

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

Wednesday 17 February 2016

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

89. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Anwar, Paule, Royce and Upton and Lord Mayor Humberstone submitted apologies.

Councillor Cook, Deputy Lord Mayor, took the chair for this meeting.

Councillors Gotch and Goddard left before the main budget debate at minute 97.

90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

On Minute 96, Councillors Abbasi, Malik and Altaf-Khan declared they had disclosable pecuniary interests as the taxi licensing fees related to their employment.

91. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

92. AGREEMENT OF PROCEDURE FOR DEBATE ON THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET

Council resolved to agree the times permitted for each stage in the procedure for debate of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget in Minute 97 as set out in the Constitution and noted the separately circulated detailed schedule including notified speakers.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

94. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES ON THE BUDGET

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services on the soundness of the financial proposals before it.

The Head of Financial Services presented his report in his capacity as the Council's S151 officer.

He reported that he had reviewed the alternative proposals submitted as amendments by the Liberal Democrat and Green groups and confirmed these were arithmetically correct and capable of implementation.

The Leader of the Council thanked Financial Services staff for their hard work in preparing the budget and outlined the key budget pressures and uncertainties.

Council noted the report and its implications.

95. SCRUTINY BUDGET REVIEW 2016/17

Council considered the report of the Finance Panel submitted to the City Executive Board on 11 February 2016 and the draft minutes of the Board.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee presented the report. Using boxes of soup as an illustration he drew Council's attention to the Council's gross budget; the proportion of the council's overall income and expenditure which was not directly scrutinised; and the need to also focus on these elements.

Council noted the report and the City Executive Board's response set out in the minutes of the meeting of 11 February.

96. LICENSING AND GAMBLING ACTS COMMITTEE AND GENERAL PURPOSES LICENSING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS ON FEES AND CHARGES

Councillors Abassi, Altaf-Khan, and Malik, having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, withdrew from the council chamber for the duration of this item.

Council considered the extracts of draft minutes and the reports on fees and charges for licensing functions from the Licensing and Gambling Acts and General Purposes Licensing Committee meetings of 19 January. The Committee Chairs presented the recommendations.

Council resolved to:

1. note the draft minutes and on the recommendation of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee adopt the licence fees and charges for 2016/17 set out in the report to that committee; and

2. note the draft minutes and on the recommendation of the General Purposes Licensing Committee adopt the licence fees and charges for 2016/17 set out in the report to that committee.

97. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016-17 TO 2019-20 AND 2016-17 BUDGET

Councillors Goddard and Gotch left the meeting at the start of part b) and before the vote was taken.

Council had before it the report of the Head of Finance to the City Executive Board on 11 February 2016, referring to the appendices to the budget as circulated with that agenda, and the draft minutes of that meeting including seven recommendations.

Council had before it two alternative budget proposals submitted in advance as amendments to the City Executive Board's budget, with supporting commentary. 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 the City Executive Board recommendations.

a) 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.

b) Amendment to the City Executive Board budget

Councillor Gant, seconded by Councillor Fooks, moved an amendment submitted in advance: £10,000 pa revenue spending from April 2016 indefinitely to support ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), to provide targeted

help for an increasingly vulnerable group, funded by increasing parking charges at Alexandra Courts, Summertown.

The S151 officer confirmed this was feasible.

The Leader of the Council proposed an amendment to this which was accepted by the proposer:

£10,000 pa revenue spending from April 2016 indefinitely both to support ESOL and to provide general language support for refugees (to cover necessary unfunded services such as interpretation and translation including help with medical and legal cases), in order to provide targeted help for an increasingly vulnerable group, funded by increasing parking charges at Alexandra Courts, Summertown.

After debate, this further amendment was put to the vote.

With more Councillors voting for than against, the amendment was carried.

c) Decision on City Executive Board budget as amended

After debate, the seven recommendations of the City Executive Board including the details of the medium term financial strategy, budget, capital programme, HRA, fees and charges and other matters as set out in the papers for the City Executive Board meeting and with the amendment agreed above, were put to the vote.

In accordance with procedure rules and as required by law a named vote was taken.

For the recommendations from the City Executive Board including the agreed amendment to the budget – Councillors Abbasi, Brown, Clack, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Darke, Fry, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, Munkonge, Pegg, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Sanders, Simm, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Turner, van Nooijen.

Against the recommendations in the report – None.

Abstentions – Councillors Altaf-Khan, Benjamin, Brandt, Fooks, Gant, Hollick, Simmons, Thomas, Wade, Wilkinson and Wolff.

Council resolved to:

1. **approve** the General Fund Budget Requirement of £19.853 million for 2016/17 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 1.99% or £5.55 per annum as set out in Table 8 and Appendices 1-4 of the report submitted to the City Executive Board, representing Band D Council Tax of £284.52 per annum. The additional amount of £146k over the four year period to go towards the funding of the Council's General Fund Capital Programme;
2. **approve as an amendment to the budget** of £10,000 pa revenue spending from April 2016 indefinitely to support ESOL and provide general language support for refugees (to cover necessary unfunded services such as interpretation and translation including help with medical and legal cases), to provide targeted help for an increasingly vulnerable group, funded by increasing parking charges at Alexandra Courts, Summertown;
3. **approve** the continuance of the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme (formerly Council Tax Benefit);
4. **approve** the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2016/17 of £43.487 million and a reduction of 1% (£1.06/wk) in social dwelling rents from April 2016 giving a revised weekly average social rent of £104.79 as set out in Appendix 4 for all Council dwellings other than sheltered accommodation. In respect of sheltered accommodation that a rent increase of 0.9% is applied (average £0.88 per week increase) generating an additional income originally proposed of £27,000 for one year to be used in full or in part for improvements in the provision of sheltered accommodation. Such changes will be subject to the Welfare Reform and Work Bill becoming law and no exemption being granted) but that in the event that an exemption or partial exemption is granted that the rent be increased in accordance with the terms of the exemption or partial exemption subject to notice being given to tenants of the proposed rent increase. In that event a further report will be made to CEB and Council detailing the consequential effect on the Housing Revenue Account budget;
5. **approve** the Capital Programme for 2016-20 as set out in Appendix 6 subject to funding availability from 2017-18 onwards;
6. **approve** the Fees & Charges schedule as set out in Appendix 8;
7. **delegate** to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health the decision to apply for the four year funding settlement and determine whether it is financially advantageous for the Council to enter into a Business Rates Distribution Agreement as referred to in paragraphs 13 and 17-18; and
8. **delegate** to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health the decision to join the Business Rates Distribution Group once business rates estimates for 2016-17 are known for all Districts within Oxfordshire.

98. COUNCIL TAX 2016/17

Council considered a report which set out the necessary calculations to enable the setting of the 2016/17 Council Tax for Oxford City.

The Head of Financial Services confirmed that Oxfordshire County Council had agreed its 2016/17 precept and were no changes to the recommendations before the meeting.

A recorded vote was taken as required by law.

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.

In accordance with procedure rules and as required by law a named vote was taken.

For the recommendations in the report – Councillors Abbasi, Altaf-Khan, Benjamin, Brandt, Brown, Clack, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Darke, Fooks, Fry, Gant, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollick, Hollingsworth, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, Munkonge, Pegg, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Sanders, Simm, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Thomas, Turner, van Nooijen, Wade, Wilkinson and Wolff.

Against the recommendations in the report – None.

Abstentions – None.

Council resolved to approve for 2016/17

1. the City Council's precept and Council Tax requirement of £12,621,173 including Parish precepts and £12,423,802 excluding Parish precepts.
2. the average Band D Council Tax figure (excluding Parish Precepts) of £284.52 a 1.99% increase on the 2015/16 figure of £278.97. Including Parish Precepts the figure is £289.04, a 2.14% increase (see paragraph 3).
3. a contribution of £10,000 to Old Marston Parish Council in recognition of the additional expenditure that the Parish incurs as a consequence of maintaining the cemetery (see paragraphs 11 and 12).
4. the amount of £538,520 to be treated as Special Expenses (see paragraph 15).
5. the Band D Council Taxes for the various areas of the City (excluding the Police and County Council's precepts) as follows:-

Littlemore	£315.17
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Old Marston	£313.50
Risinghurst and Sandhills	£303.79
Blackbird Leys	£282.54
Unparished Area	£286.87

These figures include the Parish Precepts and special expensing amounts as appropriate; in addition to the City-wide Council Tax of £272.19.

Council noted:

6. Oxfordshire County Council's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 18 (£1281.64)
7. the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 19 (£166.96), and
8. the overall average Band D equivalent Council Tax of £1,737.64 including Parish Precepts (having received confirmation from the Head of Financial Services of the Band D figures for Oxfordshire County Council).

99. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Council considered a report to the City Executive Board on 11 February 2015 which presents the Council's Treasury Management strategy for 2016-17 together with the prudential indicators for 2016-17 to 2018-19 and the draft minutes of that meeting.

Council resolved to:

1. **approve** the Treasury Management Strategy 2016-17 and adopt the prudential indicators for 2016-17 – 2018-19 as set out in paragraphs 7 to 41 and Appendix 2 of the report submitted to the City Executive Board;
2. **approve** the investment strategy for 2016-17 and investment criteria as set out in paragraphs 21 to 38 and Appendix 1 of the report submitted to the City Executive Board; and
3. **approve** the minimum revenue provision (MRP) statement at paragraphs 11 to 20 of the report submitted to the City Executive Board which sets out the Council's policy on debt and repayment.

100. CORPORATE PLAN 2016-20

Council considered a report to the City Executive Board on 11 February which set out the consultation on the draft Corporate Plan 2016-2020 and proposed its adoption and the draft minutes of that meeting.

Council resolved to:

1. **approve** the draft Corporate Plan 2016 -2020 as set out in Appendix 1 of the City Executive Board report; and
2. **delegate** authority to the Assistant Chief Executive to make minor textual/formatting changes to the Corporate Plan 2016 – 2010 in advance of formal publication.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.16 pm