

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY 7 JANUARY 2016

PRESENT: Jennie Jenkins – Chairman

Clive Arthey	David Holland
Simon Barrett	Frank Lawrenson
Sue Carpendale	Jan Osborne
Alan Ferguson	Peter Patrick

Richard Kemp was unable to be present.

59 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None declared.

60 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

61 PETITIONS

None received.

62 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received.

63 QUESTIONS FROM THE MEMBERS

None received.

64 FORWARD PLAN

Members had before them [Paper R82](#), circulated with the agenda, together with a revised version of the Plan which was circulated prior to the commencement of the meeting as [Paper R82R](#). Linda Sheppard, Senior Governance Support Officer advised the Committee of the reasons for the amendments, which comprise the addition of the Joint Strategic Plan Refresh and the Local Plan Process – Parameters to the February and April meetings respectively with the Leisure Services Review moving to the 7 April meeting. Members were aware that the Forward Plan is updated on an on-going basis, to reflect changing timescales and with a view to managing agendas.

RESOLVED

That the contents of Paper R82R be noted.

65 DRAFT JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND 2016/17 BUDGET.

Jennie Jenkins, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resource and Housing, introduced [Paper R83](#), outlining the draft proposals for the 2016/17 budget, which also covered the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy. A revised table relating to the Transformation Funds (on page 15 of Paper R83) was circulated to Members prior to the commencement of the meeting.

She drew Members' attention to some of the key points as set out in the report, in relation to the proposals regarding changes to council tax, housing and garage rents and service and utility charges.

Katherine Steel, Head of Corporate Resources, and Martin King, Head of Housing, highlighted various matters in relation to the proposed changes, and responded to Members' questions. Members were aware from the discussion that the matters referred to in resolutions 2 and 7 below would be the subject of further consideration.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the draft Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Budget proposals set out in Paper R83 be endorsed, subject to further consideration at the February meeting for recommendation to Council.**
- (2) That the final General Fund Budget for 2016/17 be based on an increase to Council Tax of 5.4p per week for a Band D property, which is equivalent to 1.95%, to support the Council's overall financial position, which will be considered further at the February Strategy Committee meeting.**
- (3) That the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Investment Strategy 2016/17 to 2020/21 and draft HRA Budget for 2016/17 be agreed, subject to further consideration at the February Strategy Committee meeting.**
- (4) That the mandatory decrease of 1% in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent reduction of £0.92 a week as required by the Welfare Reform and Work Bill be implemented.**
- (5) That an action plan be developed by the Head of Housing in consultation with the Tenants Forum, Joint Housing Board and elected Members to mitigate the impact of the legislative changes on the HRA and the strategic priorities.**
- (6) That garage rents be increased by 10% to provide some additional income to the HRA (an increase of 76 pence per week).**
- (7) That accommodation related service charges for sheltered tenants be increased by an average increase of £4.87 per week.**

- (8) That utility charges for sheltered tenants be reduced by 20%, representing an average reduction of £2.68 per week.
- (9) That in principle, Right to Buy receipts should be retained to enable continued development and acquisition of new council dwellings.
- (10) That the revised HRA Business Plan in Appendix B to Paper R83 be noted.
- (11) That the proposed capital programme in Appendix C to Paper R83 be agreed.

66 THE HRA INCOME MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Members had before them [Paper R84](#), which was presented by Jennie Jenkins, Portfolio Holder for Housing. She outlined the report for Members and advised that this was a joint strategy, alongside Mid Suffolk District Council.

Gavin Fisk, Corporate Manager – Tenant Services answered questions from Members and clarified details on various matters.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Income Management Strategy – Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2015-2020 (Appendix A) Paper R84, be approved.
- (2) That a 52 week rent collection arrangement for Babergh tenants, which brings the policy in line with Mid Suffolk, be adopted.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 7.05 p.m.

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Chairman