



Council

Minutes

Thursday, 22 February 2024 at 19:00

PRESENT : Her Worship the Mayor (in the Chair) ;Councillors Annison, Bensly, Borg, Bird, Boyd, Candon, Capewell, G Carpenter, Cordiner-Achenbach, Flaxman-Taylor, Freeman, Galer, Grant, Green, D Hammond, Jeal, Martin, McMullen, Mogford, Murray-Smith, Pilkington, Plant, Newcombe, Robinson-Payne, Sharp, Smith, Stenhouse, Thompson, Upton, Wainwright, Waters-Bunn, Williamson, Wells, B Wright and T Wright.

Also in attendance :-

Ms. S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer), Ms. C Whatling (Monitoring Officer), Ms. K Sly (Executive Director, Resources), Ms. M Lee (Head of Customer Services); Ms. L Snow (Finance Manager), and Mrs. S Wintle (Corporate Services Manager)

01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lawn and Rundle.

02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Martin declared a personal interest in Item 6 due to a family member holding an active hackney carriage license.

03 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Her Worship the Mayor called upon Mr Sean Edwards to receive a certificate in recognition for his recent sponsored walk and all that he had achieved.

Her Worship the Mayor informed the Council that on Sunday 28th January, Sean had

completed a round trip leaving from the Hippodrome in Great Yarmouth to Caister Lifeboat Station. Sean had been joined by over 300 supporters for the duration of the walk.

The monies raised from the sponsored walk were given to the St Elizabeth Hospice who have cared for more the 4,475 patients and their families in Great Yarmouth and Waveney since it was launched in April 2019. Sean's Walk raised in excessive of an incredible £4500.

The Council congratulated Sean on his achievements.

Leaders Announcements

The Leader informed Members that the Council had been nominated for Council of the Year, he paid thanks to the Officers who had worked hard to submit a bid for the council nomination and in particular the Chief Executive Officer and the Executive Director, place.

04 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

Her Worship the Mayor advised that she had not been made aware of any items of urgent business to be considered.

05 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 14 December 2023 were confirmed.

06 LICENCE FEES - HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE

Council received and considered the Licensing and Elections Manager's report.

Councillor Wells, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sustainability, Licensing and Waste presented the report to Council and advised that under the Miscellaneous Provisions Act the authority is able to set fees and charges for Hackney Carriages and Private Hire. These must be considered reasonable with a view to recovering costs for issue, administration and compliance.

As required by legislation the proposed fees have been consulted on by way of notice in the local paper for 28 days. (from 8 December to 8 January). Several comments from the trade were received (Appendix 2) and therefore consideration must be given to these before approval.

He reported that the council can either approve the fees as proposed or modify the fees after consideration of the objections.

Members were advised that Cabinet had considered and recommended the report to Council at their meeting on the 12 February 2024, Council are therefore asked this evening to consider the proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire license fees (as part of fees and charges setting process) for

2024/2025 as a result of comments received.

Councillor Wells therefore proposed that Council approved the proposed fees without modification for 2024/25.

The Deputy Mayor commented on the proposed 26% increase in the fees and felt that in the current cost of living crisis this should be reconsidered as this could cause drivers to struggle more. The Deputy Mayor here proposed an amendment to the recommendations as follows :-

That the proposed increases be deferred until at least October when the Taxi fares are due to be reviewed.

This amendment was seconded by Councillor Robinson-Payne

Councillor Wells commented that whilst he did understand the concerns that had been raised, he could not accept the amendment, as the fees proposed were relating to the Council recovering their costs, although he did agree that conversations with taxi drivers around the review of their fares could be undertaken.

Councillor Jeal commented on the need to recognise that taxi driving was potentially one of the lowest paid jobs within the town and therefore he fully supported the amendment.

Councillor McMullen advised that she had received feedback from a number of drivers who were already struggling already, therefore she also supported the amendment to defer the increase.

Councillor T Wright also spoke in support of the amendment and commented that he felt there was a need to support a trade who were already suffering due to the cost of living crisis.

Councillor Thompson asked whether the taxi fare review could be brought forward ahead of October. The Monitoring Officer advised that she could see no legal reason why this review could not be brought forward, however due to consultation timings for this review this may not be possible to be brought forward any earlier.

Following a vote on the amendment, the proposed amended was **LOST**.

Immediately following the vote Councillors Borg, Capewell, Cordiner-Achenbach, Green, Jeal, Martin, McMullen, Pilkington, Newcombe, Robinson-Payne, Sharp, Upton, Wainwright, Waters-Bunn, Williamson, T Wright and B Wright requested that their vote in favour of the amendment be recorded within the minutes of the meeting.

Members hereby moved to the vote on the original proposal.

RESOLVED :

That Council **approve** the proposed fees without modification for 2024/2025.

07 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25

Council received and considered the Head of Organisational Development's report.

The Leader advised that Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 required the Council to produce an annual pay policy statement for the start of each financial year. It is a legal requirement that Full Council formally sign off the statement and the responsibility cannot be devolved to any other person or committee and must be approved by the end of March each year.

The Pay Policy Statement had been updated for the 2024-25 financial year and the Pay Policy Statement meets the statutory requirements of the Localism Act.

The leader therefore proposed the recommendations as detailed within the Head of Organisational Development's report and this was seconded by Councillor Plant.

RESOLVED :-

That Council **approve** the increase of the apprenticeship rates to the National Living Wage rate for 21 years and over and **adopt** the Pay Policy Statement for 2024-25 which shall be published on the Council's website.

08 CAPITAL STRATEGY, INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024/25

Council received and considered the Financial Services Manager's report.

The Leader presented the item to Council and advised that the report presented the Council's 3 Strategies, capital, investment & treasury management for approval alongside the budget. These strategies are intrinsically linked so are presented together.

All the strategies support and impact on the 2024/25 budget and medium-term financial strategy.

The capital strategy details the Council's planned capital expenditure and how it is to be financed recognising how capital spend contributes to local service provision and covers General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and commercial capital spend & financing.

It recognises the ongoing impact of capital financial decisions taken now on future budgets. In light of this the capital strategy also considers the risks around the capital spend and how these are mitigated, as well as the sustainability of the planned spend.

The investment strategy focuses on commercial and service investments and recognises the ongoing implications of related investment decisions now, and in the past, have on future revenue budgets. The strategy provides the framework for specific investment decisions that may be presented as part of a business case in the coming financial year.

The final strategy that was presented for approval alongside the setting of the annual budget is the treasury management strategy for the forthcoming financial year.

This strategy outlined the approach to the borrowing and investment activity and managing these in a prudent way that has regard to security and liquidity ahead of the highest rate of return and ensuring that sufficient cash is available to meet the capital expenditure plans.

The treasury management strategy covers both the borrowing for the general fund and the housing revenue account taking into account future borrowing requirements which are aligned to the approved capital programme for the Council as presented within the budget reports.

The Leader advised that monitoring of the strategies will be provided during the year with prudential indicators included as part of budget monitoring reports, and a half yearly report against the Treasury Management Strategy being made to Members later in the year.

Councillor Plant commented on the vast amount of projects that the Borough has and felt that there was something for all to be proud of as these were a positive sign for the Borough. He further commented that he fully commended the report and thanked Officers for their work.

RESOLVED :

That Council **approve** :

The Capital Strategy for 2024/25

The Investment Strategy for 2024/25

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2024/25, including:

- The Treasury Investment Strategy (section 4)
- Prudential Indications (section 5)
- Operational Boundary and Authorised Limits (Appendix C)

09 2024/25 GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET REPORT

The Leader proposed that Council Procedure Rule 26.33.1 (a)(b) be suspended for both the Leader and the Leader of the Labour Group to allow them to speak for a maximum of 10 minutes each on Item 9 only.

This was seconded by Councillor Wainwright.

Following a vote this motion was **CARRIED**

Her Worship the Mayor reminded Members that in line with Council Procedure Rule 26.4.3 any vote (including procedural and on amendments) relating to Budget setting and Council Tax decisions made by full Council must be undertaken by a recorded named vote.

Council here received and considered the Executive Director, Resource's report.

Her Worship the Mayor called upon the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee to put Council with any recommendations which had been put forward from the Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Williamson, Chair of Scrutiny Committee advised that the Scrutiny Committee had noted the details of the Budget report and thanked the Section 151 Officer and her team for the amount of work that had gone into completing the budget. He advised that the Committee had given support to the Leader in the seeking of a fair funding review for the Council.

The Leader responded to the comments from the Scrutiny Committee and advised he had written to the Finance Minister with regard to Great Yarmouth and the need for a fair funding review and he awaited a reply from this letter.

The Leader hereby presented his comments on the budget as follows :-

This item presented for approval the revenue and capital budgets for the General Fund and Housing revenue Account for 2024/25.

The budget as presented is the culmination of a significant amount work at a very challenging time financially.

As members, we have worked collaboratively together with a number of joint working groups being held to consider savings and income proposals that have informed the budget I would also like to thank Karen and her team and the heads of service for their work on the budget that is presented here this evening for approval.

Whilst Council is only being asked to approve the budget for 2024/25, we are all aware of the continued challenges facing the sector as a whole and we continue to actively lobby for additional funding for the Borough.

Whilst the announcement of the Long term plan for towns funding provides £20million of longer term investment to the Borough is welcome, this will be received over a 10 year period and accompany a 10 year plan.

As we await further detail on the future funding for the sector from the fair funding review we will continue to prioritise work aligned to the key themes of the Councils business strategy to reduce the forecast funding gap, which include:

- ensuring that we operate in the most effective and efficient manner;
- delivering and facilitating growth from new homes or businesses to deliver income from council tax and business rates,
- ensuring that our assets are being utilised in the most efficient way, for example, reviewing opportunities for income generation and also opportunities for disposals where capital receipts can be used to fund the capital programme and deliver ongoing savings to the revenue account and,

- regeneration.

Regeneration is key for our borough for residents and businesses, not just from projects we continue to deliver as a Borough Council, but those being delivered by Norfolk County Council, for example the opening of the third river crossing earlier this month, the continued work on the Operations and Maintenance development which will both see a direct benefit to the borough in years to come.

In this coming year we will see the opening of the learning hub in the town centre, only possible through the external funding that we have successfully attracted from Town Deal and Future High Street.

So, to the budget for 2024/25, you will recall that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy as reported in November last year predicted that there would need to be a reliance on reserves in the coming year of just over half a million. This was after allowing for planned savings of £2million and forecasts of assumed levels of grants and income, plus assumptions of spending pressures.

Since then, the finance settlement and funding for 2024/25 have been confirmed and the detail of the budgets produced.

This has resulted in a necessary use of reserves in the coming year of £689,000 from reserves.

The increased spending pressures and funding gap is largely in response to external pressures the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, high levels of inflation, the cost of living crisis higher utilities costs and the impact of the nationally agreed pay award.

The budget process for 2024/25 has been challenging, the additional cost pressures that the council is facing from inflation has had a significant impact on the financial position, for example:

- Continued increases in utility prices
- The cumulative impact of past pay awards and the budget for 2024/25 reflects a 4% pay award which would total in the region of £1m, this will be subject to national negotiations;
- Other pressures on the revenue budget are from higher interest rates and the impact of financing the capital programmes from borrowing, which has partly been mitigated by an increase in interest receivable;
- Contract inflation on contracts that the council has, for example for provision of software and other services, whilst wherever possible annual increases are negotiated, some have increased by CPI which have in some cases increased by up to 10%, again placing further financial challenge on the council.

These pressures have meant that in order to present a balanced budget, savings and additional income have had to be put forward, as the inflationary pressures are not fully funded by increases in grant.

Cabinet in January approved the new fees and charges to come into operation from April this year, which will deliver additional income to help mitigate the budget gap and this along the savings approved by Council in December means that the budget reflects in the region of £1.7million of savings and income to be delivered in 2024/25.

Council will also be aware that we face more challenges in 2025-26 meaning that this Council is having to work extremely hard and make difficult decisions about savings simply to keep pace with ever increasing inflationary demand and other cost pressures with no sign in the foreseeable future of a fair funding reform or a multi year settlement for all Councils. We will need to begin work immediately to make sure that the proposals in this Budget are delivered in line with its plans to help support the Council delivering an achievable budget in 2025/26

The capital budget is recommending a number of capital bids including:

- continued annual provision in the footway lighting column replacements and upgrades to LED to deliver further efficiency savings;
- £285,000 investment in outdoor play provision that will see use of S106 monies used over a two year programme of works;

And approval in principle for two schemes which will be subject to further business cases:

- Extension to the Magdalen Cemetery and
- Repurposing of area along the seafront in Great Yarmouth.

The report also covers the setting of the Housing Revenue Account Budget for the year.

As the landlord to approximately 5,800 dwellings and 368 leaseholder homes across the Borough, the budget report outlines the plans for the coming year for the spending and income plans for 2024/25 for both the day to day revenue account and the longer term capital plans.

This report recommends the annual rent setting for the year at the cap at 7.7% which will enable the continued investment in the stock to provide accommodation at affordable rents. Across all properties, this will mean an average weekly rent of £111.74.

Service charges have been reviewed and these are outlined within Appendix M of the report, these are set on a cost neutral basis, reflecting increasing cost pressures.

The annual budget includes a provision of £12.2m for repairs in the year and just under £16.4 million of capital works to the properties and estates, a significant investment to homes within the borough.

Included in the capital budget is £7.5m for the continued delivery of the affordable homes programme to enhance the existing housing stock.

The budgeted works within the capital programme continue to reduce the

existing level of non-decency identified within the stock, as well as addressing the newly arising need going forward.

The outcomes of the stock condition survey completed in the current year will inform a review of the budget in 2024/25 to ensure the continued investment in the housing stock provision.

In summary, the report makes recommendations for the setting of the budget for the 2024/25 financial year for the housing rents at an increase of 7.7% and for the council tax for the Boroughs element which will see an increase of £5.42 for a band D per annum, and £3.61 for a band A, of 2.99%

Despite the current financial challenges, the budget continues to support delivery of vital services to the tenants, residents and businesses within the borough including:

- waste and recycling,
- grounds maintenance,
- housing including support for homelessness
- essential support to households through local council tax support.

In summary, the Leader advised that he was confident that the budget as presented continues to support the residents and businesses across the Borough, is achievable.

Councillor Wainwright, Leader of the Labour Group hereby gave his comments on the Budget report as follows :-

Councillor Wainwright firstly paid thanks to the Section 151 Officer and her team in delivering the budget at a very difficult financial time for Local Authorities, he further advised that he was aware other Section 151 Officers had commented on how difficult it had been delivering budgets this year.

Because of the Council having no over all control, for the first time we have been part of the cross party budget working groups looking at the finances and we are pleased that the funding for the lifeguards will be retained.

Councillor Wainwright commented that the cross party meetings had been constructive and because of this they would not be presenting an alternative budget as the finances of Great Yarmouth are in such a precarious state there is very little room for manoeuvre.

Councillor Wainwright commented that once it appeared that residents of Great Yarmouth were being asked to pay more for less, and stated that after 14 years of the current serving Government, we are faced with looking at a budget deficit of £2.2m for 2025/2026. This is after a call on reserves for 2023/24 of just over £1.3m and additional savings and income for 2025/26 of just over £1.4m, just over £1.1, agreed in December 2023 and £304,000 in the budget papers, these savings and income have yet to be delivered and we are very sceptical on the deliverability of some the proposed measures.

Councillor Wainwright raised concern about some of the figures shown in the report in respect of Cost Centres and the lack of action taken by the current administration

despite the call for action.

He further commented that in his opinion quite clearly the finances of GYBC as well as many other local authorities were in a difficult position and moving forward were in danger of having a section 114 notice imposed upon them and commissioners moving in, and if this were to happen then none of the Members would have any control of future finances.

Councillor Wainwright referred to the country being in an official recession after 14 years of the current administration and in his opinion this was causing residents of the Borough to pay the price.

Councillor Wainwright commented on the number of projects that the Council had received funding for all of which had been ringfenced for particular projects, and he made reference the recent Herring bridge being delivered and the rebuild of the James Paget Hospital. He stated that the funding was welcomed, and most projects had been agree through Cross Party Working Groups.

Reference was made to the Revenue Support Grant and core spending for day-to-day spending being reduced by approximately £84n, which in his opinion was only set to get worse for the Council without a fair funding review.

Councillor Wainwright advised that his group were extremely disappointed that as part of the savings and income proposals that Brush Quay car park had been brought forward, he advised that this scheme had not been discussed at the Cross-Party Working Groups. The car park was currently used mainly by residents of Riverside Road and the surrounding area and currently those residents have nowhere else to park as the majority of houses were terraced properties. If charges were to be implemented, he advised that this would see a full day charge of £9 with half a day being £4.50, he felt in his opinion that this was yet another impact on the hard working residents who were already suffering from a cost of living crisis. He further added that volunteers from the RNLI lifeboat station also used the car park, he therefore proposed the following amendment:-

That the Brush Quay proposal is moved out and that short stay pay and display is introduced on the Gorleston Cliff Top Car Park with fees as follows:-

Summer - 1st 2 Hours - £3.00
Summer - After 2 hours £3.80 per hour
Winter - £1.50 per hour.

Councillor Wainwright commented that the Cliff top Car Park was heavily used and already raised income of around £15.5k with two further concessions in the pipeline, the additional income generated from Pay and Display would be similar to the expected amount proposed for Brush Quay with no impact on the local residents parking.

Councillor Wainwright completed his comments by welcoming the Leaders comments made at the Cabinet meeting with regard to lobbying Government for a Fair Funding Review.

Councillor Jeal hereby seconded the amendment as proposed by Councillor Wainwright and requested his right to reserve to speak.

Councillor Candon advised that although fees were being proposed for Brush Quay,

he reminded Members that there would be an opportunity for residents parking to purchase season parking permits to enable them to use the location and that parking would remain free overnight.

Councillor Wells commented that he could not support the amendment and questioned why this concern for the introduction of fees had not been picked up through the Scrutiny committee comments. He further commented that if parking fees were to be introduced at the Cliff Top this would cause increased parking pressures on Marine Parade.

Councillor Williamson commented that Scrutiny were asked to look at the Budget and whether this stacked up, not at individual areas such as making recommendations on areas such as parking fees at Brush Quay, he commented that Scrutiny's job had been to come to a fair agreement on the budget.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor advised she did not support an amendment to introduce parking fees at the Cliff top car park.

Councillor B Wright stated that in her opinion the impact on residents of adding in fees to Brush quay car park was of real concern as parking around that area was already difficult and therefore this would only add to the issues.

Councillor Jeal commented that he felt residents should be given a free pass to use the Brush Quay car park, he advised there was only one other place in Gorleston where car parking was chargeable and therefore there was a need to consider the impact on the residents when considering the amendment proposed.

Councillor T Wright commented with the extensive use of Brush Quay by residents and the RNLI this amendment needed to be considered as the Cliff Top car park was not used by residents and with the Council having to make cuts, he felt this should be considered. He further advised that he had been informed the possible income for Cliff Top was estimated at around £65k.

Councillor Thomson asked for clarification over expected amount of income for Brush Quay if parking fees were to be approved, this was confirmed as approximately £46,800.

Councillor Martin advised that in her opinion both options were to help the Council finances but one being Brush Quay would directly impact the residents, whereas the Cliff Top would have little impact if fees were implemented.

Councillor Wainwright was here provided the opportunity to sum up follow his proposed amendment and commented that he disagreed with some of the comments that had been made with regard to reasons for not having pay and display at the Cliff Top car park.

Council hereby were reminded that a recorded vote would be taken on the amendment proposed and the vote was as follows:-

FOR: Councillors Borg, Capewell, Cordiner-Achenbach, Green, Jeal, Martin, McMullen, Pilkington, Newcombe, Robinson-Payne, Sharp, Upton, Wainwright, Waters-Bunn, Williamson, T Wright and B Wright.

AGAINST: Councillors Annison, Bensly, Bird, Boyd, Candon, G Carpenter, P Carpenter, Flaxman-Taylor, Freeman, Galer, Grant, Hammond, Mogford, Murray-

Smith, Plant, Smith, Stenhouse, Thompson and Wells.

ABSTENSIONS: None

This amendment was **LOST**.

Councillor T Wright referenced page 18 within the budget report with regard to the Easter Fayre and the cost to the council seemingly doubled to £30,000 for this year with an explanation of recharges varying due to changes in the net cost of service being recharged and because of changes in the apportionment basis year on year. Councillor Wright commented that in his opinion he felt that it was not right for a council to be subsidising a commercial operation for a 4-day operation to this level.

Reference was made to the Splash Pad with the overall cost rising by 100% to over £75,000 also with an explanation of recharges vary due to changes in the net cost of service being recharged and because of changes in the apportionment basis year on year.

Councillor T Wright further referred to tourism costs and commented that he had noticed that the Councils tourism department would be no more yet the Council expected to still have overall costs of £184,000 which included premises costs, he stated in his opinion Great Yarmouth must be the only seaside resort in the country that no longer had a tourism department.

Councillor Wright referred to page 143 relating to capital projects and sort clarification around the £32,000 earmarked for Peggotty road community centre flooring, however he advised that in the budget working groups new heating was being planned with a total of £77,000 proposed yet there appeared to be no mention of this project anywhere despite the need for a new heating system for this community centre, therefore he asked was the council committed to replacing the outdated and costly current underfloor heating system? He also made reference to the Gorleston seafront improvements referred to on the same page which was also budgeted for £77,000 therefore he asked for assurance that the Pegotty Road budget had not been taken out for the benefit of Gorleston seafront. The Leader confirmed that the heating works would be completed.

Councillor Martin asked with regard to page 118 which referred to the Marketplace support services and asked why this had increased quite considerably compared to the previous year. Councillor Martin also asked with regard to the Beach Huts and whether these were related to just Gorleston or if these included Great Yarmouth Huts aswell. In response to the questions raised by Councillor Martin, the Executive Director, Resources advised that the marketplace increase in costs was a reflection of costs from GY Services and that this cost included a wider remit than just the Market Place itself. The Leader advised in relation to the Beach Huts that the figure included both Gorleston and Great Yarmouth, he commented that there had been an overspend incurred at the Gorleston site and that he had been made aware that the site in Yarmouth would hopefully commence in April 2024.

Councillor Jeal sought clarity as to savings on previous years and moving forward. Councillor Wells provided clarity on proposed savings for Environmental Health and the roll out of communal bins which were being trialed in the Nelson and Claydon wards, he advised this formed part of the Council's Capital Programme and that there would be an all Member Briefing held to discuss wards affected by the change.

Councillor Newcombe referred to savings proposals that had been shown in regard to parking enforcement and raised concern at what this meant for the residents in particular in the Southtown and Cobholm Ward who struggled with parking, she advised that she felt residents in these areas should not be being penalised for having no where else to park. The Leader advised that parking enforcement was being considered across the Borough but would be focused in particular areas such as Gorleston High Street.

Councillor Robinson-Payne asked with regard to the Selective Licensing scheme and raised concern that members were not made aware current scheme was finishing, she felt that when the new scheme was to be introduced this needed to be looked at in detail with tweaks made. Councillor Wells advised that he had spoken with Councillor Wainwright about this scheme in respect of timeframes but he agreed this should be discussed further with a wider remit of Councillors before the scheme recommenced.

Councillor Cordiner-Acenbach sought clarification on the increase in Street Cleaning which had also been shown within the budget. Councillor Wells advised that this increase had been seen due to staff costs and general cost pressures seen by GY Services.

Councillor Williamson commented on the need for Yarmouth to be given a fair funding review, he advised that there had been so many good things lost due to funding not being available.

The Leader commented that the Council like many other authorities had been dealt with some challenges and had seen Members need to make some tough decisions but he hoped that Members would continue to work well together to ensure the Council continued to deliver.

Proposer : Councillor Smith
Secunder : Councillor Plant

RESOLVED :-

That COUNCIL approve:

- 1) The general fund revenue budget as detailed at Appendix A;
- 2) The Council Tax for 2024/25 for the Borough Council tax be **£186.90** (for an average Band D);
- 3) That the demand on the Collection Fund for 2024/25 be: **£5,715,589** for the Borough Council purposes; **£797,302** for Parish Precepts (*as amended for final precepts*);

- 4) The new fees and charges as outlined at Appendix E be approved;
- 5) The additional savings and income proposals as detailed at 3.5 (*as amended*);
- 6) The approval of a cashflow facility for GYS as outline at 3.10;
- 7) The reserves statement and movement on the reserves as detailed at Appendix F and within section 4 of the report;
- 8) The Policy framework for reserves as detailed at Appendix G;
- 9) The updated Capital Programme and financing for 2023/24 to 2024/25 as detailed at Appendix H and within section 6.4;
- 10) The new capital bid proposals at Appendix I;
- 11) The addition of £250,000 to the capital contingency budget for the provision of project management cost;
- 12) The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2024/25 as included at Appendix J.
- 13) The housing revenue account budget as detailed at Appendix K and L and recommend to transfer £1.4m revenue to HRA earmarked reserves in 2023/24.
- 14) An increase to all housing rents by 7.7%, cap Affordable rents to 130% of local housing allowance rates and increase Service charges as outlined at Appendix M
- 15) The housing revenue account capital programme and financing for the revised 2023/24 position and 2024/25 – 2028/29 as detailed at Appendix N

CARRIED

A recorded vote was taken as follows :-

FOR : Councillors Annison, Bensly, Bird, Boyd, Candon, G Carpenter, P Carpenter, Flaxman-Taylor, Freeman, Galer, Grant, Hammond, Mogford, Murray-Smith, Plant, Smith, Stenhouse, Thompson and Wells.

AGAINST: Councillors Borg, Capewell, Cordiner-Achenbach, Green, Jeal, Martin, McMullen, Pilkington, Newcombe, Robinson-Payne, Sharp, Upton, Wainwright, Waters-Bunn, Williamson, T Wright and B Wright.

ABSTENSIONS : None

10 COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2024-25

Her Worship the Mayor reminded Members that in line with Council Procedure Rule 26.4.3 any vote (including procedural and on amendments) relating to Budget setting and Council Tax decisions made by full Council must be undertaken by a recorded named vote.

Council received and considered the Executive Director, Resources report.

The Executive Director, Resources reported as follows :-

Ahead of setting the Council Tax each year, Members are required to receive a report from the Chief Financial Officer on the robustness of the estimates made for the purpose of the calculations along with the adequacy of reserves held by the Council.

This report is included in the report outlined at section 3 from page 157 of the agenda. The report provides details of the process that has been carried out in producing the budget which informs the setting of the council tax.

It highlights a number of the more significant financial risks facing the authority including:

- Income from demand led services for example car parking, planning and crematorium;
- The risks around the delivery of planned savings and additional income;
- delivery of capital projects
- and the future funding for local government.

In order to mitigate these risks, the estimates have been put together within a robust framework taking into account past and current performance and informed by the current and forecast inflation projections.

In relation to the reserves held by the Authority, the report provides a commentary on the adequacy of reserves held, including both earmarked and general reserves.

The policy framework for reserves outlines the process for determining the minimum level of general reserve which considers a number of factors, the recommended minimum level of the general reserve for the coming year is £3.5 million, and whilst the budget for 2024/25 is reliant on the use reserves, this must be seen as a short term solution.

In conclusion, it is my opinion as the Chief Financial Officer that, there is sufficient contingency within the current general and earmarked reserve balances and the overall level of reserves held remains adequate in the short to medium term.

After considering this report you are now required to make the statutory calculation of the council tax for 2024/25 which are set out in section 4 of the report, starting on page 158 of the agenda through to page 161 along with Appendices B to D on pages 164 to 166

The calculation for the setting of the Council Tax reflects the precepts that have been issued to the Council as the billing authority on behalf of the Parishes, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Norfolk County Council to arrive at the Council Tax determination made at Appendix D on page 166.

Proposer : Councillor Smith

Seconder : Councillor Plant

RESOLVED :

That Council :

- 1) Note the Council Tax Base for 2024/25 (4.5);
- 2) Agree that the amounts be calculated for 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act (4.6);
- 3) Note that the precepts for Norfolk County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. (4.7);
- 4) Agree the Council Tax for 2024/25 be set(4.8);
- 5) Agree That the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is not

excessive (4.9).

CARRIED

A recorded vote was taken as follows :-

FOR: Councillors Annison, Bensly, Borg, Bird, Boyd, Candon, Capewell, G Carpenter, P Carpenter, Cordiner-Achenbach, Flaxman-Taylor, Freeman, Galer, Grant, Green, D Hammond, Jeal, Martin, McMullen, Mogford, Murray-Smith, Pilkington, Plant, Newcombe, Robinson-Payne, Sharp, Smith, Stenhouse, Thompson, Upton, Wainwright, Waters-Bunn, Williamson, Wells, B Wright and T Wright.

AGAINST : None

ABSTENTIONS : None

11 MOTION TO GRANT THE HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH TO GREAT YARMOUTH LIONS CLUB

That in recognition of their dedication in helping to raise monies through many charitable events and their eminent and valuable services rendered to the people of the Borough of Great Yarmouth over a period of 70 years the Honorary Freedom of the Borough be presented to **GREAT YARMOUTH LIONS CLUB**.

Proposer : Councillor Smith

Seconder : Councillor Wainwright

CARRIED

12 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

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 3 of Part I of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act.

Proposer : Her Worship the Mayor

Seconder : Councillor Smith

CARRIED