

Council

Minutes

Thursday, 20 February 2020 at 19:00

Present :

His Worship the Mayor, Councillor Jeal (in the Chair); Councillors Annison, Bensly, Bird, Borg, Cameron, Candon, G Carpenter, P Carpenter, Cordiner-Achenbach, Fairhead, Flaxman-Taylor, Freeman, Galer, Grant, Hacon, D Hammond, P Hammond, Lawn, Martin, Mogford, Myers, Plant, Robinson-Payne, Scott-Greenard, Smith, Smith-Clare, Stenhouse, Talbot, Wainwright, B Walker, C M Walker, C Walker, Waters-Bunn, Wells, Williamson, B Wright and T Wright.

Also in attendance :

Mrs S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer); Ms C Whatling (Monitoring Officer); Mrs K Sly (Finance Director); Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director) Mrs M Burdett (Head of Inward Investment), Mrs N Turner (Housing Director) Mr S Hubbard (Strategic Planning Manager), Mrs L Snow (Capital Projects and Senior Accountant); Mr J Wedon (Senior Information and Data Protection Officer) and Mrs S Wintle (Corporate Services Manager)

1 MINUTE SILENCE

His Worship the Mayor advised Council of the tragic passing of Tina Mills, Tina had been a Borough Council employee for over 30 years and will be sorely missed by her family, friends and colleagues.

Members hereby stood for a one minute silence.

The Leader, Councillor Wainwright and Councillor Myers passed on their heartfelt condolences to Tinas family and friends on behalf of Members of the

Council.

Recognition was also given to Tina's colleagues who had assisted with the emergency services when Tina had become unwell.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Thompson.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Smith declared a personal interest in the item relating to the Final Draft local Plan Part 2 because of the potential impact of the decision on the County Council and advised he would be abstaining from voting on this matter.

Councillor Plant declared a personal interest in the item relating to the Final Draft local Plan Part 2 because of the potential impact of the decision on the County Council and advised he would be abstaining from voting on this matter.

Councillor P Carpenter declared a personal interest in the item relating to the Final Draft local Plan Part 2 because of the potential impact of the decision on the County Council and advised she would be abstaining from voting on this matter.

Councillor Grant declared a personal interest in the item relating to the Final Draft local Plan Part 2 because of the potential impact of the decision on the County Council and advised he would be abstaining from voting on this matter.

4 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

His Worship advised that there were no items of urgent business to be discussed.

5 MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

His Worship the Mayor announced that the Civic Ball would now be held on the 15 May 2020.

6 MINUTES

Proposer : Councillor Smith

Seconder : Councillor Myers

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 19 December be confirmed.

CARRIED.

7 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Council considered the following question from Mr J Cannell :-

The Great Yarmouth & District Trades Union Council would wish to seek assurances over the drinking water quality within the Borough in view of agricultural practices used for the production of salad crops on land surrounding the Trinity Boards where our drinking water supply is extracted from.

These crops are subject to a high element of spraying with insecticide and irrigation which directly flows into the broads system.

When recently silt was removed from the broad, it had to be spread on the land at low level because of the level of chemicals contained within it.

The Trades Council request that the Borough Council join in a campaign to improve the quality of water in the broads along with other environmental groups.

The Leader responded provided a response to Mr Cannell as follows :-

Essex and Suffolk Water supply the drinking water to Borough and they are therefore responsible for ensuring the water coming from our taps meets the drinking water quality standards. They undertake testing on regular basis to comply with their legal requirements around water quality. The works that were undertaken recently within the broads, were coordinated between Essex and Suffolk Water, The Environment Agency, The Broads Authority and Natural England had the aim of maintaining a healthy environment at the Broads and will prevent significant mud exposure during very dry years. The project will help protect water supplies for Great Yarmouth for many years to come.

The Borough Council are not aware of any water quality related issues within the Borough, and would normally be notified by the water company, if there were specific issues.

The Borough Council is happy to support other agencies in relation to improving the quality of the water in the Broads as it understands its importance for the tourist industry, wildlife and ecology and also protecting our water supply.

The Borough Council are not aware of the chemical content of the silt, this would have been handled by the Environment Agency and the water company as they were the lead authorities on this project.

In line with the Council Constitution Mr Cannell was hereby allowed to ask a supplementary question as follows :-

Mr Cannell commented that he hoped the Borough Council would show their support in the campaign for better quality of water.

The Leader responded that the Borough Council would support where they were able to.

8 CORPORATE PLAN 2020-2025

Proposer : Councillor Smith

Seconder : Councillor Plant

That Council formally endorse the Plan 2020-2025 for adoption as the Council's strategic mandate.

CARRIED

9 SERVICE COMMITTEE DECISION LIST FOR THE PERIOD 27 NOVEMBER 2019 TO 23 JANUARY 2020

Proposer : Councillor Smith

Seconder : Councillor Plant

That the Service Committee decision list for the period 27 November to 23 January 2020 be approved.

CARRIED

10 FINAL DRAFT LOCAL PLAN PART 2 - PUBLICATION AND SUBMISSION

Council considered the Strategic Planning Managers report which asked Members to approve the publication and submission of the Local Plan Part

The Leader presented and summarised the report to Members and advised that this had been considered by both the Policy and Resources Committee and the Local Plan Working Party.

Councillor B Walker raised concern as to the consequences of not having the Plan in place and made reference to the number of Members who had abstained from voting on the matter at the previous meetings.

Proposer : Councillor Smith

Seconder : Councillor Plant

That Council :-

1) Approves the publication of the Final Draft Local Plan Part 2 under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 (as amended) to receive representations in relation to soundness.

2) Delegates authority to the Director of Development to, prior to the publication, finalise the formatting of the document and make any appropriate minor typographical changes.

3) Delegates authority to the Director of Development to submit the Final Draft Local Plan Part 2 to the Secretary of State following the representations period, together with:

a) a request under Section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to request the Planning Inspector to recommend any main modifications necessary to make the plan sound; and

b) a request under paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework to request the Planning Inspector to confirm the five-year land supply on adoption.

4) Delegates authority to the Director of Development to work with the Inspector and participants of the examination to agree necessary main modifications under point 3a above and to make minor ("additional") modifications to the plan as necessary.

5) Delegates authority to the Director of Development to conduct a public consultation on any necessary main modifications (should they arise).

CARRIED

11 GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Council considered the Monitoring Officers report which asked Council to approve a number of actions proposed by the Monitoring Officer following consultation with the Constitution Working Party.

The Leader commented that a positive discussion had been held at the Constitution Working Party with regard to the recommendations.

Councillor Wainwright referred to the Appeals committee split recommendation and commented that he had hoped that an independent Member would still be given the opportunity to serve on the Committee. Councillor Wainwright further advised that with regard to Outside Bodies that both the East Anglian Port and the East Anglian Seafarers Groups met on a regular basis and therefore needed to remain within the Outside Body representation.

Councillor Williamson advised that the Outside Bodies Sports Council and Sports Partnership meetings had merged into one and was now referred to as Active GY. Councillor Williamson then referred to the Management Structure which had been distributed and asked why the Neighbourhoods that Work team had not been listed under a reporting line. The Chief Executive Officer advised that the Neighbourhoods that Work team reported directly into a Strategic Director, Councillor Williamson asked if this could be added into the structure, the Chief Executive Officer advised that this could be included and that any reporting lines that did not sit under a Head of Service could be added.

Councillor Scott-Greenard raised his concern with regard to the Committees and their representations and commented that he felt skill sets should be considered when appointing to Committees and suggested that Independent Councillors be included in Group Leader discussions when the distribution to Committees were discussed.

Councillor T Wright advised that the East Anglian Port Authority Outside Body had been re-named Merchant Navy Welfare Board.

Proposer : Councillor Smith

Seconder : Councillor Candon

That approval be given to the following :-

- (1) Streamlining of the Committee System, as set out in paragraphs 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.5 and 3.1.6.
- (2) Member Working Groups as set out in paragraphs 3.2.2 and 3.2.3
- (3) Pre Agenda Meetings as set out at paragraph 3.4.2
- (4) Outside Bodies as set out at 3.5.2 and 3.5.3 and amendments to the Constitution set out in 3.6 and the associated appendices.

CARRIED

12 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21

Councillor considered the Finance Director's report which asked Members to adopt the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 to be published onto the Council's website.

The Leader advised that the Localism Act required each Local Authority to produce and publish an annual pay policy statement each year. The statement outlined the policies for the remuneration of its officers in particular the highest and the lowest paid and the relationship between them. The detail of this was outlined in the statement which would be published on the website following

approval.

Proposer : Councillor Smith

Seconder : Councillor Grant

That Council adopt the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 and agree for this to be published on the Council's website.

CARRIED

13 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET SETTING 2020/21

Council considered the Housing Revenue Accountant's report which set out the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget 2020/21 to 2024/25, HRA Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25, HRA Rent and Service Charge proposal 2020/21 and the revised HRA revenue and capital forecasts for 2019/20.

Councillor Grant advised that the report presented the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2020/21 in relation to the Council's 5,783 properties. The budget provided for continuing capital investment in the Council's homes by replacing windows, doors, kitchens and bathrooms as well as replacing heating systems and rewiring homes. In total around £89m would be spent on the Council's homes over the next five years.

Councillor Grant reported that as a result of the ongoing capital programme, the cost of day to day revenue repairs had reduced by over £500,000. Over the next four years, this saving would be used to support borrowing an increased new Council housing programme above and beyond the Right to Buy receipts programme. He advised that the Council would be increasing rents in 2020/21 by CPI+1% to ensure it has the financial resources it needs to continue to invest in the existing stock and to increase the number of Council homes. All service charges – except caretaking- have been reviewed as part of the budget preparation to ensure they are fair and reflect the cost of providing each service to tenants and residents.

The 2020/21 budget provided a sound financial basis for the ongoing improvements to be delivered by the Council.

Proposer : Councillor Grant

Seconder : Councillor P Carpenter

That Council approve :-

(1) The increase in rents of CPI + 1%, as set out in the new Rents for Social Housing policy for 2020/21. For 2020/21 this equates to 3%.

(2) The Revenue budget for 2020/21 along with the forecast projects for the period up until 2024/2025 including the extended borrowing to support the provision of additional HRA homes.

(3) The Capital budget for the period 2020/21 to 2024/25.

(4) The HRA Service charges for 2020/21

(5) The revised HRA Capital and Revenue forecasts for 2019/20.

14 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2020/21

Council considered the Finance Director's report which

The Leader reported that alongside the setting of the annual budget the Council is required to approve its treasury management strategy for the forthcoming financial year. The strategy outlined the approach to borrowing and investments and managing these in a prudent way that takes into account the key principles of security, liquidity and yield.

The treasury management function ensures that the Council's cash is organised in accordance with the relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet the capital expenditure plans. The Treasury strategy covers both the borrowing for the general fund and the housing revenue account and also takes into account future borrowing requirements to support the approved capital programme for the Council, including the phased borrowing for the new leisure facility.

The strategy was considered by the Policy and Resources Committee earlier this month and will be monitored during the year with a half year report being made to Members later in the year.

Proposer : Councillor Smith

Seconder : Councillor Plant

That Council approve :

(1) The Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21

(2) The Annual Investment Strategy

(3) The Operational Boundary and Authorised Limits

CARRIED

15 2020/21 BUDGET REPORT

Council was reminded that Council Procedure Rule 31.15.6 within the Councils Constitution required a recorded vote to be taken at the setting of the Budget.

Council considered the Finance Director's report which presented the General Fund Budget for 2020/21.

Members were advised that the budget reflected the one-year local government finance settlement for 2020/21 which was announced in December and essentially represented a roll over of the previous years funding allocation.

From next year there will be a new system of funding for Local government which would see a greater share of business rate receipts being retained locally. There are a number of key pieces of work nationally that will be used to inform the future funding for local authorities, namely the fair funding review and the review of business rates retention, resulting in local services being funded from local sources of income.

As an Authority that is currently one of the highest receivers of revenue support grant for our tier of local government, the Council will ensure that they continue to be proactive in responding to the consultations and feeding into these reviews to inform the future funding for Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

The report covers the 2020/21 budget only and makes recommendations for the setting of the council tax for the Boroughs element which is in line with the national assumptions of council tax increases which amounts to a £5 increase for a band D per annum, and £3.33 for a band A. When taken into account with the level of parish precepts for the Borough, Great Yarmouth will continue to be the lowest for Norfolk and one of the lowest nationally.

The Council continues to hold a number of earmarked reserves which along with the general reserve provides some financial stability. Whilst the transfers from reserves should only be seen as a one-off source of funding, use of reserves in this way can provide one-off upfront funding for projects and schemes that can deliver future savings and efficiencies.

The budget as presented for recommendation has been set within the context of funding reductions, whilst still continuing to deliver essential services such as

- waste and recycling,
- grounds maintenance,
- housing including support for homelessness which we have been allocated just under £300,000 grant funding to reduce homelessness.

These have all been possible at the same time as leading on the replacement leisure facility along the seafront, which along with the completion of the waterways this year, will see a transformation and continued investment in

some of the boroughs significant assets to support and regenerate the area.

These and other key projects have been possible due to the Council making investments in its assets and also successfully drawing down external funding, either from national funding for example heritage lottery, or locally from the Local Enterprise partnership and from business rates.

The Authority are continuing to make progress in applying for further external funding from the future high street and towns fund to facilitate and support continued economic growth within the borough.

The budget presented reflected the continued investment and proactive work that the Council is undertaking to support the economy and public priorities. This will be achievable due to the council's priority to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible and identify opportunities to generate additional income and retain growth within the borough.

Whilst there are still financial challenges ahead, and at this time we do not know what the outcome of the funding reviews will be from 2021/22 onwards, the key themes of our business strategy including:

- regeneration,
- delivering and facilitating growth be it new homes or business, and
- ensuring that we operate in an effective and efficient manner will all remain a priority in the medium term.

To ensure that the Council able to plan for 2021/22 in a timely manner, work on the future financial planning for the Authority will commence early in the new financial year and will be updated once outcomes of the spending review and fair funding review are announced.

The Leader congratulated the Finance Director and her team on the work that had been undertaken by the Finance team on producing the Budget for 2020/21.

Councillor Wainwright commented that he hoped that Great Yarmouth was not left behind as part of the Fair Funding review. He referred to the increase to the Parish Precepts, Councillor Wainwright referred to the concurrent function grants that Parish Councils received and used Hemsby Parish Council as an example and he suggested that these grants should be reviewed.

Councillor Wainwright suggested the following items be considered as part of the recommendations for approval :-

(1) That a review be undertaken on the level of Concurrent Function Grants awarded ahead of the 2021/22 Budget setting.

Councillor Plant commented that the concurrent function grants were used to help maintain the villages of the Borough and felt in his opinion if these were

not made available then the villages may not be maintained as they currently are.

Councillor Martin commented that she felt there was a need for these grants to have accountability to them to show where and what the funds are spent on.

Following a vote this amendment to the recommendations was CARRIED

(2) A £1000 Ward Budget to be provided to all 39 Councillors for 2020/21 to be taken from General Reserves to be reviewed next year.

Councillor Martin commented that she was fully supportive of reintroducing the Ward Budgets and felt that these would benefit residents of the Borough.

Councillor Myers advised that he agreed with the reintroduction of the Ward Budgets and he had seen a positive outcome from these when they were previously awarded.

The Leader sought comments from the Section 151 Officer with regard to the impact on the budget if these grants were to be reintroduced, he was advised that the balance on reserves currently sat at £3.1m and that £300k remained for general use, although the Section 151 Officer advised of the risks when allocating one off monies.

Following a vote this amendment to the recommendations was CARRIED

(3) An amendment to the Mayoral Civic Budget for 2020/21 of an increase of 2% which will result in the budget for 2020/21 being £5,610.

Following a vote this amendment to the recommendations was CARRIED

Councillor T Wright raised some concern with regards to the increase in Burial Charges and the collection of Bulky Waste. He also referred to the Easter Fair fees and charges and asked if the revenue for the loss of the use of that facility during the fairs use was taken into consideration. The Chief Executive Officer advised that a report on the Easter Fair was to be brought back to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Proposer : Councillor Smith

Seconder : Councillor Wainwright

That approval be given to the following :-

- 1) The 2020/21 general fund revenue budget as outlined at Appendix A;
- 2) The Council Tax for 2020/21 for the Borough Council tax be £166.48 (for an average Band D);
- 3) That the demand on the Collection Fund for 2020/21 be:

- a. £4,835,911 for the Borough Council purposes;
- b. £474,871 for Parish Precepts;
- 4) The statement of and movement on the reserves as detailed at Appendix E and within section 8 of the report;
- 5) The Policy framework for reserves as detailed at Appendix F;
- 6) The updated Capital Programme and financing for 2019/20 to 2020/21 as detailed at Appendix G;
- 7) New capital bid proposals at Appendix H;
- 8) The prudential indicators and minimum revenue provision policy as detailed at Appendix I.
- 9) That a review be undertaken on the level of Concurrent Function Grants awarded ahead of the 2021/22 Budget setting.
- 10) A £1000 Ward Budget to be provided to all 39 Councillors for 2020/21 to be taken from General Reserves to be reviewed next year.
- 11) An amendment to the Mayoral Civic Budget for 2020/21 of an increase of 2% which will result in the budget for 2020/21 being £5,610.

A recorded vote was taken on this matter as follows :-

For the Motion :-

Councillors Annison, Bensly, Bird, Borg, Cameron, Candon, G Carpenter, P Carpenter, Cordiner-Achenbach, Fairhead, Flaxman-Taylor, Freeman, Galer, Grant, Hacon, D Hammond, P Hammond, Jeal, Lawn, Martin, Mogford, Myers, Plant, Robinson-Payne, Scott-Greenard, Smith, Smith-Clare, Stenhouse, Talbot, Wainwright, B Walker, C M Walker, C Walker, Waters-Bunn, Wells, Williamson, B Wright and T Wright.

CARRIED

16 COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2020/21

Council was reminded that Council Procedure Rule 31.15.6 within the Councils Constitution required a recorded vote to be taken at the setting of the Budget.

Council considered the Finance Director's report which presented for approval the budget for 2020/21 and to make statutory calculations in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set the Council Tax for 2020/21. The report also included the Chief Financial Officer's report on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves.

Proposer : Councillor Smith

Seconder : Councillor Wainwright

That Council approve :-

(1) That the budget for 2020/21 as detailed in the budget report to Policy and Resources

Committee and outlined at Appendix A is approved;

(2) That Members undertake the Council Tax and statutory calculations as set out in

section 4 of the report and set the Council Tax for 2020/21;

(3) The demand on the Collection Fund for 2020/21 be:

a. £4,835,911 for the Borough Council purposes;

b. £479,131 for Parish Precepts.

A recorded vote was taken on this matter as follows :-

For the Motion :-

Councillors Annison, Bensly, Bird, Borg, Cameron, Candon, G Carpenter, P Carpenter, Cordiner-Achenbach, Fairhead, Flaxman-Taylor, Freeman, Galer, Grant, Hacon, D Hammond, P Hammond, Jeal, Lawn, Martin, Mogford, Myers, Plant, Robinson-Payne, Scott-Greenard, Smith, Smith-Clare, Stenhouse, Talbot, Wainwright, B Walker, C M Walker, C Walker, Waters-Bunn, Wells, Williamson, B Wright and T Wright.

CARRIED

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

His Worship the Mayor advised that he had been made aware of an item of business to change the representation to the following Outside Body.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Proposer : Councillor Smith

Seconder : Councillor Grant

That Councillor Flaxman-Taylor replace Councillor Cara Walker on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

CARRIED

18 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED :

"That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act."

**19 CONFIDENTIAL SERVICE COMMITTEE DECISION LIST FOR THE PERIOD
27 NOVEMBER 2019 TO 23 JANUARY 2020**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

The meeting ended at: 20:13