partner to implement this scheme.

Mrs McKinlay did not accept the **AMENDMENT**.

Following a debate during which a Member requested the Council's full confidence in the Section 151 Officer be minuted, a vote was taken on a show of hands and the **AMENDMENT** was **LOST**.

Cllr Barrett **MOVED** and Cllr Morrissey **SECONDED** the third **AMENDMENT** submitted by the Labour Group, as follows:

Build a Memorial Wall both for former residents and pets. Estimates have been developed taking costs of similar local authority and applying a prudent take up of 150 total per year.

There is a lower income in year 2017/18 to account for the construction and any necessary planning requirements.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay did not accept the **AMENDMENT** and advised that the proposal had been included in the proposed budget under Senior Officer Initiatives.

In light of this, Cllr Barrett **WITHDREW** the proposed **AMENDMENT**.

Cllr Barrett **MOVED** and Cllr Morrissey **SECONDED** the fourth **AMENDMENT** submitted by the Labour Group, as follows:

Use experience of the Housing Department to set up a private sector focused letting agency. Given numerous problems with local letting agencies and potential to work more closely with CAB set up 'best practice' model. This could potentially be a sustainable income stream for the Council, alongside offering benefits in cost reduction on homelessness and housing concerns through strengthened delivery.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay did not accept the **AMENDMENT** and advised that the proposal had been included in the proposed budget.

In light of this, following a debate, Cllr Barrett **WITHDREW** the proposed **AMENDMENT**.

Cllr Aspinell **MOVED** and Cllr Mynott **SECONDED** the **AMENDMENT** submitted by the Liberal Democrat Group as follows:

The Lib Dem Group would like to propose that this Council investigates and invests in the work needed to set up a LATCO to enable Brentwood Borough Council to generate revenue in addition to grants and council tax income through entrepreneurial ideas.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay did not accept the **AMENDMENT** and following a debate, a vote was taken on a show of hands and the **AMENDMENT** was **LOST**.

Returning to the **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION**, following a debate in accordance with Procedure Rule 8.3.5 which set out the length of speeches and in accordance with Procedure Rule 9.6 of the Constitution, a recorded vote was taken. Cllr Aspinell had left the Chamber during the debate and therefore did not vote.

The Mayor advised that she had agreed to a Member's request to divide the recommendations into 3 separate votes: 2.1 and 2.1b, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 - the General Fund and Capital Programme, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 – the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and 2.8 – Council Tax.

Members voted as follows on recommendations 2.1 and 2.1b, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 relating to the General Fund and Capital Programme:

For: Cllrs Bridge, Cloke, Mrs Coe, Faragher, Hirst, Mrs Hones, Hossack, Kerslake, McCheyne, Mrs McKinlay, Mrs Middlehurst, Mrs Murphy, Parker,

Poppy, Mrs Pound, Reed, Russell, Ms Sanders, Mrs Slade, Trump, Tumbridge and Wiles (22)

Against: Cllrs Barrett, Chilvers, Clarke, Mrs Davies, Mrs Fulcher, Mrs Hubbard, Keeble, Kendall, Morrissey, Mynott and Newberry (11)

Abstain: (0)

Members **RESOLVED:**

General Fund:

2.1 To approve the General Fund - Revised MTFP for 2017/18 as shown in Table 7 at paragraph 8.2 which includes the proposed savings target envelope as shown in Table 8 at paragraph 8.7 of this report.

2.1b To agree the General Fund budget detail savings and growth outlined in Table 8.1.

Capital programme

2.5 To approve the proposed Capital Programme and Funding totalling £33.9 million for 2017/18 to 2019/20 as set out in Tables 15 and 16 of the report.

2.6 To approve the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy as set out in Section 12 of the report.

2.7 To note the Section 151 Officer's Assurance Statement as set out in Section 13 of the report.

Members voted as follows on recommendations 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 relating to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

For: Cllrs Bridge, Cloke, Mrs Coe, Faragher, Hirst, Mrs Hones, Hossack, Kerlake, McCheyne, Mrs McKinlay, Mrs Middlehurst, Mrs Murphy, Parker, Poppy, Mrs Pound, Reed, Russell, Ms Sanders, Mrs Slade, Trump Tumbridge and Wiles (22)

Against: Cllrs Chilvers, Clarke, Mrs Davies, Mrs Fulcher, Mrs Hubbard, Keeble, Kendall, Mynott and Newberry (9)

Abstain: Cllrs Barrett and Morrissey (2)

Members **RESOLVED:**

- 2.1 To approve the HRA Business Plan for 2017/18 and beyond as shown in Appendix E of the report.
- 2.2 To approve a 1% decrease in rents for 2017/18 and for the following 2 years.
- 2.3 To recommend to apply the formula rent to all new tenancies from April 2017/18.

Members voted as follows on recommendation 2.8 relating to Council Tax.

For: Cllrs Bridge, Cloke, Mrs Coe, Faragher, Hirst, Mrs Hones, Hossack, Kerslake, McCheyne, Mrs McKinlay, Mrs Middlehurst, Mrs Murphy, Parker, Poppy, Mrs Pound, Reed, Russell, Ms Sanders, Mrs Slade, Trump Tumblebridge and Wiles (22)

Against: Cllrs Barrett, Chilvers, Clarke, Mrs Davies, Mrs Hubbard, Keeble, Kendall, Morrissey, Mynott and Newberry (10)

Abstain: Cllr Mrs Fulcher (1)

Members **RESOLVED**

Council Tax 2017/18

- 2.8 To approve a Council Tax increase of £5 (Band D) for 2017/18, to fund the growth items outlined in Table 8.1.

Reason for Recommendation

The Council is required to approve the Budget as part of the Budget and Policy Framework.

Following this item of business the meeting was adjourned for a short comfort break.

293. Council Tax 2017/18

The Council was the billing authority for the Borough of Brentwood and was required to set a Council Tax that would not only cover its own requirements, but also those of Essex County council, Police and Crime Commissioner, Fire authority and the Parish Councils.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report and following a debate and in accordance with Procedure Rule 9.6 of the Constitution, a recorded vote was taken.

Members voted as follows:

For: Cllrs Bridge, Cloke, Mrs Coe, Faragher, Hirst, Mrs Hones, Hossack, Kerslake, McCheyne, Mrs McKinlay, Mrs Middlehurst, Mrs Murphy, Parker, Poppy, Mrs Pound, Reed, Russell, Ms Sanders, Mrs Slade, Trump Tumblebridge and Wiles (22)

Against: Cllrs Aspinell, Barrett, Chilvers, Clarke, Mrs Davies, Mrs Hubbard, Keeble, Kendall, Morrissey, Mynott and Newberry (11)

Abstain: Cllr Mrs Fulcher (1)

Members **RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Council approve the formal Council Tax resolution for Brentwood Borough Council and Parishes as contained in Appendix A.**
- 2. That it be noted that for the year 2017/18 Essex County Council, Essex police and Crime Commissioner and Essex Fire Authority have issued the following precept requirements to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (“the Act”) for each of the categories of dwellings (valuation and) shown in Table 2.**
- 3. That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands and the amounts in 2.2 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, hereby sets the amounts in Table 3 as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2017/18 for each of the categories of dwellings shown in Table 3 within the report.**

Reason for recommendations

The Council had a legal requirement to set out the Council Tax for its area by 11 March 2017.

294. Revenues & Benefits Shared Service Agreement

The matter was considered by the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 15th February 2017 where it was resolved to recommend to Ordinary Council the approval of the Revenues & Benefits Shared Service Agreement subject to the appropriate delegated authority.

The detail of the proposed agreement was set out in the report to the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on the 15th February 2017 attached as appendix A and B (exempt) to the report.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report, following a discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was

RESOLVED

- 1. To approve that the Council enters a new sharing agreement for provision of the Revenues and Benefits Service with Basildon Borough Council on the basis set out in Appendix A of the report.**
- 2. That delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council as appropriate, to agree and formally enter the agreement once negotiations have been completed.**

(Cllr Bridge declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being employed by an IT provider but advised that the company had no contract with the Council).

Reason for recommendations

To enable the Council to deliver effective and efficient Revenues and Benefits Services for the benefit of the Council and its customers.

295. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business but Cllr Kendall requested confirmation of whether or not the Ordinary Council meeting for 24 April 2017 would take place.

The Chief Executive advised that Members would be advised as soon as a decision had been made regarding this meeting.

The meeting ended at 10.15pm