

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL****SPECIAL COUNCIL  
MINUTES****Date: Wednesday 28 January 2015****Time: 7.00 pm****Place: Council Chamber**

**Present:** The Mayor, S Batson MBE DL CC and Councillors D Bainbridge, L Bell, P Bibby, L Briscoe, R Broom, J Brown, H Burrell, L Chester, E Connolly, M Gardner, L Harrington, R Henry CC, J Hollywell, PD Kissane, C Latif, Mrs J Lloyd, J Lloyd CC, L Martin-Haugh, J Mead, S Mead, M Notley, R Parker CC, C Saunders, G Snell, S Speller, P Stuart, S Taylor OBE CC, H Tessier, J Thomas and A Webb.

**Start/End Time:** Start Time: 7.00 p.m.  
End Time: 7.45 p.m.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Cherney-Craw, J Gardner, G Clark, D Cullen, A McGuinness, M McKay, R Raynor, V Warwick, the Youth Mayor, Shae Field and Jochebel MacCarthy of the Youth Council.

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) FINAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2015/2016 RENT SETTING**

Council had before it an officer report concerning the 2015/2016 rent setting and HRA Budget that had previously been considered by the Executive on 20 January 2015.

In moving the 2015/16 HRA Budget and Rent proposals, Councillor Webb informed the meeting that since the Council had taken the decision to manage its own housing stock, its focus has not only been directed to providing a sustainable financial plan but also delivering the Council's commitment to improve the quality of its homes, establishing an extensive new build programme and keeping rent affordable.

Councillor Mrs Lloyd seconded the motion and informed Council that in light of the Right to Buy policy she welcomed the fact that SBC would in the next 10 years be building 520 new council homes.

Following debate a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the rents be increased, week commencing 6 April 2015 by an average 2.18% or £2.15 per week which has been calculated using the new rent formula, CPI +1% in line with the 2014 Rent Policy.
2. That the revised 2014/15 and the 2015/16 HRA budget be approved, as set out in Appendix A to the report.
3. That the proposed fees and charges as shown in Appendix B of the report be approved.
4. That Savings Options totalling £283,920 as shown in Appendix C of the report be approved
5. That the Growth Options with an impact of £1,503,950 on the HRA as shown in Appendix D of the report be approved.
6. That the minimum level of reserves for 2015/16 as shown in Appendix E of the report be approved
7. That the increase of £28,590 to the 2014/15 HRA working budget be approved.
8. That the review of service charges to be undertaken in 2015/16 be noted.

### **3. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

Council had before it an officer report concerning the 2015/2016 Council Tax Support Scheme which had previously been considered by the Executive on 20 January 2015

In moving the recommendations Councillor Mrs Lloyd informed Council that she was pleased to announce that despite the cuts being made to SBC funding, including Council Tax Support, the scheme remained unchanged from 2014/15.

Councillor S Taylor CC, seconded the recommendations and stated that she was disappointed that government cuts would fall disproportionately on working claimants on a low income. She also noted that studies amongst local authorities have shown that there is an increase in council tax debt following the introduction of this scheme in England.

Following debate a vote was then taken and it was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the 2015/16 Council Tax Support Scheme as set out in the report (see Appendix A) be adopted.
2. That the complete review of the scheme to be carried out during the summer of 2015 be noted.

**Mayor**