

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL**COUNCIL
MINUTES****Date: Tuesday 28 February 2017****Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage**

Present: Members: The Mayor (J Lloyd CC), D Bainbridge, P Bibby, L Briscoe, R Broom, J Brown, H Burrell, L Chester, E Connolly, M Downing, J Fraser, J Gardner, M Gardner, S Hearn, R Henry CC, J Hollywell, C Latif, G Lawrence, Mrs J Lloyd, M McKay, L Martin-Haugh, J Mead, S Mead, A Mitchell, M Notley, R Parker CC, R Raynor, C Saunders, G Snell, S Speller, S Taylor OBE CC, P Stuart, J Thomas and A Webb

In Attendance: Emma Chapman - Stevenage Youth Mayor

Start/End Time: Start Time: 7:00 pm
End Time: 8:10 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Cullen, L Harrington, M Hurst and A McGuinness.

At this Juncture and in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992, Councillor Sharon Hearn declared that she would take no part in item 5 the Main Debate.

2. MINUTES – COUNCIL – 7 DECEMBER 2016

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Council meeting of 7 December 2016 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

3. MINUTES – COUNCIL – 31 JANUARY 2017

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Council meeting of 31 January 2017 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

4. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATION

The Mayor provided Council with a brief update of events that he had attended since the last meeting including attending two events to mark Holocaust Memorial Day and hosting the last three school parliaments where the current theme was rubbish disposal. The Mayor was then presented with a certificate as the Council had achieved a bronze award

from the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme.

5. MAIN DEBATE – 2017/18 COUNCIL TAX AND GENERAL FUND AND CAPITAL BUDGETS

The Main Debate related to items 5A and item 5B on the agenda. A revised page 32, Appendix A to report 5A – General Fund Summary, was circulated at the meeting.

The Mayor called upon the Leader of the Council, Councillor S Taylor OBE CC to move the Motion on the Council Tax Setting 2017/2018, General Fund and Capital Budgets which was circulated around the chamber.

In her speech Councillor Taylor referred to the loss of nearly £4million of Government Support since 2010 and that by 2019/20 the Council would have lost £5million with no government grant, the Council's challenge would be to have to rely on funding from council tax, business rates and fees and charges. However in the face of this challenge the Town had celebrated its 70th anniversary last year, handed over keys to brand new council homes in Archer Road, invested £2million in smartening up the Town Centre to make it a brighter place to be while the longer term regeneration plans took shape as well as managing to save more than £8million in the last seven years.

Councillor Taylor reminded Council of the three main priorities for the Council: Regeneration for the Town Centre, the Co-operative Neighbourhood agenda and quality affordable homes for the people of Stevenage.

In relation to the Capital Programme, Councillor Taylor informed Council that £1.5million would be committed to improving play areas over the next five years; £10million was committed for garage investment and £1.7million on neighbourhood environments.

Concerning the New Homes Bonus received the Leader announced that this would fund the following projects:

- Enhancing Life Chances (Child poverty support, for vulnerable families in Stevenage) - £40,000;
- Stevenage Festival of Cycling (CycleFest – First and Best) - £90,000;
- Acknowledging the end of World War 1 - £3,000;
- 'No More' Service (NMS) - £80,000;
- Homelessness Initiative 'Next Steps' Extension of 2016/17 Initiative - £46,491;
- Woodland Burials - £20,000;
- Neighbourhood wardens - £36,200;
- apprenticeship programme for 2017/18 New Cohort - £100,000;
- Funding to facilitate new Residents Groups - £4,500;

- Co-operative Neighbourhood Management - £120,000;
- Memorial for Councillor Sherma Batson - £5,000

Finally Councillor Taylor extended her thanks to all involved in the budget setting process and then moved the recommendations of the Executive and the formal Council Tax Resolution that was circulated around the Chamber.

The Motion was formally seconded by Councillor Mrs J Lloyd who informed Council of the difficulty in predicting what changes the Government would be imposing on local authorities which could affect budget projections.

Councillor Mrs Lloyd also informed Council that the Capital Programme included expenditure to help residents access services and information on line which supported one of the key Future Town Future Council priorities 'Connecting to our Customers'.

The Mayor then invited the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor J Fraser to address the meeting.

Councillor Fraser advised that his Group would be supporting the Budget which had been produced through a competent financial management process. He was particularly pleased to see provision to support the British Legion and Woodland Burial projects through the New Homes Bonus.

The Leader of the Minority Opposition Party, Councillor R Parker CC also stated that his group would be supporting the budget and he highlighted the work of the cross party Leader's Financial Security Group (LFSG) in compiling the budget.

Councillor Parker expressed concern regarding the level of Town Centre car parking charges, asked that the New Homes Bonus allocations be considered alongside the work of the LFSG and whether there could be an increase in Local Community Budgets.

A full debate then took place. Members were pleased to see support for victims of domestic abuse including support for older people who could also be vulnerable and potentially subject to such abuse. The rising numbers of children in poverty was also an issue which needed to be considered.

In reply Councillor Taylor thanked the LFSG, she gave credit to Members that all parties had worked well together to enable the Budget to be produced. She agreed with the sentiments expressed in relation to child poverty and domestic abuse and gave assurances that the Council would continue to do all it could to alleviate these issues and to work towards making all people feel safe in their own homes.

The Motion was then put to a recorded vote* and it was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the 2016/17 revised net expenditure on the General Fund of £10,139,310 is approved.
2. That General Fund Budget Requirement for 2017/18 of £8,950,125 be approved with a contribution from balances of £432,095 and a Band D Council Tax of £198.52 (assuming a maximum £5.00 or 2.58% increase on a Band D property) based on the Government's financial funding settlement. This is reflected in the formal Council Tax Resolution 3-8 below.
3. That the following are approved:
 - a. the revised working revenue estimates for the year 2016/17 amounting to £10,139,310 and the revenue estimates for 2017/18 amounting to £9,382,220;
 - b. the contribution from balances totalling £2,612,512 in 2016/17;
 - c. the contribution from balances totalling £432,095 in 2017/18.
4. That it is noted that at its meeting on 24 January 2017 the Executive calculated the amount of 26,695.1 Band D equivalent properties as its council tax base for the year 2017/18 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011.
5. That the following amounts are calculated by the Council for the year 2017/18 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011:

a.	£86,854,693	Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act, less the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d)
b.	£81,555,107	Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the Act.

- c. £5,299,586 Being the amount by which the aggregate at 3a above exceeds the aggregate at 3b above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
- d. £198.52 Being the amount at 3c divided by the amount at 2 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year
- e. Valuation Bands
- | | |
|---|----------|
| A | £ 132.35 |
| B | £ 154.40 |
| C | £ 176.46 |
| D | £ 198.52 |
| E | £ 242.64 |
| F | £ 286.75 |
| G | £ 330.87 |
| H | £ 397.04 |

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 3d above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

6. a. That it is noted that for the year 2017/18 Hertfordshire County Council have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

	Basic Amount Of Council Tax	3% Social Care Charge	2017/18 Council Tax
A	£ 791.61	£ 38.94	£ 830.55
B	£ 923.54	£ 45.44	£ 968.98
C	£ 1,055.48	£ 51.92	£ 1,107.40
D	£ 1,187.41	£ 58.42	£ 1,245.83
E	£ 1,451.28	£ 71.40	£ 1,522.68
F	£ 1,715.14	£ 84.39	£ 1,799.53
G	£ 1,979.02	£ 97.36	£ 2,076.38
H	£ 2,374.82	£ 116.84	£ 2,491.66

- b. That it is noted that for the year 2017/18 Hertfordshire Police Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and amended by Section 27 of the Police and Magistrates' Court Act 1994, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	£ 101.33
B	£ 118.22
C	£ 135.11
D	£ 152.00
E	£ 185.78
F	£ 219.56
G	£ 253.33
H	£ 304.00

7. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 5e. and 6a. and b. above, the Council in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992,

hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts for council tax for the year 2017/18 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	£1,064.23
B	£1,241.60
C	£1,418.97
D	£1,596.35
E	£1,951.10
F	£2,305.84
G	£2,660.58
H	£3,192.70

8. That in accordance with Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992 it is agreed that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2017/18 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZC having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 5e.
9. That the risk assessments of General Fund Balances of £2,656,938, as shown at Appendix H to the report are noted.
10. That the advice of the Chief Financial Officer on the robustness of the draft budget and the adequacy of reserves (Appendix C) is noted.
11. That the contingency sum of £400,000 for 2017/18 within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates is approved.
12. That the 2017/18 proposed Fees and Charges increase of £190,030 (Appendix F) is approved.
13. That the 2017/18 proposed Concessions Policy (Appendix G) is approved.
14. That the 2017/18 proposed Financial Security budget options of £226,190 (Appendix D) are approved.
15. That the 2017/18 proposed Growth options of £143,700 (Appendix E) are approved.

16. That it is noted that the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy continues to meet the financial objectives set by the Chief Financial Officer.

2016/17 FINAL CAPITAL FORWARD PLAN & 5 YEAR CAPITAL STRATEGY (Report 5B)

17. That the revised General Fund and HRA 2016/17 capital programme, as detailed in Appendix A and Appendix C to this report is approved.
18. That the 2017/18 General Fund Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix A to this report is approved subject to the removal of the Golf Course drainage work project.
19. The 2017/18 HRA Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix C to this report is approved.
20. That the updated forecast of resources as summarised in Appendix A (General Fund) and Appendix C (HRA) to this report is approved.
21. That the transfer of any unused General Fund borrowing costs to the Capital Reserve, (paragraph 4.4.3 refers) is approved.
22. That the growth bids identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (Appendix B and D) are approved subject to the removal of the Golf Course drainage work project.
23. That the work undertaken by LFSG on behalf of the Executive in reviewing and challenging the General Fund Capital Strategy is noted.
24. That a review of site disposals is carried out during 2017/18 to see if the timing of the sites in the programme can be brought forward for disposal and if any additional/alternative sites can be identified.

New Homes Bonus Proposals

25. That the following New Homes Bonus schemes and initiatives proposed by the Leader, as detailed below, be referred to a Special Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 2 March for comment and then reported to the Executive on 14 March in order that the approved schemes and initiatives may be implemented with effect from 1 April 2017.
 - Enhancing Life Chances (Child poverty support, for vulnerable families in Stevenage) - £40,000;
 - Stevenage Festival of Cycling (CycleFest – First and Best) - £90,000;

- Acknowledging the end of World War 1 - £3,000;
- No More Service - £80,000;
- Homelessness Initiative 'Next Steps' Neighbourhood - £46,491;
- Woodland Burials - £20,000;
- Neighbourhood wardens (extension of current provision) - £36,200;
- apprenticeship programme for 2017/18 - £100,000;
- Funding to facilitate new Residents Groups - £4,500;
- Co-operative Neighbourhood Management (revenue) - £120,000;
- Memorial for Councillor Sherma Batson - £5,000

* Votes for the Motion – Councillors D Bainbridge, P Bibby, L Briscoe, R Broom, J Brown, H Burrell, L Chester, E Connolly, M Downing, J Fraser, J Gardner, M Gardner, R Henry CC, J Hollywell, C Latif, G Lawrence, Mrs J Lloyd, J Lloyd CC, M McKay, L Martin-Haugh, J Mead, S Mead, A Mitchell, M Notley, R Parker CC, R Raynor, C Saunders, G Snell, S Speller, S Taylor OBE CC, P Stuart, J Thomas and A Webb

Votes against the motion – nil

Abstentions – Councillor S Hearn

6. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None.

7. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

None.

8. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

9. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE

The Leader of the Opposition enquired about the actions the Council was taking in order to mitigate the rise in fly-tipping incidents around the Town.

The Leader of the Council asked Councillor John Gardner, Executive Member for Environment and Regeneration to respond on her behalf.

Councillor Gardner advised that all reports of fly tipping received by the Council were responded to and dealt with in a timely and efficient way. However, the part time closure of the Household Waste Sites by the County Council had exacerbated the problem of fly tipping. It was also noted that the Government had recently introduced a new system of penalties for

those caught in the act of fly-tipping.

Councillor Gardner agreed to send a written reply to Cllr Fraser in response to his concerns regarding the balance between the Council increasing the charges for waste collection compared to the cost of responding to the resultant increase in fly tipping.

10. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

None.

11. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

None.

12. TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL CODE INDICATORS 2017/18

The Chief Executive reported that this item had been considered by the Audit Committee and the Executive and that the recommendation was for the provisions to come into effect from 1 March 2017.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED**:

1. That the 2016/17 revised net expenditure on the General Fund of £10,139,310 is approved.
2. That General Fund Budget Requirement for 2017/18 of £8,950,125, with a contribution from balances of £432,095 and a Band D Council Tax of £198.52 (assuming a £5.00 on a band D or a 2.58% increase) is approved.
3. That the advice of the Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) on the robustness of the draft budget and the adequacy of reserves (Appendix C) is noted.
4. That a minimum level of General Fund reserves of £2,656,938, in line with the 2017/18 risk assessment of balances, as shown at Appendix H to this report, is approved.
5. That the contingency sum of £400,000 within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates, is approved for 2017/18, (unchanged from 2016/17).
6. That the 2017/18 proposed Fees and Charges increase of £190,030 (Appendix F) is approved.
7. That the 2017/18 proposed concessions (Appendix G) are approved.

8. That the 2017/18 proposed Financial Security budget options of £226,190 (Appendix D) are approved.
9. That the 2017/18 proposed Growth options of £143,700 (Appendix E) are approved.
10. That it be noted that the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy continues to meet the financial objectives set by the Chief Finance Officer.
11. That the above provisions are implemented from 1 March 2017.

13. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2017/18

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2017/18 as set out in Appendix A to the report is approved.

14. OFFICER REPORT – PAY POLICY STATEMENT

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Pay Policy Statement set out in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, and the Data Transparency Code 2015 attached at Appendix 1 to the report, is approved
2. The Pay Policy be placed on the Council's website and that a notice of the policy be published in the next edition of Chronicle.

15. AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES – 1 FEBRUARY 2017

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 1 February 2017 are noted.

CHAIR