

COUNCIL

Wednesday 19 February 2014

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Sinclair (Lord Mayor), Abbasi (Sheriff), Brett (Deputy Lord Mayor), Altaf-Khan, Baxter, Benjamin, Brown, Campbell, Canning, Clack, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Curran, Darke, Fooks, Fry, Goddard, Hollick, Humberstone, Jones, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, McCready, Mills, O'Hara, Paule, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Royce, Sanders, Seamons, Simmons, Tanner, Turner, Van Nooijen, Wilkinson and Williams.

90. CONDUCT OF COUNCIL BUSINESS

Council agreed to adopt the procedure (amended to these minutes) for dealing with the budget debate.

91. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lord Mayor made the following announcements:

- (1) The Rainbow Flag would be flown from the Town Hall flag pole on Saturday 22nd February 2014, to mark the closing of the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi.
- (2) The Commonwealth Flag will be presented to the Council and flown from the town Hall flag pole on Monday 10th March 2014.
- (3) On behalf of the Full Council, the Lord Mayor congratulated Councillor Laurence Baxter on the announcement of his engagement.
- (4) Val Howlett, was to retire having been an employee with the Council for many years, initially as a telephonist and more recently as a member of Facilities Management. Council wished to record its thanks and to wish her well in her retirement.
- (5) William Reed, Democratic Services Manager was to retire after 41 years and 8 months service with the City Council. First as an Assistant in the Information Centre in 1972, followed by positions as a trainee Committee Secretary, Committee Secretary, Principle Committee Secretary and more recently as the Democratic Services Manager.

Council noted that during his many years of service, William Reed had clerked all of the Committees appointed by Council, most notably the Full Council meeting and the former Highways and Traffic Committee.

Council thanked William Reed for his service and wished him a happy and restful retirement.

92. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michael Gotch, Mick Haines, Shah Jahan Khan, David Rundle, Val Smith, Louise Upton and Dick Wolff.

93. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

94. PUBLIC ADDRESSES AND QUESTIONS THAT RELATE TO MATTERS FOR DECISION AT THIS MEETING

No requests to address Council or ask questions were received from members of the public.

95. REPORT OF THE COUNCIL'S CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER ON THE ROBUSTNESS OF THE 2014/15 BUDGET

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 which required the Council's Chief Financial Officer report to Council on:

- (a) The robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations of the budget, and
- (b) The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

Council agreed to note the report.

96. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2014-15 TO 2017-18 AND 2014-15 BUDGET FOR CONSULTATION: A FAIR FUTURE FOR OXFORD

Council had before it the following:

- (1) Report of the Head of Finance, submitted to the City Executive Board on 12th February 2014;
- (2) Supplementary budget report of the Head of Finance, submitted to the City Executive Board on 12th February 2014, following the Government's late announcement of 'excessive Council Tax' level;
- (3) Extract from the minutes of the City Executive Board held on 12th February 2014;
- (4) Supplementary budget report of the Head of Finance, concerning a change to the recommendation of the City Executive Board of 12th February 2014, on Council Tax discounts;
- (5) Liberal Democrat Group alternative budget proposals;

(6) Green Group alternative budget proposals;

(7) A revised Green Group alternative budget proposals (revenue);

Councillor Ed Turner, seconded by Councillor Bob Price, moved and spoke to the Administration's budget.

Councillor Jean Fooks, seconded by Councillor Mark Mills, moved and spoke to the Liberal Democrat Group alternative budget.

Following a further debate, Council resolved under procedure Rule 11.19(d) to have a named vote. The result of the named vote was as follows:

For the Liberal Democrat Group amendment – Councillors Mohammed Niaz Abbasi, Tony Brett, Mohammed Altaf-Khan, Jim Campbell, Jean Fooks, John Goddard, Graham Jones, Stuart McCready, Mark Mills, Gwynneth Royce, Ruth Wilkinson

Against the Liberal Democrat Group amendment – Councillor Laurence Baxter, Elise Benjamin, Susan Brown, Beverley Clack, Mary Clarkson, Colin Cook, Van Coulter, Stephen Curran, Roy Darke, James Fry, Sam Hollick, Rae Humberstone, Pat Kennedy, Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan, Mark Lygo, Sajjid Malik, Helen O'Hara, Michele Paule, Susanna Pressel, Bob Price, Mike Rowley, Gill Sanders, Scott Seamons, Craig Simmons, Dee Sinclair, John Tanner, Ed Turner, Oscar Van Nooijen, David Williams

Abstentions – None

With more Councillors voting against than for, the Liberal Democrat Group alternative budget proposals they were not carried.

Councillor Craig Simmons, seconded by Councillor Sam Hollick, moved and spoke to the Green Group alternative budget.

Following a further debate, Council resolved under procedure Rule 11.19(d) to have a named vote. The result of the named vote was as follows:

For the Green Group amendment – Councillors Elise Benjamin, Sam Hollick, Craig Simmons, David Williams

Against the Green Group amendment – Councillors Tony Brett, Mohammed Niaz Abbasi, Mohammed Altaf-Khan, Laurence Baxter, Susan Brown, Jim Campbell, Beverley Clack, Mary Clarkson, Colin Cook, Van Coulter, Stephen Curran, Roy Darke, Jean Fooks, James Fry, John Goddard, Rae Humberstone, Graham Jones, Pat Kennedy, Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan, Mark Lygo, Sajjid Malik, Stuart McCready, Mark Mills, Helen O'Hara, Michele Paule, Susanna Pressel, Bob Price, Mike Rowley, Gill Sanders, Scott Seamons, Dee Sinclair, John Tanner, Ed Turner, Oscar Van Nooijen, Ruth Wilkinson

Abstentions – None

With more Councillors voting against than for, the Green Group alternative budget proposals they were not carried.

Amendments

Amendment 1 - Councillor Jean Fooks, Seconded by Councillor Stuart McCready, moved an amendment to the Administration's budget for an amendment to the parking fees as follows:

1. ***Remove fee of 50p from one hour's parking at Cutteslowe Park, Hinksey Park and Walton Well Road car park.***

The new fee structure for these car parks would be

Cutteslowe Park; Harbord Road and A40

0-1 hour free, but ticket required

1-3 hours £1.10

3-24 £2.20

Hinksey Park and Walton Well Road Port Meadow car parks:

0-1 hour free, ticket required

1-3 hours £1.10

3-5 hours £2.20

5-24 hours £10.20

2. ***Charge district centre fees at Alexandra Courts, with permits for tennis players***

New charges would be

Monday to Sunday (0800-20.00)

0-1 hours £1.20

1-2 hours £1.70

2-3 hours £3.20

3-4 hours £5.20

4-6 hours £13.10

6-8 hours £13.10

8+ hours £13.10

All other times £1.20

Amendment 2 - Councillor Mark Mills, seconded by Councillor Jean Fooks moved an amendment to the Administration's budget as follows:

Council resolves to release the contingency for transport for the elderly and disabled to the general fund to support Dial-a-Ride or an analogous service.

Amendment 3 – Councillor Jean Fooks seconded by Councillor Craig Simmons moved a joint amendment to the Administration's budget (details appended to these minutes)

Amendment 4 – Councillor Sam Hollick, seconded by Councillor Craig Simmons moved an amendment to the Administration's budget as follows:

Introducing an inflation cap on rent rises for council homes from 16/17

Amend the HRA budget as follows:

Additional savings

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|------|-------|
| Reduce revenue contribution to capital | 0 | 0 | -700 | -1300 |
|--|---|---|------|-------|

Additional costs

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|-----|------|
| Reduce rental income to inflation Only increased for 16/17 and 17/18 | 0 | 0 | 600 | 1200 |
| Prudential borrowing costs to finance The HRA capital programme | 0 | 0 | 56 | 112 |
| Transfer the balance of proposals From /(to) reserves | 0 | 0 | -44 | 12 |

Amendment 5 – Councillor Sam Hollick, seconded by Councillor Craig Simmons moved an amendment to the Administration’s budget as follows:

Extra support for homelessness – reversing the cut in officer post from the Housing Team, and extending funds available to support people facing homelessness.

This would be funded from modest other proposals already in the Council papers.

Amend the revenue budget as follows:

| | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| Extending annual increase to Park And Ride sites (in 2 * 5%) | -50 | -50 | -100 | -100 |
| Reverse proposed cuts in some off Street parking tariffs | -50 | -50 | -50 | -50 |
| Introduce district car parking charges To Alexandra Courts | -26 | -26 | -26 | -26 |
| Reduce Your Oxford to 1 per year | -10 | -10 | -10 | -10 |
| TOTAL | -136 | -136 | -186 | -186 |
| Reverse cut to homeless officer | 36 | 36 | 36 | 36 |
| Homeless Support Grant | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| TOTAL | 136 | 136 | 186 | 186 |

Following a combined debate on all of the amendments, Council voted. All four amendments fell with more Councillors voting against than for.

Council resolved under procedure Rule 11.19(d) to have a named vote on the City Executive Board’s recommendations from its meeting on 12th February 2014 and on the amended recommendation submitted to this Council meeting. The result of the named vote was as follows:

For the City Executive Board recommendations as amended – Councillors Mohammed Niaz Abbasi, Laurence Baxter, Susan Brown, Anne-Marie Canning, Beverley Clack, Mary Clarkson, Colin Cook, Van Coulter, Stephen Curran, Roy

Darke, James Fry, Rae Humberstone, Pat Kennedy, Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan, Mark Lygo, Sajjid Malik, Helen O'Hara, Michele Paule, Susanne Pressel, Bob Price, Mike Rowley, Gill Sanders, Scott Seamons, Dee Sinclair, John Tanner, Ed Turner, Oscar Van Nooijen

Against the City Executive Board recommendations as amended – Councillors Tony Brett, Mohammed Altaf-Khan, Jean Fooks, John Goddard, Stuart McCready, Mark Mills, Gwynneth Royce, Ruth Wilkinson

Abstentions – Councillor Elise Benjamin, Sam Hollick, Graham Jones, Craig Simmons, David Williams

The following recommendations were carried:

- (a) The Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £24.080 million for 2014/15 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 1.99% or £5.34 per annum as set out in Table 1 of the supplementary report of the Head of Finance, representing a Band D Council Tax of £273.53 per annum;
- (b) The continuance of the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme (formerly Council Tax Benefit) as referred to in paragraph 44 of the main report of the Head of Finance;
- (c) The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix 4 to the main report and an increase in average dwelling rent of 5.42% representing £5.25 per week and taking the annual average rent to £102.08 as set out in Appendix 5 to the main report;
- (d) The Capital Programme for 2014/15 -2017-18 as set out in Appendix 6 to the main report;
- (e) The Fees and Charges Schedule that forms Appendix 7 to the main report;
- (f) The changes to the level of exemptions and discounts on empty homes and unoccupied properties as outlined in paragraph 44 of the main report, except for Class A empty properties where the Council Tax Discount for Class A empties remains unchanged from that agreed on 1st April 2013, namely a 25% discount for a period of one year.

97. CORPORATE PLAN 2014-18

Council had before it the following (previously circulated, now appended):

- (1) Report of the Head of Policy, Culture and Communications which had also been submitted to the City Executive Board on 12th February 2014. The report detailed the outcomes of the consultation on the Corporate Plan 2014-2018
- (2) Extract from the minutes of the City Executive Board held on 12th February 2014.

Councillor Bob Price moved and spoke to the report.

Councillor Jim Campbell seconded by Councillor Mark Mills moved an amendment as follows:

In the main Corporate Plan document on page 10, under the heading of Improving Oxford's City Centre, to add a fourth bullet point as follows:

- *Working in partnership with the traders to make effective use of the findings of the Retail group's report on the Future of the Covered Market, to increase footfall in the Market, and to ensure it plays a key role in the City Centre Retail offer.*

Councillor Bob Price accepted the amendment and following a vote Council agreed:

- (a) The Corporate Plan 2014-18 as amended;
- (b) To delegate authority to the Head of Policy, culture and Communications to make minor textual amendments where necessary, in preparation for the formal publication of the Corporate Plan 2014-18.

98. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2014/15

Council had before it the following (previously circulated, now appended):

- (3) Report of the Head of Finance which had also been submitted to the City Executive Board on 12th February 2014. The report presented the Treasury Management Strategy for 2014/15 with Prudential Indicators for 2014/15 – 2017/18
- (4) Extract from the minutes of the City Executive Board held on 12th February 2014.

Councillor Ed Turner moved and spoke to the report.

Following a debate, Council voted and agreed to:

- (1) Adopt the Treasury Management Strategy 2014/15, and to approve the treasury prudential indicators at paragraphs 13 – 28 of the report;
- (2) Approve the Investment Strategy for 2014/15 and the detailed investment criteria as set out in paragraphs 29 – 48 of and Appendix 1 to the report, including the changes highlighted in paragraph 9 of the report;
- (3) Approve the Prudential Indicators and limits for 2014/15 to 2017/18 as set out in paragraphs 50-51 of and Appendix 2 to the report;
- (4) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision statement (which sets out the Council's policy on repayment of debt) at paragraphs 18 – 28 of the report.

99. COUNCIL TAX 2014/15

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which set out the necessary calculations to enable Council to set the 2014/15 Council Tax for Oxford City, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Acts, 1988 and 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Ed Turner moved and spoke to the report.

Council agreed:

(a) To approve for 2014/15: -

- (1) The City Council's precept and Council Tax requirement of £11,582,179 (inclusive of Parish Precepts). Net of the Parish Precepts, the figure is £11,420,559;
- (2) The average Band D Council Tax figure (excluding Parishes) of £273.53 a 1.99% increase on the 2013/14 figure of £268.19. Including Parish Precepts the figure is £277.40, a 2.01% increase on the 2013/14 figure of £271.93;
- (3) The contribution of £10,000 to the Parish of Old Marston in recognition of the additional expenditure that the Parish incurs as a consequence of maintaining the cemetery;
- (4) The amount of £495,020 to be treated as Special Expenses;
- (5) The Band D Council Taxes for the various areas of the City (excluding the Police and County Council's additions) as follows:-

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Littlemore | £293.24 |
| Old Marston | £302.24 |
| Risinghurst and Sandhills | £290.03 |
| Blackbird Leys | £270.91 |
| Unparished Area | £275.78 |

These figures include the Parish Precepts and special expensing amounts as appropriate in addition to the City-wide Council Tax of £261.67.

(b) To note:

- (1) Oxfordshire County Council's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 26 of the Officers report;
- (2) The Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 27 of the Officers report;
- (3) The overall average Band D equivalent Council Tax of £1,646.32 including Parish Precepts.

100. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

None.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.26 pm