

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BABERGH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2015

PRESENT: Peter Burgoyne – Chairman

Jenny Antill
Bryn Hurren
James Long

Mark Newman
Jack Norman

Neil MacMaster and David Wood were unable to be present.

1 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Bryn Hurren declared a local non pecuniary interest in respect of Minute No. 6 by reason of being the Council's representative on the Quay Theatre at Sudbury Ltd Management Board (and its Chairman) but indicated that he could speak and vote on the item.

2 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to a minor typographical error on Minute No. 5, where the date for final determination by Strategy Committee and Council should read 'February 2014'.

3 PETITIONS

None received.

4 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received.

5 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

6 JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND DRAFT 2015/16 BUDGET

The Head of Corporate Resources on behalf of Management Board introduced Paper P90 asking Members to consider the Council's draft Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and draft 2015/16 Budget, and to determine key aspects of the Budget including Council Tax and Council House rent levels.

In relation to the proposed Capital Programme (Appendix C to Paper P90) Members supported the Joint Audit and Standards Committee recommendation for the sum of £25m identified for potential prudential borrowing in relation to delivery plan projects to be subject to robust business cases agreed by Full Council.

Members also supported a recommendation seeking an increase in expenditure on Community Grants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the draft Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Budget proposals set out in the report be endorsed subject to further consideration at the February meeting for recommendation to Council.**
- (2) That the final General Fund Budget for 2015/16 be based on:-**
 - (a) A continuation of the funding strategy agreed for 2014/15 in order to deliver the Council's Transformation Programme and Strategic Priority outcomes;**
 - (b) Linked to the above, using an estimated £2m from New Homes Bonus and Business Rates (section 31 Grant) received in 2015/16 to support the Budget, including Programme Development resources;**
 - (c) No increase in Council Tax.**
- (3) That the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Investment Strategy 2015/16 to 2019/20 and draft HRA Budget for 2015/16 be agreed subject to further consideration at the February Strategy Committee meeting of either:-**
 - (a) An increase of 3% increase in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent increase of £2.68 a week or;**
 - (b) Such lower increase that relates to the 'limit rent' fixed by the Government for next year, which could be 2.5%, equivalent to an average rent increase of £2.23 a week.**
- (4) That the revised HRA Business Plan in Appendix B to Paper P90 be noted.**
- (5) That the proposed capital programme in Appendix C to Paper P90 be agreed including the addition of a provisional sum of £25m for 'Other unspecified Delivery Plan projects' which can then be allocated to investment proposals that meet the desired investment strategy returns and strategic priority outcomes. Further, that the use of the £25m be subject to robust business cases to be presented to Strategy Committee for recommendation to Full Council.**
- (6) That an increase in Community Grants (revenue) expenditure based on RPI as at September 2014 be approved.**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 10.25 a.m.

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Chairman