

Adur District Council

Record of Decisions made at a Meeting of the Executive

3 February 2015

Councillor Neil Parkin (Leader)
Councillor Angus Dunn (Deputy Leader)

*Councillor Pat Beresford
Councillor Keith Dollemore

Councillor Jim Funnell
Councillor David Simmons

*= absent

Also in attendance: Councillors Carson Albury and Ken Bishop.

A EX /005/14-15 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

A EX/006/14-15 Questions by the Public

None were submitted.

A EX/007/14-15 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions

There were no items raised under urgency provisions.

A EX/008/14-15 Housing Revenue Account – Budget 2015/16

The Executive had before it a joint report from the Director for Digital and Resources and the Director for Communities, attached to these minutes as item 4.

The report set out the financial arrangements for the Housing Revenue Account and asked Members to set the rent levels and service charges for 2015/16. The report also considered some of the issues emerging from 2016/17 onwards.

The Strategic Finance Manager introduced her report explaining that the 2.2% increase was CPI plus 1% and followed the Government Social Rent Policy and the Rent Policy as recently agreed by the Adur Homes Management Board.

The Executive Member for Customer Services in echoing the Officers comments, mentioned that the ACF had been concerned at the level of the previous year's but that the proposal before the Executive was inline with the DCLG guidance of CPI plus 1% for the next 10 years. He recommended the proposals.

Decision the Executive

(i) considered and approved the Housing Revenue Account estimates

(ii) determined the level of associated rents and charges with effect from week one of 2015/16 as follows:-

(a) **Rents of Council Dwellings** – agreed an average increase of 2.2% raising the average council dwelling rent by £1.98 to £92.00 per week (average rent currently £90.02 per week) – (Para.5.9 of the report)

(b) **Rents of Council garages** – agreed an increase of 2.2% to £9.03. (currently £8.84 per week), plus VAT for non-Council tenants) (Para.5.14 of the report)

(c) **Service Charges** - delegated to the Head of Housing and Head of Finance in consultation with the Executive Member for Customer Services, the setting of the service charges (Para. 11.2 of the report)

(iii) Approved a continued contribution of £566,060 to the earmarked reserve specifically for new development and refurbishment of council housing (para. 13.5 of the report)

(iv) Approved the HRA Treasury Management Strategy contained in Appendix 3 to the report.

Reason for Decision

To set the rent level for 2015/16

Alternative options considered

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Call In

The call in deadline for this decision is Friday 13th February at 5pm.

A EX/009/14-15 Adur District council overall Budget Estimates 2015/16 and Setting of 2015/16 Council Tax

The Executive had before it a report from the Director for Digital and Resources, attached to these minutes as item 5.

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

- The final revenue estimates for 2015/16;
- An updated outline 5-year forecast; and
- The provisional level of Council Tax for 2015/16, prior to its submission to the Council for approval on the 19th February 2015.

(This will be subject to any proposals to change the draft revenue budget following the consideration of the budget proposals by Executive).

The budgets as presented reflected the decisions taken by Members to date in relation to agreed savings proposals. The report also updated the Executive about the impact of the draft 2015/16 settlement.

The major points raised within the report included:

- A full update on the impact of settlement. The Council was advised to prepare itself for a continuation of the austerity measures for another 2-5 years (see paragraph 3.7 of the report) ;
- The Executive will need to consider whether to increase Council Tax by 1.5% or to freeze Council Tax for the fifth successive year and accept the Council Tax freeze grant (paragraph 5.12); and, finally
- The Executive needed to consider the new growth items in Appendix 2

The budget was presented as individual Executive Member portfolios . In addition, the draft Estimates for 2015/16 had been prepared, as always, in accordance with the requirements of the Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities 2015/16 (except in relation to pension costs adjustments that do not impact either on the Budget Requirement or the Council Tax Requirement).

The Police and Crime Commissioner had consulted on an increase to the Council Tax for 2015/16 of 1.98% and the report explained that the proposed 2015/16 budget was due to be considered by the Sussex Police and Crime Panel (PCP) on 23 January 2015. If the proposals were vetoed by the PCP, revised proposals will be considered by the Panel on the 20 February 2015 at which point the Commissioner will be in a position to confirm the Council Tax for 2015/16. If the proposals for the PCC's share of the Council Tax are not confirmed until 21 February, then the planned Council date of the 19 February would need to be rearranged to the 26 February 2015.

The Head of Finance updated the Executive on various matters. The Settlement had been received earlier in the day therefore full evaluation had not yet been possible but no substantive changes were expected. The PCP had agreed a 1.98% increase therefore the reserve date for Council was not required. The new homes bonus had been included within the estimates and there was favourable news regarding Business Rates, income was up by £40K.

The Leader pointed out that the Council had not frozen the Council Tax in 2014/15 but had reduced the Council Tax required.

The Executive Member for Resources commented that the business rates income increase was encouraging as it reflected the economy moving in the right direction. He further mentioned that the freeze in council tax, and the previous year's reduction, had been achieved by restructuring producing savings and efficiencies and a challenging plan to deliver services rather than cutting service provision.

The Executive Member for the Environment explained the pressures mounting in the European Union regarding waste management and supported a small increase in Council Tax to ensure that the Council was in a good position in the future.

The Leader thanked the officers for their hard work in producing the estimates in the report before the meeting.

The Head of Finance advised that the Worthing Executive the previous evening had considered the grow items, as detailed in Appendix 3, supporting those as presented in the papers to the Adur Executive.

Decision the Executive

- i. Considered and agreed to include the growth items detailed at Appendix 3 within the revenue budget in 2015/16;
- ii. Agree to recommend to Council the draft budgets for 2015/16 at Appendix 7 as submitted in Executive Member Portfolio order, and the transfer to Reserves leading to a net budget requirement of £9,585,090 , subject to any amendments in (i) above;
- iii. Approved the rationalisation of the reserves as outlined in paragraph 7.7
- iv. Considered which band D Council Tax to recommend to Council for Adur District Council's requirements in 2015/16 as set out in paragraph 12.3 determining that a 0% increase was recommended making the recommendation that the Council Tax Band D for Shoreham, Southwick, Sompting and Coombes for 2015/16 be £279.45 ;
- v. Agree to recommend to Council the special expenses of £17.82 per band D equivalent charged in all areas of the District except Lancing

Reason for Decision

Statutory requirement to set a budget

Alternative options considered

As detailed in the report; growth bids were considered, increasing the Council Tax was considered against the availability of the Council Tax support Grant.

Call In

There is no call-in for this decision as it is a recommendation to Council

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.24pm having commenced at 7pm.

Chairman