

# Minutes

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## Ordinary Council Wednesday, 28th February, 2024

### Attendance

Cllr Barrett (Mayor)	Cllr Mayo
Cllr Haigh (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr McCheyne
Cllr Aspinell	Cllr Munden
Cllr Barber	Cllr Mrs Murphy
Cllr Dr Barrett	Cllr Mynott
Cllr Bridge	Cllr Naylor
Cllr M Cuthbert	Cllr Parker
Cllr Mrs N Cuthbert	Cllr Mrs Pound
Cllr Mrs Francois	Cllr Reed
Cllr Mrs Fulcher	Cllr Rigby
Cllr Gelderbloem	Cllr Russell
Cllr Gorton	Cllr Sankey
Cllr Heard	Cllr Slade
Cllr Hirst	Cllr Wagland
Cllr Kendall	Cllr White
Cllr Laplain	Cllr Worsfold
Cllr Marsh	

### Apologies

Cllr Mrs Davies	Cllr Poppy
Cllr Lewis	Cllr Wiles

### Officers Present

Phoebe Barnes	- Director - Assets & Investments
Claire Mayhew	- Acting Joint Director of People & Governance & Monitoring Officer
Zoey Foakes	- Governance & Member Support Officer
Marcus Hotten	- Director - Environment
Jonathan Stephenson	- Chief Executive
Matthew Stickley	- Interim Democratic Services Manager
Lauren Stretch	- Director of Housing
Steve Summers	- Strategic Director
Tim Willis	- Interim Director - Resources
Emily Yule	- Strategic Director

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Davies, Lewis, Poppy and Wiles.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Hirst declared a non pecuniary interest given that he will be co-financing some elements as Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for the County.

## **3. Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-29**

The report and appendices set out all the relevant information in support of the Council's Budget for General Fund services and Council Tax for 2024/25, together with financial forecast information through to 2028/29. Also included is information on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2024/25 and the Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29.

- i. Appendix A - The General Fund budget proposals for 2024/25 to 2028/29.
- ii. Appendix B - The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals for 2024/25 onwards.
- iii. Appendix C - The Capital Programme 2024-29.
- iv. Appendix D – Fees & Charges Schedule 2024/25.
- v. Appendix E - Pay Policy Statement.
- vi. Appendix F – Council Tax Resolution
- vii. Appendix G – Section 151 Officer's Assurance Statement

The report summarised the detailed service budgets, together with known adjustments including the impact of the provisional central government grant funding.

The key elements of the proposed budget are:

### **General Fund**

- 1) A proposed 2.99% increase in Council Tax for 2024/25 for Brentwood Borough Council services.
- 2) Earmarked Reserves to set aside appropriate balances to mitigate future financial risk and build up in borough regeneration.
- 3) Future uncertainty of local government financing.
- 4) The budget will be balanced in 2024/25 & 2025/26. However, there will be a budget gap in 2026/27 which will grow during the remainder of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

### **Housing Revenue Account**

- 1) A balanced budget across the MTFS.
- 2) There will be a contribution to reserves to pay for the deficit in 2025/26 of £212k.

- 3) Proposed increase in rents of 7.7%.
- 4) Continued investment in the delivery of Decent Homes and development of Housing within the Borough.
- 5) Significant investment in the Strategic Housing Delivery Programme ensuring the 30-year business plan is sustainable.

#### Capital

- 1) Total capital investment of £9.2m (General Fund) and £26.1m (HRA) in 2024/25.
- 2) Subsequent investment of £24.1m (General Fund) and £69.1m (HRA) from 2025 to 2029

Member's thanked the Finance Team for the work on the Budget.

Cllr Aspinell **MOVED** and Cllr Laplain **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report:

#### Members are asked to:

**R1. Approve the General Fund Budget 2024/25 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendix A.**

**R2. Approve a proposed Council Tax increase of 2.99% for 2024/25, the charge of Band D property increases to £210.70 per annum for Brentwood Council services only.**

**R3. Approve the HRA budget 2024/25 including the 30-year HRA Business Plan within Appendix B.**

**R4. Approve a proposed increase to rents of 7.7% for 2024/25.**

**R5. Approve the Capital Programme 2024-29 in Appendix C.**

**R6. Approve the Fees & Charges Schedule in Appendix D.**

**R7. Approve the Pay Policy Statement in Appendix E.**

**R8. To note the Section 151 Officers Assurance Statement in Appendix G.**

Councillor Russell **MOVED** an amendment to the budget (as appended to these minutes) and was **SECONDED** by Cllr White.

The amendment was not accepted by the mover of the original motion Cllr Aspinell.

Members debated the proposed amendment. After a full discussion a recorded vote was taken on the proposed **AMENDMENT** in accordance with Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2014).

**FOR:** Cllrs Barber; Bridge; Mrs Francois; Gelderbloem; Heard; Hirst; Marsh; McCheyne; Mrs Murphy; Parker; Mrs Pound; Reed; Russell; Wagland and White. (15)

**AGAINST:** Cllrs Barrett (Mayor), Haigh (Deputy Mayor), Aspinell, Dr Barrett, M Cuthbert, Mrs N Cuthbert, Mrs Fulcher, Gorton, Kendall, Laplain, Lewis, Mayo, Munden, Mynott, Naylor, Rigby, Sankey and Worsfold. (17)

The **AMENDMENT** motion was **LOST**.

Members debated the original motion. After a full discussion a recorded vote was taken on the original motion in accordance with Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2014).

**FOR:** Cllrs Barrett (Mayor), Haigh (Deputy Mayor), Aspinell, Dr Barrett, M Cuthbert, Mrs N Cuthbert, Mrs Fulcher, Gorton, Kendall, Laplain, Lewis, Mayo, Munden, Mynott, Naylor, Rigby, Sankey and Worsfold. (17)

**AGAINST:** Cllrs Barber; Bridge; Mrs Francois; Gelderbloem; Heard; Hirst; Marsh; McCheyne; Mrs Murphy; Parker; Mrs Pound; Reed; Russell; Wagland and White. (15)

The **ORIGINAL MOTION** was **CARRIED**.

#### **4. Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25**

The report and appendices set out all the relevant information in support of the Council's Treasury management strategy for 2024/25.

Cllr Hirst requested that the Treasury Management Strategy be presented at Audit & Scrutiny Committee for post scrutiny.

The motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Kendall and **SECONDED** by Cllr Laplain. A vote was taken by a show of hands and was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

**R1. To approve the council's Treasury management strategy for 2024/25.**

##### **Reasons for Recommendation**

Effective financial management underpins all the priorities for the Council and will enable the Council to operate within a sustainable budget environment.

The Council is required to approve the Treasury management strategy in accordance with the 2021 CIPFA prudential code.

#### **5. Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting concluded at 9:27pm.