

**Record of Decisions made at a Meeting of the  
Adur District Council Cabinet**

**5 February 2013**

Councillor Neil Parkin (Leader)  
Councillor Julie Searle (Deputy Leader)

Councillor Keith Dollemore  
Councillor Angus Dunn

Councillor Jim Funnell  
\*Councillor David Simmons

\*= absent

**CAB/006/12-13 Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

**CAB/007/10-11 Questions and Statements by the Public**

Mr Hillman of Buckingham Road Shoreham questioned pages 55-57 of the proposed budget in relation to the increase costs of Allotments and asked for clarification of the acronym 'MTFP'. MTFP was explained as the shortened version of 'Medium Term Financial Plan' ; relating to the budget question - at this point in the meeting officers were unable to give full details in answer to Mr Hillman's question – however by the end of the meeting the details had been investigated with the meeting being informed that a budget had been removed in a previous year by accountancy as it seemed unused however this was not the case and the budget had been re-instated.

**CAB/008/10-11 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions**

None

**CAB/009/10-11 Housing Revenue Account Budget 2013/14**

Before the Cabinet was a joint report by the Executive Head of Financial Services and Executive Head of Adur Homes copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Decisions as Item 5. The report set out financial arrangements for the Housing Revenue Account and asked members to set the rent levels and service charges for 2013/14 and considers some of the issues emerging from 2014/15 onwards.

The Finance Manager reported on the positive position regarding the HRA and explained that the rental increase recommendation was in-line with those set by Housing Association nationally. There had been a meeting with the ACF (Adur Consultative Forum) with no comments from the Forum to be reported to the Cabinet.

**Decision that**

- i. The Housing Revenue Account estimates be approved;

- ii. the level of associated rents and charges with effect from week one of 2013/14 be :-
  - (a) **Rents of Council Dwellings** – to implement the progression towards restructured rents which equated to an average increase of 3.1% (£2.54) £84.57 per week (as detailed in para. 6.5) (average rent presently £82.03 per week) be agreed
  - (b) **Rents of Council garages** – to increase garage rents by 2% (as detailed in para. 6.7) (rent presently £8.50per week, plus VAT for non-Council tenants) be agreed
  - (c) **Service Charges** – to delegate to the Executive Head of Adur Homes and Executive Head of Financial Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, the setting of the service charges
- iii. a contribution of £346,060 to the earmarked reserve specifically for new development and acquisitions of council housing (as detailed in para 14.4) be approved
- iv. the closure in 2012/13 of the Housing Repairs Account and the virement of the 2012/13 budget to the HRA to meet the costs of repairs in that year: with the retained balance on the Housing Repairs Account being transferred to the HRA General Balance be approved
- v. the HRA Treasury Management Strategy contained in appendix 5 be approved

### **Reason for Decision**

Officer advice.

### **Alternative options considered**

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### **Call In**

The call-in for this decision will be 5pm on Monday 18 February 2012.

### **CAB/0010/10-11 Revenue Estimates 2013/14 and Setting the 2013/14 Council Tax**

The Cabinet had before it a report by the Executive Head of Financial Services, copies of which had been circulated to all members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of this record of decision as item 4.

The report represented the culmination of the annual budget exercise and asked members to consider the following:

- The final revenue estimates for 2013/14;
- An updated outline 5-year forecast; and
- The provisional level of Council Tax for 2013/14, prior to its submission to the Council for approval on the 21 February 2013.

The report was subject to any proposals to change the draft revenue budget following the consideration of the budget proposals by Cabinet. The budgets reflect the decisions taken by Members to date in relation to agreed savings proposals and also updated the impact of the 2013/14 settlement.

The budget was presented and analysed by Cabinet Member portfolio. In addition, the draft estimates for 2013/14 were prepared, as usual, in accordance with the requirements of the Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities 2013/14 (except in relation to pension costs adjustments that do not impact either on the Budget Requirement or the Council Tax Requirement).

The arrangements for setting the Sussex Police Authority precept have changed this year. The new Police and Crime Commissioner had indicated that the overall increase to the Council Tax will be 0% for 2013/14 and this was approved by the Sussex Police and Crime Panel on 11th January 2013.

The precept for West Sussex County Council has not yet been finalised and will not be confirmed until 15th February 2013. Therefore the formal detailed resolution setting the overall Council Tax for next year will be presented direct to the Council Meeting on 21 February 2013.

Presenting the report at the meeting the Executive Head reminded those present of previous discussions by the Cabinet including the recent consideration of Joint Strategic Committee reports – the Cabinet was encouraged to focus on two key areas : whether to passport any grant to the Parish Councils and the amount of Council Tax increase to be supported.

Highlighting the reduction in local government finance which amounted to a 40% loss of grant over the last 3 years the Executive Head reminded the Cabinet that until now this had been accommodated without the loss of front line services however this was unlikely to continue. Regarding the Parish Councils the situation regarding their base calculations was explained; both of the councils had been consulted with Lancing respectfully turning down the option of a passported grant. Although Sompting was not due to meet until 14 February, it was expected that it too would turn down the option.

The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) had recommended that the draft budget be adopted, supported a 0% Council tax increase and that the annual Investment Strategy and the Policy for Minimum Revenue provisions be agreed.

Members of the Cabinet questioned officers present as to why the budget had been before the JOSC. Using the Government budget as an parallel to illustrate their point – the Chancellor did not release the Government's proposed budget to scrutiny before it had announced it therefore the Cabinet Members did not consider it necessary to follow a different route. The Cabinet was clear that the scrutiny of its budget took place at Council in the Council chamber and at no other place.

Officers reminded the Cabinet of the previous year's JOSC meeting in which the Chief Executive and the Leaders were questioned on the budget. On hearing that the item was on the Overview and Scrutiny work programme Cabinet requested that this process be looked at with a view to it not being placed before JOSC before consideration by Cabinet and recommendation to Council.

The Leader mentioned the letter he had received and responded to from Brandon Lewis on the Council Tax Support Grant; other members of the Cabinet expressed concerns regarding the financial pressures in future years for the Council that would make it increasingly difficult to protect front line services. Mention was made that the Council didn't have political advisors, large members allowances, refreshments at meetings or Mayoral cars to cut and was reduced to a bare minimum. In supporting the Cabinet recommendation to Council, the Cabinet Members made it clear that unless the Government properly funded the council in future then it may not be able to accept a council tax freeze for a 4<sup>th</sup> time.

Members of the Cabinet mentioned the work of staff in the achievements of savings and passed on their thanks for the hard work achieved and the work being done to forward the many changes and NWoW projects.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet considered the level of Council Tax supporting a 0% increase and therefore agreed the following:

that Council be **recommended**:

- i. that the Council Tax Support grant should not be passported to the Parish Councils
- ii. that a 0% Council Tax increase be supported, which in real terms was a 10.6% reduction on current year,
- iii. to agree the changes to the prudential indicators as set out in Appendix 4 of the report
- iv. to agree the draft budgets for 2013/14 at Appendix 6 as submitted in Cabinet Member Portfolio order, and the transfer to the Reserves leading to a net budget requirement of £ 9,658,510;
- v. to agree the special expenses of £17.28 per band D equivalent charged in all areas of the District except lancing
- vi. to agree that the Council Tax for Adur District Council's requirements in 2013/14 be £ 262.08 for a Band D equivalent property
- vii. to agree the Annual Investment Strategy and Policy for Minimum Revenue Provisions contained in Appendix 7 to the report

## **Reason(s) for Decision**

The Council is obliged to set a balanced budget.

The Cabinet was of the opinion that the recommended budget would allow the Council to continue to deliver its services in a manner that was affordable within the resources available to it.

Members considered the level of Council Tax increase that should be levied on the public and decided that in the current financial climate when personal incomes were stretched that it was not appropriate to place an additional financial burden on Council Tax payers.

Statutory requirement to set a Council Tax

### **Alternative options considered**

The Cabinet considered whether to recommend to Council to freeze the current level of Council Tax or to increase Council Tax by 1.9% .

### **Call In**

This is a recommendation to Council on 21 February 2012.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.37pm having commenced at 7pm.

Chairman