



BUDGET COUNCIL

MINUTES

7.30pm – 10.00pm

17 February 2015

Present: Councillor Lubbock (Lord Mayor), Mr Armstrong (Sheriff), Councillors Ackroyd, Arthur, Barker, Blunt, Bogelein, Boswell, Bradford, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Button, Carlo, Driver, Galvin, Gayton, Gihawi, Grahame, Harris, Haynes, Henderson, Herries, Jackson, Jones, Kendrick, Little, Manning, Maxwell, Neale, Packer, Price, Ryan, Sands (M), Sands (S), Stammers, Stonard, Waters, Woollard and Wright

Apologies: Councillor Howard

1. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lord Mayor said that it had only been three weeks since the last council meeting but it has been a busy time with many engagements including a visit to our twin city in Serbia, Novi Sad by invitation of its Mayor. They have a special day on 1st February to celebrate their city and they were extremely hospitable and welcoming to her and her husband. They travelled with Diana and Peter Beckley who have done so much to encourage the twinning links that they have been made Honorary Citizens of Novi Sad.

The previous Sunday the city said a farewell to Canon Peter Nokes of St Peter Mancroft. A service in the church was followed by a wonderful reception at City Hall and the Lord Mayor thanked the council for providing this event. Many tributes were paid to Peter for his dedication to the city over the last 15 years. He will be missed very much.

Finally she said she had visited the extraordinary exhibition at the Castle 'Homage to Manet', which is a 'must see' and she encouraged everyone to find time to go along and enjoy it.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

4. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

5. MINUTES

The Lord Mayor highlighted that there was an error in Appendix A of the minutes of the previous meeting. Three questions to portfolio holders and answers were missing. Subject to these being added to the final version of the minutes it was –

RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January, 2015.

6. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2015-2020

Councillor Arthur moved and Councillor Driver seconded the recommendations in the annexed report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve the corporate plan 2015-2020.

7. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015-16

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Maxwell seconded the recommendations in the annexed report subject to the following revised figures in table 6.1a of the appendix:-

	£000s
+ Increases in council tax	(539)
+ Movement 2014/15 to 2015/16	1,352

Councillor Boswell moved and Councillor Stammers seconded the following amendment : –

“To amend recommendation 1a) by inserting after “ Annex A” “...and the changes detailed below:-

General Fund 2015/16

Add the following items:-

	£s
- Gulley unblocking	20,000
- Student Community Outreach Officer	25,000
- Increase Environmental Strategy budget to create full time community outreach officer post	20,000
- Contingency fund to cover replanting of trees outside of Conservation areas in the event council is not able to source this from Community Infrastructure Levy funding	50,000
- Create a separate repairs and maintenance budget for Community centres	180,000
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	295,000

Reduce the following:-

- Grass cutting budget	65,000
- Level of reserves	50,000
- General repairs and maintenance	180,000
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	295,000 “

With 16 voting in favour (Councillors Ackroyd, Blunt, Bogelein, Boswell, Carlo, Galvin, Grahame, Haynes, Henderson, Jackson, Jones, Little, Neale, Price, Stammers and Wright), 21 against (Councillors Arthur, Barker, Bradford, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Button, Driver, Gayton, Gihawi, Harris, Herries, Kendrick, Manning, Maxwell, Packer, Ryan, Sands (M), Sands (S), Stonard, Waters and Woollard) and 1 abstention (Councillor Lubbock), the amendment was declared lost.

Councillor Galvin moved and Councillor Bogelein seconded the following amendment –

“To ask cabinet to:-

- set up a cross-party working group to review strategy and options for future capital investment.
- pursue joint funding (with the county council and the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT) for a Homeless Mental Health Officer to work within the city council and to include that in future budgets from 2016-7 onwards.
- seek to find alternative funding arrangements for the £25k Greater Norwich Growth Board increased cost (as already outlined in the transformation programme) with an arrangement with the New Anglia LEP or from commercial sources”.

With 38 voting in favour and 1 abstention, the amendment was carried and became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Wright moved and Councillor Ackroyd seconded the following amendment :-

- “1) To amend recommendation 1a) by replacing “.... the budgetary requirement be set to £17.056M”” with “...the budgetary requirement be set to **£17.002M**” and by inserting after “....Annex A” “..... and the changes detailed below:-

Additional savings/income:-	£s
Reduce HR/Democratic Services Budget	61,000
Council Tax Freeze Grant	99,757
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	160,757
 Growth/reduced income:-	
Council Tax – zero increase	153,902
Channel shift scoping work around delivering council services via the post office network	6,855
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	160,757
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2) To amend recommendation 1b) to read:-

“that the council’s council tax requirement is set at **£8.160m**”.

3) To amend recommendation 1c) to read:-

“that council’s council tax should be set at **£234.76** for band D”.

4) To amend recommendation 1d) to read:-

“that the precept of the collection fund for 2015/16 be set at **£7.926m** calculated in accordance with sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 as per the statutory determination at annex B”.

(Info note – no Council Tax increase reduces income by £154k – attracts Council Tax Freeze Grant of £100k – net effect is to reduce budgetary requirement by £54k)”.

With 2 voting in favour (Councillors Ackroyd and Wright), 35 against (Councillors Arthur, Barker, Blunt, Bogelein, Boswell, Bradford, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Button, Carlo, Driver, Galvin, Gayton, Gihawi, Grahame, Harris, Haynes, Henderson, Herries, Jackson, Jones, Kendrick, Little, Manning, Maxwell, Neale, Packer, Price, Ryan, Sands (M), Sands (S), Stammers, Stonard, Waters, Woollard and Wright) and 1 abstention (Councillor Lubbock), the amended was declared lost.

RESOLVED, -

- 1) with 22 voting in favour (Councillors Arthur, Barker, Blunt, Bradford, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Button, Driver, Gayton, Gihawi, Harris, Herries, Kendrick, Manning, Maxwell, Packer, Ryan, Sands (M), Sands (S), Stonard, Waters and Woollard); 13 against (Councillors Ackroyd, Bogelein, Boswell, Carlo, Galvin, Grahame, Haynes, Henderson, Little, Neale, Price, Stammers and Wright) and 3 abstentions (Councillors Jackson, Jones and Lubbock) to approve cabinet's recommendations of 4 February for the 2015/16 financial year:
 - a) that the council's budgetary requirement be set to £17.056m and that the budgets set out in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.3 of Annex A are approved, taking into account the savings, income and other budget movements set out in the report and appendix 2 of annex A;
 - b) that the council's council tax requirement is set at £8.315m;
 - c) that council tax be set at £239.34 for band D, which is an increase of 1.95%;
 - d) that the precept of the collection fund for 2015/16 be set at £8.081m calculated in accordance with sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 as per the statutory determination at annex B;
 - e) that a new general fund earmarked reserve be set up into which all Section 31 Business Rates Relief grant monies are transferred until applied to offset related business rates deficits as they arise;
 - f) that the prudent level of reserves for the council be set at £4.474m in accordance with the recommendation of the chief finance officer;
 - g) that the non-housing capital plan 2015/16 to 2019/20 should be as set out in paragraph 9.7 of annex A and the further detail provided in annexes C-E;
 - h) that the non-housing capital programme 2015/16 be as set out in paragraph 10.3 of annex A including the council elements of the Greater Norwich Growth Programme,
- 2) with 35 voting in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention, to allocate the neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy for 2015/16 as set out in annex E.
- 3) with 36 voting in favour, none against and 2 abstentions to approve the Greater Norwich Growth programme as set out at annex D.
- 4) with 38 voting in favour and 1 abstention, to approve the addition of the extended Push the Pedalways programme to the 2015/16 to 2019/20 capital plan and the 2015/16 capital programme as set out at Annex F subject to the Department for Transport approving the scheme; and that Council confirms its acceptance of the DfT's condition of grant that it accepts responsibility for meeting any costs over and above the DfT contribution requested as set out in paragraph 9.

5) with 38 voting in favour and 1 abstention, to ask cabinet to –

- a) set up a cross-party working group to review strategy and options for future capital investment;
- b) pursue joint funding (with the county council and the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT) for a Homeless Mental Health Officer to work within the city council and to include that in future budgets from 2016-7 onwards;
- c) seek to find alternative funding arrangements for the £25k Greater Norwich Growth Board increased cost (as already outlined in the transformation programme) with an arrangements with the New Anglia LEP or from commercial sources”.

(With more than 2 hours having passed since the commencement of the meeting the Lord Mayor invited members to consider whether any of the following items could be taken as unopposed business).

8. HOUSING RENTS AND BUDGETS 2015-16

RESOLVED, unopposed, to approve the cabinet’s recommendations for the 2015-16 financial year.

- (1) that the council housing rent increase be approved at 2.2% as set out in paragraph 6.7 of the report;
- (2) that the housing revenue account budgets be approved as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report;
- (3) that the prudent minimum level of housing reserves be approved as set out in paragraph 7.1.1 of the report;
- (4) that the housing capital plan 2015-16 to 2019-20 set out in paragraph 8.6 of the report and the housing capital programme 2015-16 set out in paragraph 9.1 of the report be approved.

9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2015-16

RESOLVED, unopposed, to approve cabinet’s recommendations in relation to the key elements of the annexed report –

- (1) the capital prudential indicators and limits for 2015-16 to 2017-18 contained within paragraphs 10 – 15 of the report;
- (2) the minimum revenue provision policy statement set out in paragraph 16 of the report;

- (3) the borrowing strategy 2015-16 to 2017-18 set out in paragraphs 24 – 28 of the report;
- (4) the treasury prudential indicators set out in paragraphs 29 – 32 of the report, including the authorised limit.
- (5) the investment strategy 2015-16 as set out in paragraphs 33-57 of the report and the detailed criteria included in appendix 3.

CHAIR