

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council

Date: Friday, 19 February 2016

Venue: Council Chamber - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

M J Ford, JP
(Mayor)

Mrs C L A Hockley
(Deputy Mayor)

Councillors: B Bayford, Mrs S M Bayford, Miss S M Bell, J V Bryant, Mrs P M Bryant, T M Cartwright, MBE, P J Davies, Mrs M E Ellerton, J M Englefield, K D Evans, G Fazackarley, Miss T G Harper, L Keeble, T G Knight, A Mandry, Mrs K Mandry, D J Norris, R H Price, JP, D L Steadman, D C S Swanbrow, Mrs K K Trott, N J Walker, D M Whittingham, P W Whittle, C J Wood and S D T Woodward



1. PRAYERS

The Mayor invited all Members of the Council and members of the public present to observe a minute's silence, as a mark of respect and in memory of former Leader of the Council, Dr Leslie Ellis, who passed away on 26 January 2016.

There followed prayers led by the Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Paul Bedford of the United Reform Church in Fareham.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor N. R Gregory, Councillor T. J Howard and Councillor Ms S. Pankhurst.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Mayor be authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17 December 2015.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that following a request from Mrs Jan Caddy, former Headteacher at Wykeham House School to relocate a time capsule which was buried in the school grounds, he was delighted to announce that the capsule will be buried at Westbury Manor Museum.

The request had been made, following the closure of the school in December 2015, after 102 years in Fareham

The Mayor announced that the next charity events would be:

Lunch at Portchester Parish Hall on Sunday 21st February 2016. 12 noon for 12.30pm. Bring your own drinks. Tickets cost £10.

"The Magic Musicals" - A concert at St Mary's Church, 109 Church Road, Warsash, Fareham on Saturday 19th March at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £6.

The Mayor's Tea Party will take place in the Mayor's Parlour at the Civic Offices at 2.30pm on 7th April 2016. Admission is £4.

Matt Wakefield will give a talk about "Fareham in Bloom".

The Mayor of Fareham's Charity Ball which will take place on Friday 15th April 2016 - 7pm for 7.30pm with carriages at midnight. Dancing to "The Attributes". Tickets cost £45 (table of ten - £40 each).

At the invitation of the Mayor, Councillor R H Price, JP announced the sad news of the death of former Mayor of Pulheim, Hans Umpfenbach. Fareham

Borough Council and the City of Pulheim exchanged Charters and formal twinning arrangements in 1966. Hans died on 12 February aged 87. Councillor Price also announced that in recent weeks, Kurt Berger, the Chairman of the Pulheim Twinning Association had also passed away.

5. EXECUTIVE LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Leader provided the Council with an update on the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Devolution bid.

The Executive Leader had recently attended a meeting in Petersfield which was attended by James Wharton, the Minister for Devolution. The Minister delivered a clear message that the Government was only interested in Devolution deals which include elected Mayors.

Following this, the Executive Leader had attended another meeting in Eastleigh last Friday with all Council leaders. They discussed a number of issues around devolution, the first being the introduction of elected Mayors. The Civil Servant present at the meeting confirmed that without opting for an elected Mayor for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, there was no Devolution deal available as the Government would be concentrating on those areas proposing elected Mayors.

The Executive Leader advised those present at the meeting that Fareham Borough Council did not support an elected Mayor for the Hampshire and the Isle of Wight geography along with the governance proposals which were being put forward locally and that was an almost unanimous view from those Council Leaders present. The discussions moved on to consider whether negotiations should continue with the Government and the Executive Leader pointed out that an offer had been made to Government and that a response was still awaited either for the Government to agree or to come back with counter proposals.

Since then, the only noteworthy change was the Government announcing that business rates would be retained by all local authorities from 2020 and the other part of the offer included significant infrastructure guarantees and the ability to designate green belt. In collecting opinions from those present at that meeting, the question was asked whether Councils would wish to continue with negotiations. The response was that they wanted to hear from the Government what their offer might be but it was unlikely that there would be anything positive, although everyone still remained supportive of the Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Devolution deal in principle providing various issues including governance could be satisfactorily resolved.

The general view in the room was they still wished to hear what the Government had to say and, asking around the room what people wished to do, a number of people – not a majority – thought that one option was to look at other options for Local Government which included Combined Authorities, Districts merging or sharing services or Unitarisation.

The Executive Leader confirmed that he has asked the Chief Executive Officer to investigate various structures around local Government and what they might

mean for Fareham, highlighting the pros and cons of Combined Authorities, District mergers and Unitarisation. This will be reported back to Members in due course and will reflect the current difficulty of a situation across local Government which will see revenue support from Government being removed in two years' time, resulting in the need to make further savings.

6. EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Member for Public Protection announced that he attended the Hampshire Police and Crime Panel at the end of last month where the main discussion was on the budget for 2016/17 which included the Police Precept.

The Government announced in November that Police spending would be protected in real terms, but the Chancellor stated that the Police Crime Commissioner should plan on the basis that the overall referendum limit for Police Precept would be maintained at 2%. It also became very clear during this discussion that the 108 additional Police Officers, as stated in the press, was incorrect, in that an increase of 1.99% would maintain 108 Police Officers. A public consultation was held by the Commissioner which showed that 72% supported an increase in Council Tax of 1.99%. This was agreed by the panel. During these discussions, the Commissioner also agreed that he could find the additional funding to maintain the Hampshire Police Marine Unit.

Discussion took place on the Estates Plan, and it would appear the latest date for the Police in Fareham to move into the Civic Offices would be September 2016; a letter of intent has been received to confirm this and work has commenced with the PCC to finalise the terms.

Finally, interviews for the new Chief Constable's are currently taking place with 6 applicants. The Commissioner's choice will be announced at the Crime Panel meeting on 11 March and there will then be the opportunity to question the proposed Chief Constable and agree, or otherwise, on his or her position.

The Executive Member for Streetscene announced that Fareham Borough is backing the national 'Clean for The Queen' campaign which aims to give the country a tidy-up ahead of The Queen's 90th birthday in April. A special clean-up will take place from Friday 4 March - Sunday 6 March.

Fareham is holding its own 'Clean and Green for the Queen' campaign which will not only aim to clean up litter, but will also improve the horticultural features around the borough, alongside the Fareham in Bloom initiative.

Fareham Borough Council has a dedicated team that patrol and clean the Borough seven days a week, removing up to 700 tonnes a year of litter and debris from our streets and open spaces. Events such as this are welcomed to highlight the problem to the minority of residents who are not as considerate in disposing of their litter as the majority are, and to demonstrate that most of our residents do not want to see litter on our streets.

The Council is holding a clean-up event on Friday 4 March at Portchester car park and Precinct from 10am – 3.00pm, which anyone is welcome to attend and help out. Portchester Community Association, along with a team of volunteers, will be on hand to re-plant the shrub beds at the car park.

Residents can also get their own team of volunteers together to help make a lasting difference to their local area ready for the big event. The Council can provide some litter-pickers and plastic bags and will arrange for any litter collected to be picked up and disposed of.

The Executive Member for Leisure and Community informed Members that Hampshire County Council are holding a ten week Consultation in respect of Youth facilities. This consultation will commence on Tuesday 23 February.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor confirmed that the Monitoring Officer had granted a dispensation to all Members to enable discussion and a decision to be taken at item 15 – Finance Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2016/17.

Councillor R H Price, JP declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest for item 15 – Finance Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2016/17 as he leases an allotment in Portchester. He confirmed that he would leave the chamber and not take part in any debate on allotments.

8. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions presented at this meeting.

9. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations given at this meeting.

10. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE

(1) Minutes of meeting Monday, 11 January 2016 of Executive

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 11 January 2016 be received.

(2) Minutes of meeting Monday, 8 February 2016 of Executive

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 8 February 2016 be received;
 - (b) the recommendation of the Executive contained in minute 11(1) of 8 February 2016 - Housing Revenue Account Budget and including Capital Plans for 2016/17 be considered at item 15 (see minute 15 below); and
 - (c) the recommendation of the Executive contained in minute 11(2) of 8 February 2016 regarding the Finance Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2016/17 be considered at item 15 (see minute 15 below).
- (3) Schedule of Individual Executive Member and Officer Delegated Decisions

RESOLVED that the Schedule of Individual Executive Member Decisions and Officer Delegated Decisions be received.

11. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD

- (1) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 14 January 2016 of Scrutiny Board

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Board held on 14 January 2016 be received.

12. REPORTS OF OTHER COMMITTEES

- (1) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 16 December 2015 of Planning Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 16 December 2015 be received.

- (2) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 27 January 2016 of Planning Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 27 January 2016 be received.

13. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 17.2

There were no questions submitted for this meeting.

14. MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 15

There were no Motions under Standing Order 15 submitted for this meeting.

15. FINANCE STRATEGY, CAPITAL PROGRAMME, REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2016/17

- (1) Suspension of Standing Order 19.4 and 19.5

Having been duly proposed and seconded, it was RESOLVED that:

- (a) the provisions of Standing Orders 19.4 be suspended to allow the Executive Leader of the Council to speak on the matters referred to in items (2) and (3) for longer than five minutes and the Spokesman for the opposition group to speak for not more than ten minutes; and
 - (b) the provisions of Standing Order 19.5 be suspended to allow the Executive Leader to speak on the matters referred to in items (2) and (3) more than once in order to respond to points raised in debate.
- (2) Report to Executive - 8 February 2016

Following a debate on the item and on the recommendations being put to the meeting as contained in the tabled information, it was declared CARRIED with 23 voting in favour and 4 against.

(Councillors B Bayford, Mrs S M Bayford, Miss S M Bell, J V Bryant, Mrs P M Bryant, T M Cartwright, P J Davies, Mrs M Ellerton, J M Englefield, K D Evans, G Fazackarley, Miss T Harper, Mrs C L A Hockley, L Keeble, T G Knight, A Mandry, Mrs K Mandry, D J Norris, D L Steadman, D C S Swanbrow, N J Walker, D M Whittingham, and S D T Woodward voting in favour and Councillors R H Price, JP, Mrs K K Trott, P W Whittle and C J Wood voting against).

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Executive at its meeting on 8 February 2016, contained in Minute 10(2): Finance Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2016/17 be accepted and, accordingly that the Council approves:

- (a) the capital programme and financing of £36,959.00;
 - (b) an overall revised revenue budget for 2015/16 of £9,174,600;
 - (c) a revenue budget for 2016/17 of £8,903,300; and
 - (d) a council tax for Fareham Borough Council for 2016/17 of £145.22 per band D property, which represents a £5.00 increase when compared to the current year.
- (3) Council Tax 2016/17

RESOLVED that the Council agrees to delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Resources to amend the Council Tax for 2016/17, in the event that any of the precepting authorities change their precept calculation from that expected and reported at the Council meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor S D T Woodward and seconded by Councillor T M Cartwright that the Council accepts the recommendations of the Executive and approves:

- (a) the capital programme and financing of £36,959.00;
- (b) an overall revised revenue budget for 2015/16 of £9,174,600;
- (c) a revenue budget for 2016/17 of £8,903,300; and
- (d) a council tax for Fareham Borough Council for 2016/17 of £145.22 per band D property, which represents a £5.00 increase when compared to the current year.

The Council considered additional information tabled at the meeting: a schedule showing the formal calculations for setting the council tax and a graphical breakdown of council tax rates, as attached to these minutes.

In presenting the proposal, the Executive Leader reviewed the Council's performance, success stories and outlined the agreed priorities. He also reminded Members of notable achievements and looked to the challenges for the coming year. These included:

Fareham's success in receiving a number of awards for various projects around the Borough as well as the Council receiving awards for some of the Partnership work the Council is involved with;

Four parks across the Borough have received complete refurbishments and 20 more receiving mini-makeovers. A new Skate Park, designed by local skaters, was also completed;

Work on the Holly Hill Leisure Centre is due to be completed and open this summer with "Everyone Active" appointed to manage it.

The Executive Leader outlined how planning for the future is key: the adoption of the Welborne Plan and the Development Sites and Policies Plan sets out the long-term development plans for Borough, the latter covering the period to 2026 at the moment, and allocates housing sites within Fareham Town Centre and in other urban areas in the Borough.

Turning to the Council's corporate policy to deliver new homes, tenants have moved to new properties and new thermally efficient homes are being built within the Borough. 16 affordable homes are due for completion this spring and work has also started on a new sheltered housing scheme.

The Council's work with Vanguard has achieved over £500,000 of savings with some made from the changes made to how we provide our services.

In March 2015 the Council took ownership of Daedalus and The Innovation Centre was completed. With an occupancy rate of 90%, the Council has also secured £7m of funding to fund the provision of roads and services for the next phase of development. The Council also has an agreement in principle to lease land at Daedalus, subject to conditions, to National Grid.

The Executive Leader outlined that with Government cuts to funding being announced, there is a challenge to realise the savings which need to be made. Funding has changed since the Council first set its Council Tax and increases are required to meet the budget gap. From 2018/19 the Council will receive no revenue support grant and will be solely reliant on income from businesses rates and Council tax. Furthermore, the Transitional Grant Funding received over the next two years, it is proposed will be set aside to assist with efficiency plans going through to 2019/20.

The Commercial Property Investment Strategy which has been established by the Council to look at new ways to invest its money was outlined and to date, £8m has been spent acquiring commercial properties. Renting out surplus office space will also generate an income.

Looking at the Council's capital programme, The General Fund capital programme for the next 5 years is a very generous £37m, focussed on delivering schemes on a prioritised basis. This is a fully funded programme, paid partly from resources that the Council has accumulated, and a large

proportion attracted from external sources, thereby protecting the Council taxpayers. By 2020 it is estimated that there will be a surplus of £1.2 million but this relies on every scheme being completed on time and within budget. Surplus resources are required to cover these situations and also for new schemes that may come online during the next 5 years. Currently the capital resources are topped up by the use of the New Homes Bonus. This however is unlikely to continue beyond 2016/17 as agreed policy allows the first call on the money to meet any shortfall in funding.

Turning to the revenue budget for Council housing expenditure, in 2016/17 this is estimated to be £12m with the principal source of income being rents. Alignment of Council rents with those of registered Landlords will bring an average weekly rent to £92 in 2016/17.

Summarising the budget, the Executive Leader outlined the following. The net budget for 2016/17 will amount to £8.9m; the budget is balanced: there is sufficient income to meet planned costs and it is sustainable; a robust budget will provide sufficient resources to fulfil our pledges; spending pressures known and accounted for in the budget; and sources of income to pay for services carefully estimated to reflect a realistic position and savings and efficiencies made and only those which are secured are included in the budget.

A Consultation exercise undertaken in January after the £5 increase option was made available to Fareham showed that 85% of respondents agreed an increase was a reasonable option with some indicating they would be willing to pay more; and 89% of respondents agreed that the investment in commercial property and renting out office space was the way forward.

The sum of £6,100,068 must be raised from the Council's taxpayers. Therefore, a Council Tax for band D properties will be £145.22. This would be the first increase since 2009.

The overall position for Fareham's taxpayers will be:

- Fareham Borough Council £145.22, a £5 or 3.57% increase
- Hampshire County Council £1079.28, a 3.99% increase
- Police and Crime Commissioner £160.46, a 1.99% increase
- Hampshire Fire and Rescue £62.60, a 1.99% increase
- Total £1,477.56, which represents a 3.63% increase

Fareham has most properties in Band C and here the Council Tax for two adults will still be £129.08 or just £2.48 per week. This proposed £5 increase means an additional charge of less than 1p a day for those in a Band C property which still makes Fareham's Council Tax one of the lowest "district" rates in England.

On the recommendations being put to the meeting, it was declared CARRIED unanimously.

(Councillors B Bayford, Mrs S M Bayford, Miss S M Bell, J V Bryant, Mrs P M Bryant, T M Cartwright, P J Davies, Mrs M Ellerton, J M Englefield, K D Evans, G Fazackarley, Miss T Harper, Mrs C L A Hockley, L Keeble, T G Knight, A Mandry, Mrs K Mandry, D J Norris, R H Price, JP, D L Steadman, D C S

Swanbrow, Mrs K K Trott, N J Walker, D M Whittingham, P W Whittle, C J Wood and S D T Woodward voting in favour).

RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Executive be accepted and accordingly the Council approved the details as set out in the tabled schedule for item 15(3) as appended to these minutes, and:

- (a) the capital programme and financing of £36,959.00;
 - (b) an overall revised revenue budget for 2015/16 of £9,174,600;
 - (c) a revenue budget for 2016/17 of £8,903,300; and
 - (d) a council tax for Fareham Borough Council for 2016/17 of £145.22 per band D property, which represents a £5.00 increase when compared to the current year.
- (4) Housing Revenue Account and Capital Plans 2016/17

On the recommendations being put to the meeting, it was declared CARRIED unanimously.

(Councillors B Bayford, Mrs S M Bayford, Miss S M Bell, J V Bryant, Mrs P M Bryant, T M Cartwright, P J Davies, Mrs M Ellerton, J M Englefield, K D Evans, G Fazackarley, Miss T Harper, Mrs C L A Hockley, L Keeble, T G Knight, A Mandry, Mrs K Mandry, D J Norris, R H Price, JP, D L Steadman, D C S Swanbrow, Mrs K K Trott, N J Walker, D M Whittingham, P W Whittle, C J Wood and S D T Woodward voting in favour).

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Executive at its meeting on 8 February 2016, contained in Minute 10(2): Housing Revenue Account Spending Plans, including the Capital Programme for 2016/17 be accepted and, accordingly that the Council approves that:

- (a) rents be approved for Council dwellings as set out in paragraph 10 with effect from 4 April 2016;
 - (b) rents for Council garages be increased by 5% with effect from 4 April 2016;
 - (c) discretionary fees and charges be increased to provide a minimum increase of 5%, where possible, with effect from 4 April 2016;
 - (d) the revised budget for 2015/16 be approved;
 - (e) the base budget for 2016/17 be approved;
 - (f) the capital programme and financing for 2015/16 to 2019/20 be approved; and
 - (g) annual budgets and assumptions are set with the aim of ensuring sufficient surpluses are held to repay debt on the date of maturity of each loan.
- (5) Treasury Management Strategy & Prudential Indicators 2016/17

RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Executive at its meeting on 8 February 2016, contained in Minute 10(2): Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators for 2016/17 be approved.

16. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

There were no changes to appointments to the seats on committees.

(The meeting started at 5.00 pm
and ended at 6.49 pm).

