

## 9 Budget Speech –Adur District Council 2014

May I start by thanking the Deputy Leader for all her hard work and support in the last year. Also my Cabinet colleges for all their hard work and support.

I am Delighted to move the Council's budget for 2014/15.

- I do so with real pride at the many things we have achieved over the last year when I look at what we've done and the impact we have had on the lives of the people in our Adur.

This has in many ways been an extraordinary year for Council:-

- In June we welcomed Brandon Lewis the local government minister to officially open Portland House the new central customer point for the Councils whilst retaining our Help Point facility in Shoreham Civic Centre
- We continue to make progress on establishing a permanent Civic presence at the Shoreham Centre, planning approval is in place and the development team now selected to start work on site in April. We have welcomed Shoreham

CAB into the Civic Centre on a temporary basis prior to their moving with the Council into the Shoreham Centre accommodation once complete.

The year has seen the transition in the leadership of the officers of the Council with Peter Latham retiring and Alex Bailey joining us to build the existing partnership work between the Councils and look at how we better grasp many of the opportunities that are now presenting to us.

- in “Catching the Wave” which we agreed as a Council in January we have a focus for radical change and opportunities to go for economic growth and ensure real opportunities for our communities and drive future prosperity. We of course say goodbye and wish good luck to several long serving senior staff and are currently recruiting to the new leadership of the Council. These new directors will lead some different and ambitious agendas whilst saving some sizeable sums from the senior management salary bill. When we started the partnership in 2007-08 the senior management

team cost £2.2 million a year. The new structure recently agreed will cost £807.960 a 56% in cost.

- In November we welcomed the Duke of Gloucester to Shoreham to open our new footbridge and we are shortly to complete and sign the “City Deal” proposal that enables us to benefit economically from regional investment opportunities.
- I’m particularly proud of the work that a number of our staff have been doing to keep the District safe and dry over the winter months during the exceptional weather. The overtopping of the riverbank, the flooding of Shoreham Airport and parts of Shoreham town centre together with old problems in Lancing created some unique challenges and I’m pleased to say that the skills and adaptability of our staff played a significant role in responding and helping design future flood prevention. I, with local MP are, currently working hard to encourage the Environment Agency to step up to the investment required for the provision of the Adur Tidal Walls to provide flood defences for the next decades.

Councils are about “Big Strategic Achievements” but as importantly they are about the impact they have on the lives of individuals and their communities at the local level. Again I’m proud of many of our achievements here including:-

- Playstreets programme for 2014 the way it brought communities together and encouraged safe play areas for children.
- The Work of our Communities Team renovating a local children’s home garden in Shoreham and encouraging young people to grow their own food and enhance cooking skills.
- Working with local residents to tackle health and wellbeing issues through our Wellbeing Hubs (showing that a public health role isn’t all strategy and plans).
- Our on-going support for the voluntary and community sector meant we have been able to manage budgets wisely without cutting back on our grants to small and medium size groups.

- Providing valuable work experience opportunities for local unemployed people within the Council (and our partner organisations) to help improve skills and opportunities for work which have been so vital during the economic downturn.

And I recognise that we are an important customer service organisation.

- Since our customer service centre relocated to Portland House we've received a number of plaudits for outstanding service that the advisors provide to our residents. Similarly I have received a number of comments from residents about the help received from the Adur Help Point. I would like to thank the staff for the advice, support and guidance that is provided often at very stressful times.
- Waste collection and street cleansing are very often a "Cinderella service". But not when you live next door to Brighton and Hove. Our service does not happen by accident. I would like to pay testimony to all of our staff, who through some very trying weather conditions, have emptied

our bins and swept our streets with a level of dedication that is almost universally regarded as excellent.

- We have recently completed a contract with the Rabbit Group for the disposal of trade waste which has enabled the Councils to freeze trade waste prices, we've rationalised service provision and created significant savings and better services, we have our lowest fly tipping figures for 10 years, we've deep cleaned approximately 80 streets across Adur and Worthing and delivered an exceptional amount of clean up after the unusually bad weather.
- To top it all we now having 10,000 garden bin contracts generating over half a million pounds of revenue.

Our Parks and Foreshore are a significant part of who we are and what makes our communities.

Again we have enjoyed being part of:-

- Refurbishment of Halewick Lane play area
- The holding of 96 open space events across Adur

- Redevelopment of the BMX track at Adur Rec.
- Planting of new trees in November by the Youth Charity Esteem at Adur Rec.
- Seeing our Conservation Volunteers complete 630 hours of work alongside our staff on environmental projects at our Council managed sites across the district.
- Successful integration of a new joint grounds maintenance service including the establishment of a new arboriculture team (which has led us to be able to respond rapidly to storm damage throughout the year).
- The outdoor gym installation at Shoreham Beach Green.
- Works at Lancing Manor provide new planters and additional parking for the leisure centre and a new artificial cricket mat shortly to be installed at Lancing Manor.

In short Council, we are doing more for less. This is a phrase that as politicians we often use but I

genuinely believe much of local government is delivering (and when I look at other parts of the public sector I think we are leading the way). Many of you will be aware that I'm a Director of IESE (a local government owned organisation that promotes efficiency and innovation) and from my perspective we can be proud of our achievements with our Partners Worthing, we are leading the way in Local Government and with our new Chief Executive will continue to do so.

The budget paper before you that I am moving sets out in detail through tight financial management by officers and Members alike we find ourselves in a reasonably stable financial position compared to very many local authorities in the Country.

I came into politics to make a difference to provide good services, to enable the people to run their lives and be successful and to ensure that essential taxation is properly spent.

I am also proud in our record at Adur District Council of freezing council tax. This is something that matters to our residents at a time when a variety of bills (including utilities) are out pacing



real increases in wages. Anything we can do to make financial life easier for our residents is vital.

The budget papers before us provide an option for us to increase Council tax by 1.5%. I am not in favour of this and I believe that few in this Chamber would disagree.

It is important that we do not increase the financial impact on people of council tax. It's worth remembering our track record. Despite this being past the end of pantomime season I would like your help in remembering our record on council tax. I would therefore ask you some questions.

Question – In 2011/12 what was the percentage rise in council tax? [audience shouts 0%]

Question – in 2012/13 what was our percentage rise in council tax? [audience shouts 0% Leader]

Question – In 2013/14 What was our percentage rise in council tax? [audience shouts 0% Leader]

And in 2014/15 ... hold on a moment. I've said that it's important that we freeze council tax when

we can ... however it's essential that we cut tax when we are able.

Council as well as moving a budget I am also proposing an amendment to the budget. [please circulate printed amendment]. I am moving today that we cut council tax by 1% for the year 2014/15. I do so because I believe that when we are successfully running efficient council services we should ensure our residents feel the benefits of our success.

I believe that if you approve this amendment that this will make us the only council in West Sussex that will be cutting council tax in 2014/15. We know most are going to freeze and Chichester is going up by £5 a year, good old Brighton and Hove are looking to a referendum and a nearly 5% rise. The Police commissioner is increasing hers by 2%. So I believe that if you approve this amendment that this will make us the only council in west Sussex possibly Sussex As well as being proud of our achievements I'm proud of our efficiency in delivering them.

Our budget round this year has been very successful and as a result we will be putting £105,000 into the reserves. However I think we should be putting some of it back into our residence pockets.

I rose to say that I was delighted to move the budget for 2014, and end by saying that I'm extremely proud to be in a position to cut council tax by 1% in the coming year and would urge you Council to support both the budget and my amendment.

Mr Chairman thank you.