

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council

Date: Friday, 20 February 2015

Venue: Council Chamber - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

D J Norris
(Mayor)

M J Ford, JP
(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, Miss T G Harper, Mrs C L A Hockley, T J Howard, L Keeble, T G Knight, A Mandry, Mrs K Mandry, Mrs S Pankhurst, R H Price, JP, D L Steadman, D C S Swanbrow, N J Walker, D M Whittingham, P W Whittle, JP, C J Wood and S D T Woodward



1. PRAYERS

The meeting opened with prayers led by the Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Garry Roberts from Holy Trinity Church in Fareham.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Fazackarley, N R Gregory and Mrs K K Trott.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Mayor be authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10 February 2015.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor was pleased to announce that tickets are available for the Charity Ball at Ferneham Hall on Friday 4 April from 7pm. Tables can be booked with the Mayor's PA in the Civic Offices.

The Mayor announced that the next tea party would be on Thursday 5 March with a talk on "Fareham in Bloom" by Matt Wakefield. Tickets for Tea Parties are £4.00 on the door.

5. EXECUTIVE LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Leader announced that Hampshire County Council would be carrying out an electoral review which would impact on the Council as the County elections are run by Fareham Borough Council. A consultation is underway on the review which will consider the size of divisions based on the electorate. Fareham Crofton is currently 11% deficient, Fareham Warsash 15% deficient and Fareham Portchester 10% above. The Executive Leader invited all members to respond to the consultation which closes 1 May 2015.

The Executive Leader advised that there had been rumours circulating about the future of the College of Nautical Studies (formerly known as the School of Navigation) in Warsash which employs 150 people and is home to 5,000 students. He confirmed that the University of Southampton Solent was in the process of reviewing the future of the college and that he had asked the Deputy Executive Leader to engage with the University as part of that review process.

6. EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Executive Members' announcements made at this meeting.

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 2015/16.

Councillor R H Price, JP declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest for item 15 – Finance Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2015/16 as he leases an allotment in Portchester. He confirmed that he would leave the chamber and not take part in any debate on allotments.

Councillor J M Englefield declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest for item 15 – Finance Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2015/16 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, 2 February 2015 of Executive

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 2 February 2015 be received;
- (b) the recommendation of the Executive contained in minute 11(1) of 2 February 2015 regarding the Finance Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2015/16 be considered at item 15 (see minute 15 below); and
- (c) the recommendation of the Executive contained in minute 11(2) of 2 February 2015 - Housing Revenue Account Spending Plans, including Capital Programme for 2015/16 be considered at item 16 (see minute 16 below).

(2) Schedule of Individual Executive Member Decisions 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, 22 January 2015 of Scrutiny Board

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Board held on 22 January 2015 be received.

12. REPORTS OF OTHER COMMITTEES

- (1) Minutes of meeting Monday, 24 November 2014 of Audit and Governance Committee

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 24 November 2014 be received; and
(b) the recommendation of the Audit and Governance Committee contained in minute 6 regarding the Review of Financial Regulations to approve the proposed changes to the regulations be agreed.

- (2) Minutes of meeting Monday, 9 February 2015 of Audit and Governance Committee

The recommendation of the Audit and Governance Committee contained in minute 6 refers to item 17 on the Council agenda. The Mayor therefore agreed to bring that item forward for discussion.

In considering the recommendation in minute 7 – Review of the Constitution, Councillor T G Knight proposed an amendment to remove the words: “before consideration by the Scrutiny Board and the Executive and approval by Council” from minute 6(a). Having been duly seconded, the amendment was declared CARRIED with no members voting against.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 9 February 2015 be received;
(b) the recommendation of the Audit and Governance Committee contained in minute 6 regarding the Proposed Changes to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers in respect of the Planning Committee and the Planning Committee Deputation Scheme be considered at item 17 (see minute 17 below); and
(c) the recommendation of the Audit and Governance Committee contained in minute 7 regarding the Review of the Constitution be approved with Councillors T G Knight, L Keeble, P J Davies and R H Price, JP being agreed as members of the Member Officer Working Group, subject to the removal of the words “before consideration by the Scrutiny Board and the Executive and approval by Council” from minute 6(a).

- (3) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 6 January 2015 of Planning and Development Policy Development and Review Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning and Development Policy Development and Review Panel held on 6 January 2015 be received.

- (4) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 8 January 2015 of Streetscene Policy Development and Review Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Streetscene Policy Development and Review Panel held on 8 January 2015 be received.

- (5) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 14 January 2015 of Leisure and Community Policy Development and Review Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Leisure and Community Policy Development and Review Panel held on 14 January 2015 be received.

- (6) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 15 January 2015 of Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel held on 15 January 2015 be received.

- (7) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 20 January 2015 of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee held on 20 January 2015 be received; and
(b) the recommendation contained in minute 7 of 20 January 2015 regarding Spending Plans 2015/16 be considered at item 15 (see minute 15 below).

- (8) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 28 January 2015 of Planning Committee

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 28 January 2015 be received; and
(b) the recommendation contained in minute 6 of 28 January 2015 regarding Spending Plans 2015/16 be considered at item 15 (see minute 15 below).

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 submitted for this meeting.

15. FINANCE STRATEGY, CAPITAL PROGRAMME, REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2015/16

- (1) Suspension of Standing Order 19.4

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

- (a) the provisions of Standing Order 19.4 be suspended to allow the Executive Leader of the Council to speak on the matters referred to in items (2) and (3) below for longer than five minutes and the Spokesman for the opposition group 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 - 2 February 2015

The Council considered the Executive's recommendations concerning the Finance Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2015/16, referred to in the minutes of the Executive meeting dated 2 February 2015 and took account of the recommendations in determining the budget calculations at item 15(3) below.

The Council took account of the recommendations of the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee, referred to in the minutes at item 12(7) and of the Planning Committee, referred to in the minutes at item 12(8) and took account of the recommendations in determining the budget calculations at item 15(3) below.

(3) Council Tax 2015/16

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 £33,176,000;
- (b) an overall revised revenue budget for 2014/15 of £9,516,100;
- (c) a revenue budget for 2015/16 of £9,174,600; and
- (d) a council tax for Fareham Borough Council for 2015/16 of £140.22 per band D property, which represents no 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 over the past year and drew attention to the challenging background of more local control, more local decisions and more community engagement with higher expectations to be met with fewer resources.

The Executive Leader reminded members of a number of notable achievements of the last 12 months before looking at the challenges of the coming year. He confirmed that a planning application for a Leisure Centre and pool in the Western Wards has now been approved and the £1.5million runway improvement works at Daedalus is now complete. He also reported the Planning inspectors' examination of the Welborne Plan and the Development Sites and Policies Plan.

The Executive Leader highlighted a number of projects such as the launch of FareLets, a private rental scheme aimed at landlords who need tenants, improvement works on flood defences in Wallington, the continued work with Vanguard achieving the Council £380,000 annual savings, a review of the employment package establishing the gap between the lowest pay scale and the national minimum wage, progression of the Innovation Centre at Daedalus which is due to be completed in March which is included in the investment of £8.3million in the Solent Enterprise Zone at Daedalus.

He also highlighted the delivery of 138 affordable homes, including 40 new sheltered flats at Collingwood Court, a £5million replacement for Collingwood House, 16 affordable homes in Palmerston Road, 36 one and two bedroom flats in Sylvan Court, a £5.2million sheltered housing project in the Western Wards, and 6 Passivhaus certified homes in Sarisbury.

The Executive Leader commented that all of the new initiatives and successes had been achieved whilst the council tax had remained unchanged since 2009. He observed that this was even more remarkable when in 2009, the Council's core funding from Government was over £6 million and since that time, whilst Council Tax has remained the same the funding has dropped to £3.2 million. During those 6 years, the Council has delivered efficiencies of over £4.3million but the standards of service have remained very high and front line services have not been cut to achieve this.

The Executive Leader stated that although the Council had been successful in making savings, the Government has announced Fareham will be receiving further funding reductions in 2015-16 of £600,000, the challenge to realise these savings is coupled with the fact that customer expectations continue to rise.

The Executive Leader was pleased to confirm that he is very happy with the delivery of Council services, although there are still some areas in need of attention. These include littering and dog fouling and forming a Young People's Community Action Team to improve engagement with youngsters.

The Executive Leader turned his attention to the Council's capital Programme and confirmed that the General Fund capital programme for the next 5 years is a very generous £33.2million, focussed on delivering schemes on a prioritised basis, which accord with our Council Priorities.

As interest rates have fallen the Council has had to find new ways to invest its money. The Commercial Property Investment Acquisition Strategy has been established to maximise value for money, by delivering a good return on investment and a regular income stream for the Council. To date nearly £5.9m has been spent to acquire 5 properties, including 2 Sainsburys and a Tesco store. The acquisitions are generating £432,000 per annum for the Council, representing an initial yield of 7.3%.

The Executive Leader concluded by saying that the proposed budget delivered all services at a cost equivalent to a level seen a decade ago, with a capital programme for the next 5 years, valued at £33million, and identifying a further £900,000 of resource for new capital investment in the future. This brings real financial benefit to every single taxpayer in the Borough and continues to be one of the lowest Council Tax rates in the country.

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, M J Ford, Miss T Harper, Mrs C L A Hockley, T J Howard, L Keeble, T G Knight, A Mandry, Mrs K Mandry, Mrs S Pankhurst, R H Price, JP, D L Steadman, D C S Swanbrow, N J Walker, D M Whittingham, P W Whittle, JP, 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:

- (a) the capital programme and financing of £33,176,000;
- (b) an overall revised revenue budget for 2014/15 of £9,516,100;
- (c) a revenue budget for 2015/16 of £9,174,600; and
- (d) a council tax for Fareham Borough Council for 2015/16 of £140.22 per band D property, which represents no increase when compared to the current year.

16. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SPENDING PLANS INCLUDING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Executive at its meeting on 2 February 2015, contained in minute 11(2): Housing Revenue Account Spending Plans, including the Capital Programme for 2015/16 be accepted and, accordingly that the Council approves:

- (a) individual rent increases in line with the rent model, be approved for Council Dwellings with effect from 6 April 2015;
- (b) rents for Council garages be increased by 5% with effect from 6 April 2015;
- (c) discretionary fees and charges be increased to provide a minimum increase of 5%, where possible, with effect from 6 April 2015;
- (d) the revised budget for 2014/15 be approved;
- (e) the base budget for 2015/16 be approved;
- (f) the capital programme and financing for 2014/15 to 2018/19 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.

17. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS IN RESPECT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE AND THE PLANNING COMMITTEE DEPUTATION SCHEME

During a debate Councillor Price proposed an amendment to add a recommendation that the new arrangements be reviewed after 12 months. Having been duly seconded and following a debate on the amendment, the amendment was declared CARRIED, with 20 members voting in favour, 5 members voting against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers in respect of the Planning Committee as set out in paragraphs 38 and 48 of the report at Appendix A, along with the minor amendments and clarifications recommended by the Planning Committee in paragraph 5 of this report be agreed;
- (b) the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the necessary amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and to the Planning Committee Deputation Scheme of the Constitution; and
- (c) the new arrangements be reviewed after a period of 12 months.

18. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

There were no changes to appointments to committees made at this meeting.

(The meeting started at 5.00 pm
and ended at 6.55 pm).