

Minutes of a meeting of the  
Adur Cabinet  
1 February 2024  
at 6.30 pm

Councillor Angus Dunn (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Carson Albury  
Councillor Emma Evans

Councillor Kevin Boram  
Councillor Steve Neocleous

**Absent**

Councillor Neil Parkin

**A CAB/1/23-24      Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**A CAB/2/23-24      Public Questions**

There were no questions received from members of the public.

**A CAB/3/23-24      Members Questions**

There were no pre-submitted questions received from members.

**A CAB/4/23-24      Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions**

There were no items raised under urgency provisions.

**A CAB/5/23-24      Second Homes & Long Term Empty Property Premium: Council Tax**

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

This report identified decisions to be made by Full Council and made recommendations to change the council's approach in respect of certain discretionary areas within council tax legislation. If agreed, changes to Empty Property premiums will take effect from 1 April 2024 and changes to Dwellings Occupied Periodically (Second Homes) shall take place from 1st April 2025. These changes arise from the the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 which enables councils to make further amendments to the levying of council tax premiums within the District.

Members were told that the report recommendations would reduce the number of empty homes within the District in line with the Council's Empty Homes Strategy and to

encourage the use of premises as main residence by local residents rather than as second homes.

Members supported the recommendations in the report and welcomed recognition that there would be some relevant circumstances whereby the premium would not apply

## **Decision**

That the following be recommended to Adur District Council

- 1) That from 1 April 2024 to continue to levy the maximum level of premium for empty properties as follows noting the change for empty homes after 1 year:-
  - Premium of 100% for dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished (Empty Homes Premium) after 1 years up to 5 years of becoming empty;
  - Premium of 200% for dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished (Empty Homes Premium) between 5 years and up to 10 years; and
  - Premium of 300% for dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished (Empty Homes Premium) for 10 years or more.
- 2) From 1 April 2025 to approve the application of a premium for second homes (Second Homes Premium) of 100% for all dwellings that are no persons' sole or main residence and which is substantially furnished
- 3) (Exceptions to premiums) that mindful of the current consultation by government which recommends exceptions in certain circumstances, to the second homes premium to be charged, and subject to the outcome of that consultation, it is recommended that the Section 151 Officer is given delegated authority to implement this Council's policy on premiums in line with statute and any following guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 4) Recommend no changes to existing Council Tax Discounts.

## **Reason for Decision**

To reduce the number of empty homes within the District in line with the Council's Empty Homes Strategy and to encourage the use of premises as main residence by local residents rather than as second homes

## **Alternative options considered**

As outlined in the report.

## **Call In**

There is no call for these items as they are recommendations to Council

## **A CAB/6/23-24      Housing Revenue Account: 2024/25 Budget**

The Cabinet had before it a report from the Director for Sustainability and Resources and the Director for Housing and Resources, copy attached to these minutes as item 6.

The report set out the current and future financial prospects for the Housing Revenue Account and requested that Members agree to set the rent levels and service charges for 2024/25 as set out in the report. The report also considered some of the strategic challenges facing the Housing Revenue Account and the need to maximise income in order to continue to deliver the improvement plan following the self-referral to the social housing regulator.

Members noted that the rent limitation announced in 2015/16 had significantly affected the financial viability of the Housing Revenue Account for the past few years which had been in deficit for five years. However, the Council was now permitted to increase rents on social rent properties by up to the September CPI +1% each year from 2020. It was the Government's intention that this arrangement should remain in place for a period of at least five years.

The recommendations in the report were unanimously supported.

### **Decision**

- 1) That the Housing Revenue Account estimates for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 be approved;
- 2) That the rents of council dwellings will increase by 7.7%, increasing the average council dwelling rent by £8.16 to £114.26 per week (average rent currently £106.10 per week, paragraph 6.2) be approved
- 3) That the level of associated rents and charges be determined with effect from week one of 2024/25:
- 4) Rents of council garages – agree an increase of 6.7% to £13.11. (currently £12.29 per week, plus VAT for non-Council tenants, paragraph 6.6)
- 5) Service charges - delegate to the Assistant Director for Housing and Homelessness Prevention and Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the cabinet member for Adur Homes and customer services, the setting of the service charges (paragraph 9.2)
- 6) That the HRA Treasury Management Strategy contained in Appendix 3 be approved.

### **Reason for Decision**

To set the rent level for 2024/25.

### **Alternative options considered**

As outlined in the report.

### **Call In**

The call-in deadline for these decisions is Tuesday 13 February 2024 at 5.00pm.

## **A CAB/7/23-24      Budget Estimates 2024/25 and setting of the 2024/25 Council Tax**

The Cabinet had before it a report from the Director for Sustainability and Resources, attached to these minutes as item 7.

The report was the final budget report of the year, the culmination of the annual budgeting exercise, and asked members to consider:

- The final revenue estimates for 2024/25 including any adjustments arising from settlement;
- An updated outline 5-year forecast; and
- The provisional level of Council Tax for 2024/25, prior to its submission to the Council for approval on the 20 February 2024. This would be subject to any proposals to change the draft revenue budget following the consideration of the budget by the Cabinet.

This report outlined the Adur Cabinet specific decisions to be made with respect to areas such as fees and charges and the setting of council tax. It also included the Adur Cabinet decisions on the shared services which were reported to the JSC for review at its meeting on 8th February as part of the Joint Services Budget

The report outlined the medium term financial challenge through to 2027/28 and describes the key risks and assumptions which underpin this medium term financial view.

The major points raised within the report included:

- A full update on the impact of settlement.
- Highlights the proposed funding for initiatives to support the councils' ambitions;
- Details the proposals to invest in services outlined in Appendix 3 alongside savings proposals which are being proposed;
- The Executive will need to consider whether to increase council tax by 2.99% or by a lower amount (section 4.3).

The budget was analysed by Cabinet Member portfolio. In addition, the draft estimates for 2024/25 had been prepared, in accordance with the requirements of the Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities (except in relation to pension costs adjustments that did not impact either on the Budget Requirement or the Council Tax Requirement).

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has been informed that the referendum criteria for the year was an increase of £13.00 per Band D property which would be equivalent to an increase of 5.42%. The proposed 2024/25 budget was due to be considered by the Sussex Police and Crime Panel (PCP) on 26th January 2024. If the proposals were vetoed by the PCP, revised proposals will be considered by the Panel on

the 19th February 2024 at which point the Commissioner will be in a position to confirm the council tax for 2024/25 in time for Full Council on the 22nd February 2024.

The draft Local Government Finance Settlement allowed councils to increase core council tax by up to 3%. Councils with responsibility for Adult Social Care could increase council tax by up to a further 2%. Therefore a council tax increase of 5% for councils with social care responsibilities was allowed for 2024/25.

The precept for West Sussex County Council had not yet been finalised and would not be confirmed until 16th February 2024. The formal detailed resolution setting the overall council tax for next year will be presented directly to the council meeting on 22nd February 2024.

A recorded vote was taken, the results of which, are set out below:-

For: (5) - Councillors C Albury, K Boram, A Dunn, E Evans, S Neocleous

Against: (0)

Abstentions: (0)

### **Decision**

- 1) That the the proposals for savings outlined in Appendix 2 be approved;
- 2) That the proposals to invest in services outlined in Appendix 3 be approved;
- 3) That it be recommended to Full Council to approve the use of capital receipts to support the delivery of the Organisation Design Programme and the budget as set out at appendix 4;
- 4) That it be recommended to Full Council approval of the draft budgets for 2024/25 and the transfer to reserves leading to a net budget requirement of £11,101,880 which includes provision for the proposals in Appendix 2 and 3, subject to any agreed amendments; and
- 5) recommended to Council an average increase of 2.99% in Council Tax, making the average Band D £333.72 for Adur District Council's requirements in 2024/25, as set out in paragraph 4.3;
- 6) That it be Recommend to Full Council that special expenses of £28.80 per Band D equivalent to be charged in all areas of the district except Lancing.
- 7) That the council tax base of 22,409.9 for 2024/25 as set out in paragraph 11.3 be approved

### **Reason for Decision**

Statutory requirement to set a budget.

## **Alternative options considered**

As detailed in the report.

## **Call In**

The call-in deadline for decision (1) and (2) and (7) will be 5.00pm on Tuesday 13th February 2023.

There is no call-in for recommendations to Full Council, (3), (4) and (5).

## **A CAB/8/23-24 Investing in our Places - Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27**

The Cabinet had before it a report from the Director for Sustainability and Resources, attached to these minutes as item 8.

This report before members recommended the investment programmes for Adur District Council which supported both the strategic ambition of the Council, and the vital regular investment toward the upkeep and improvement of our public assets and the delivery of services.

Members were asked to approve the new schemes for 2024/25. The report recommended:

- the schemes for inclusion in the overall Capital Investment Programmes for 2024/25; and
- an indicative list of schemes for 2025/26 which will be confirmed next year.

The report informed the Cabinet of the resources available for future capital investment, and updates Members about the financing of the proposed programmes.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet had before it a report from the Director for Sustainability and Resources, attached to these minutes as item 8.

This report before members recommended the investment programmes for Adur District Council which supported both the strategic ambition of the Council, and the vital regular investment toward the upkeep and improvement of our public assets and the delivery of services.

Members were asked to approve the new schemes for 2024/25. The report recommended:

- the schemes for inclusion in the overall Capital Investment Programmes for 2024/25; and
- an indicative list of schemes for 2025/26 which will be confirmed next year.

The report informed the Cabinet of the resources available for future capital investment, and updates Members about the financing of the proposed programmes.

## **Decision**

- 1) That the the General Fund Capital Investment Programmes for 2024/25 the schemes to be included as detailed in Appendix 2 and 3 be confirmed
  
- 2) That the full programme detailed at Appendix 3 be recommended for approval by Adur District Council on the 22nd February 2024;

## **Reason for Decision**

To protect and maintain the District's Assets

## **Alternative options considered**

As outlined in the report.

## **Call In**

The call in deadline for this decision is Tuesday 13 February 2024 at 5.00pm.

There is no call in for b) as it is a decision for Council

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The meeting ended at 6.55 pm