

COUNCIL

Wednesday 18 February 2015

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Abbasi (Lord Mayor), Humberstone (Sheriff), Simmons (Deputy Lord Mayor), Altaf-Khan, Anwar, Brandt, Brown, Clack, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Darke, Fooks, Fry, Gant, Goddard, Gotch, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollick, Hollingsworth, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, Munkonge, Paule, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Royce, Sanders, Seamons, Simm, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Thomas, Turner, Upton, Van Nooijen, Wade, Wilkinson and Wolff.

90. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Benjamin and Taylor submitted apologies.

91. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations made.

92. RECOMMENDATION TO VARY COUNCIL PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING

Council agreed to suspend its normal procedure rules and adopt the procedures set out in the agenda, with amendments to lengthen the time to consider opposition group budget proposals to 30 minutes each and reduce the time to debate the administration's budget and amendments to 70 minutes.

93. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lord Mayor reminded councillors his charity dinner would be held on 27 March 2015.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

95. SECTION 151 OFFICER'S BUDGET REPORT

Council had before it the report of the Council's S151 officer on the robustness of the 2015/16 budget as required under Section 25 of the local Government Act 2003.

The S151 officer explained the conclusions of his report which should be taken into consideration when setting the council's budget for 2015/16 and agreeing the medium term financial strategy.

Council noted the report.

96. BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Councillor Darke left the meeting towards the end of the debate but before the vote was taken.

Council had before it the report of the Head of Finance to the on 12 February 2015 and the decisions of the City Executive Board.

Council also had before it the report of the Scrutiny Finance Panel and the responses of the Executive Member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health to the Panel's recommendations.

Council had before it two alternative budget proposals submitted in advance as amendments to the City Executive Board's budget, with supporting commentary and comments from the Head of Finance. One set out the proposals of the Liberal Democrat Group, and one set out the proposals of the Green Group.

Councillor Ed Turner, seconded by Councillor Bob Price, moved and spoke to City Executive Board recommendations.

He clarified that the final recommendation should read: "approve an increase in the 2014-15 capital budget of £550,000 in relation to the property purchase referred to in paragraph 52 and referred to elsewhere on the CEB agenda" and that this superseded the recommendation to Council in Minute 134 of the City Executive Board minutes.

Alternative budget proposals

Councillor Fooks, seconded by Councillor Altaf Khan, moved and spoke to the Liberal Democrat Group alternative budget proposals (circulated with the briefing note).

After debate, these were put to the vote.

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

Councillor Hollick, seconded by Councillor Simmons, moved and spoke to the Green Group alternative budget proposals (circulated with the briefing note).

After debate, these were put to the vote.

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

Amendments to the recommended budget

Amendment 1 (circulated with the briefing note)

Councillor Hollick, seconded by Councillor Simmons, moved a set of amendments submitted in advance. The S11 officer confirmed these were achievable.

After debate, these were put to the vote.

With more Councillors voting against than for, the amendments were not carried.

Amendment 2 (appended to these minutes)

Councillor Fooks, seconded by Councillor Altaf Khan, moved an amendment tabled at the meeting and circulated to all councillors. The S11 officer confirmed this was achievable.

After debate, this was put to the vote.

With more Councillors voting against than for, the amendment was not carried.

Councillors Hollick and Simmons said that the Green Group supported the Housing Revenue Account budget, although noted potential difficulties in later years, and supported the Capital Programme and in particular the programme for housing. However the Group could not support the revenue budget proposals.

The recommendations of the City Executive Board, with only the amendment put forward by the proposer, were put to the vote.

In accordance with procedure rule 11.11 (d) a named vote was taken.

For the City Executive Board recommendations– Councillors Abbasi, Anwar, Brown, Clack, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Fry, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Humberstone, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, Munkonge, Paule, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Sanders, Seamons, Simm, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Turner, Upton, and Van Nooijen.

Against the City Executive Board recommendations– Councillors Altaf-Khan, Fooks, Gant, Goddard, Gotch, Royce, Wade, and Wilkinson.

Abstentions – Councillor Brandt, Hollick, Simmons, Thomas, and Wolff.

With more Councillors voting for than against, the recommendations of the City Executive Board, with only the amendment put forward by the proposer were carried.

Council resolved to:

1. approve the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £23.304 million for 2015/16 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 1.99% or £5.44 per annum as set out in Table 8 and Appendices 1-4, representing a Band D Council Tax of £278.97 per annum;
2. approve the continuance of the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme (formerly Council Tax Benefit)
3. approve the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2015/16 to 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 5 and 6 and an increase in average dwelling rent of 3.49% for April 2015 representing £3.59 per week an annual average rent of £105.77 as set out in Appendix 7;

4. approve the Capital Programme for 2015/16 to 2018/19 as set out in Appendix 8 and 9;
5. approve the Fees & Charges schedule as set out in Appendix 10;
6. adopt the criteria for adopting the Business Rates Retail Relief scheme as set out in paragraph 21 and transitional relief as set out in paragraphs 22 – 24; and
7. approve an increase in the 2014-15 capital budget of £550,000 in relation to the property purchase referred to in paragraph 52 and referred to elsewhere on the CEB agenda.

97. COUNCIL TAX 2015/16

Councillors Fry and Simm left the meeting at the start of this item.

Council had before it the report of the Head of Finance setting out the necessary calculations to enable Council to set the 2015/16 Council Tax for Oxford City, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Acts, 1988 and 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Turner moved and Councillor Price seconded approval of the recommendations in the report.

In accordance with procedure rule 11.11 (d) a named vote was taken.

For the recommendations in the report – Councillors Abbasi, Altaf-Khan, Anwar, Brandt, Brown, Clack, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Fooks, Gant, Goddard, Gotch, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollick, Hollingsworth, Humberstone, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, Munkonge, Paule, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Royce, Sanders, Seamons, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Thomas, Turner, Upton, Van Nooijen, Wade, Wilkinson and Wolff.

Against the recommendations in the report – None.

Abstentions – None.

Council resolved to approve for 2015/16:

1. The City Council's precept and Council Tax requirement of £12,072,263 (inclusive of Parish precepts) and £11,900,498 excluding Parish precepts.
2. The average Band D Council Tax figure (excluding Parish Precepts) of £278.97 a 1.99% increase on 2014/15 figure of £273.53. Including Parish Precepts the figure is £283.00, a 2.02% increase (paragraph 3 of the report).
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 (report paragraphs 11 and 12).
4. The amount of £515,696 to be treated as Special Expenses (report paragraph 15).

5. The Band D Council Taxes for the various areas of the City (excluding the Police and County Council's additions) as follows:-

Littlemore	£301.50
Old Marston	£308.19
Risinghurst and Sandhills	£295.59
Blackbird Leys	£276.71
Unparished Area	£281.25

These figures include the Parish Precepts and special expensing amounts as appropriate in addition to the City-wide Council Tax of £266.88.

The Council also noted:

6. Oxfordshire County Council's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 18 of the report.
7. The Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 19 of the report, and
8. The overall average Band D equivalent Council Tax of £1,679.16 including Parish Precepts

98. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 15/16

Council had before it the report of the Head of Finance to the City Executive Board on 12 February 2015 detailing the treasury management strategy for 2015/16 and the prudential indicators for 2015/16 to 2017/18, and the decisions and recommendations of the City Executive Board.

Councillor Turner moved and Councillor Price seconded approval of the recommendations to Council in the report.

Council resolved to:

1. approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16 and adopt the Prudential Indicators 2015/16 – 2017/18 at paragraphs 8 to 37 and Appendix 2;
2. approve the Investment Strategy for 2015/16 and investment criteria set out in paragraphs 23 to 37 and Appendix 1; and
3. approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement at paragraphs 12 to 22 which sets out the Council's policy on debt repayment.

99. ADOPTION OF THE CORPORATE PLAN 2015-19

Council had before it the report of the Head of Policy, Culture and Communications to the City Executive Board on 12 February 2015 containing the draft Corporate Plan 2015-19, the decisions and recommendations of the City Executive Board.

Councillor Price moved, and Councillor Brown seconded, approval of the recommendations to Council in the report and adoption of the Corporate Plan.

After debate the recommendations were put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. approve the draft Corporate Plan 2015 – 19; and
2. delegate authority to the Head of Policy, Culture and Communications to make minor textual changes to the Corporate Plan 2015 -19 in advance of formal publication.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.30 pm

Amendment 2 - proposed by Councillor Fooks, seconded by Councillor Altaf Khan

Amendment:

Fund £100,000 in year 1 for schools to bid to raise attainment.
Increase grants budget by £46,000pa for 4 years.

Reason:

The remaining education fund should be reallocated to meet schools' requests for support. The grants budget should be increased to meet growing demand. Six executive board members are enough to run the council.

How this is to be funded:

Reallocating residual education budget in Years 1 and 2 (£26,000pa)
Increasing parking charges at Alexandra Court to district centre level (Y1 £43,000, Y2 £23,000)
Reduce number of executive board members from 10 to 6, saving £28,852pa.

Impact on budget:

Cost		Saving	
Year 1	£146,000		£28,852
Years 2-4	£46,000		£28,852

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