

Annual Business Rate Payers

Minutes

Thursday, 06 February 2014 at 17:30

Present:

Councillor T Wainwright (in the Chair), Councillor B Walker, Pettit and Plant.

Margaret Farrow (Federation of Small Businesses), Jonathan Newman (Town Centre Partnership) and David Dukes (Norfolk County Council).

Seb Duncan, Donna Summers, Peter Wright, Toby Matthews, David Glason and Karline Smith (Great Yarmouth Borough Council Officers).

1 Welcome and Introductions

Welcome and Introductions were carried out.

2 Efficiency Support Grant

It was reported that the Council would be receiving £1.9m efficiency support grant for 2014/2015. It received 15% of the 25% available for the Efficiency Support Grant reward for 2013/2014. It was also reported that the Council would within the next two weeks be receiving notification if they would be receiving the 2014/2015 Efficiency Support Grant. Councillor T Wainwright reported the Council has to spend this on efficiencies and not on the general running of the Council. The representative from the Federation of Small Businesses asked if the Council had plans on how to spend the money this year if they were successful. Councillor B Walker stated that next year and the year after would be even harder financially and each department's budget would be looked at line by line to see where savings could be made.

Councillor T Wainwright reported that 100% of business rates goes to Central Government and that the Council receives 20% of this back. For 2014/2015 Great Yarmouth Borough council will receive business rates £3,163.979 and Revenue Support Grant of £3,859.385 totalling £7,023.364.

It was reported that from April 2014 small businesses with a rateable value less than £50,000 would receive a discount of £1,000 from their rates.

The Town Centre Partnership reported that Retail Units empty for more than 2 years

would receive 50% rate relief for 18 months in order to help fill shops. The Town Centre Manager asked how the Council would be letting businesses know about this and it was reported that the Resources Group Manager would be writing a letter which would be sent out with the business rates bills.

3 Budget 2014/15

Council Tax had been frozen for another year. All services would be looked at to see where savings could be made. The public would be asked what services they would like to stay and what could be removed. Car parking charges would be increasing on Great Yarmouth Seafront, Gorleston High Street parking would be reducing and the Great Yarmouth Town Centre charges would be frozen. Councillors Ward Budgets would be removed.

The representative from the Federation of Small Businesses asked if 30 minute parking spaces in King Street Great Yarmouth or Gorleston High Street could be extended. It was reported that this was a Norfolk County Council issue and that this would need three consultations to change the Traffic Regulation Orders and would cost in the region of £1,700 per street which was not achievable.

It was reported that the Council's budget papers were now available on the Council Website.

Councillor B Walker reported that the Council would be looking at Statutory and Non Statutory Services when deciding which services to stop and stated that non statutory council services included Tourism, Economic Development and Public Toilets and if all three were removed this would still not make enough savings to balance the council budget for next year.

Councillor T Wainwright stated that the Council would not be sharing a Chief Executive and Senior Management at this point. Councillor B Walker stated that savings had been made by removing the Deputy Chief Executive post.

The meeting ended at: 17:50