

Council

Monday, 24 February 2020

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Michael Chalk (Mayor), Councillor Gareth Prosser (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Joe Baker, Tom Baker-Price, Roger Bennett, Joanne Beecham, Juliet Brunner, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, John Fisher, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Julian Grubb, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Ann Isherwood, Wanda King, Anthony Lovell, Gemma Monaco, Nyear Nazir, Mike Rouse, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, David Thain, Craig Warhurst and Jennifer Wheeler

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Sue Hanley and Jayne Pickering

Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

72. WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed those present to the meeting.

73. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Debbie Chance.

74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Executive advised Members that at a meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held in July 2019 all Members had been granted a general dispensation to participate in voting on Members' allowances, the Council's budget and Council Tax matters.

There were no declarations of interest.

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Chair

75. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of Council held on Monday 20th January 2020 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Mayor.

76. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made during the meeting:

a) The Mayor's Announcements

A written record of the civic engagements that had been attended by the Mayor since the previous meeting of Council was circulated at the meeting.

The Mayor also explained that a charity dinner would be taking place on 4th April 2020. All Members would be welcome to attend this dinner.

b) The Leader's Announcements

The Leader circulated a written update in respect of Coronavirus, also called Covid-19, for Members' consideration.

Members were advised that the outcome in respect of the Council's membership of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) would be announced shortly.

c) The Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

77. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The following matters were discussed in detail during consideration of this item:

Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24

Members discussed the proposals detailed in the report concerning the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2020/21 to 2023/24.

There had been some positive developments that had helped to balance the Council's budget. This included a better rate of return on the Council's pension investments over the previous three years than had been anticipated. The Council had also benefitted from

receiving £494,000 in New Homes Bonus (NHB) funding for 2020/21, which had not been expected. As a consequence the original gap in the budget of £1.2 million that had been anticipated for 2020/21 had been addressed and the Council was now projecting a surplus of £82,000 in that financial year which would be returned to balances.

In order to balance the budget in 2020/21 difficult decisions had had to be taken by Members. This included decisions in respect of funding for Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, the decision to close the One Stop Shops and the decision that had been taken in respect of Rubicon Business Centre. Officers had managed to achieve significant savings during the year and further savings were anticipated as a result of changing the operating model for the Dial A Ride service. However, there remained a budget gap of £1.6 million that would need to be addressed over the three years from 2021/22 to 2023/24. In order to address this gap Members would need to make further difficult decisions.

Reference was made to the challenging financial position for most local authorities in the country. Members noted that there remained a lot of uncertainty about Council funding moving forward; the Government's Fair Funding Review would impact on Council finances as would an anticipated resetting of the base level for business rates growth. Reference was also made to the fact that the Council was still subject to a Section 24 Notice and would need to demonstrate to the external auditors that the authority had a sustainable budget moving forward in order for this to be lifted.

During consideration of this item Councillor Bill Hartnett explained that the Labour group would support the ninth recommendation from the Executive Committee in respect of the MTFP for 2020/21 to 2023/24. This recommendation was as follows:

"The increase of the Council Tax per Band D at £5 for 2020/21 be approved."

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the ninth recommendation in respect of the MTFP was subject to a named vote.

Members voting FOR Recommendation 9 below:

Councillors Salman Akbar, Joe Baker, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Roger Bennett, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, John Fisher, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Julian Grubb, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Ann Isherwood, Wanda King, Anthony Lovell, Gemma Monaco, Nyear Nazir, Gareth Prosser, Mike Rouse, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, David Thain, Craig Warhurst and Jenny Wheeler. (28)

Members voting AGAINST recommendation 9 below:

No Councillors (0).

Members ABSTAINING on the vote on recommendation 9 below:

No Councillors (0).

The recommendation was therefore carried.

Members subsequently voted on the remaining recommendations in respect of the MTFP 2020/21 to 2023/24; recommendations 1 to 8 and 10. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 these recommendations were subject to a named vote.

Members voting FOR Recommendations 1 to 8 and 10:

Councillors Salman Akbar, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Roger Bennett, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, Peter Fleming, Julian Grubb, Ann Isherwood, Anthony Lovell, Gemma Monaco, Nyear Nazir, Gareth Prosser, Mike Rouse, David Thain and Craig Warhurst (18).

Members voting AGAINST Recommendations 1 to 8 and 10:

Councillors Joe Baker, Greg Chance, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Wanda King, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith and Jenny Wheeler (10).

Members ABSTAINING on the vote in respect of Recommendations 1 to 8 and 10:

No Councillors (0).

The recommendations were therefore carried.

Council Tax Resolutions

Members discussed the Council Tax Resolutions which had also been considered that same evening by the Executive Committee. During consideration of this item concerns were again raised about the financial position of local government and the impact that uncertainty about local authority funding was having on the sustainability of Council services.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the recommendations in respect of the Council Tax Resolutions were subject to a named vote.

Members voting FOR the Council Tax Resolutions

Councillors Salman Akbar, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Roger Bennett, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, Peter Fleming, Julian Grubb, Ann Isherwood, Anthony Lovell, Gemma Monaco, Nyear Nazir, Gareth Prosser, Mike Rouse, David Thain and Craig Warhurst (18).

Members voting AGAINST the Council Tax Resolutions

No Councillors (0).

Members ABSTAINING on the Council Tax Resolutions

Councillors Joe Baker, Greg Chance, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Wanda King, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith and Jenny Wheeler (10).

The recommendations were therefore carried.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Monday 24th February 2020 be received and all recommendations adopted;**
- 2) the calculation for the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2020/21 (excluding Parish precepts) as £6,415,355 be approved;**
- 3) that the following amounts calculated for the year 2020/21 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act be approved:**
 - a) £44,214,467 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act (taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils) (*i.e. Gross expenditure*);**
 - b) £37,789,112 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act. (*i.e. Gross income*);**
 - c) £6,425,355 being the amount by which the aggregate of 3 (a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3 (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax**

requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act);

- d) £244.53 being the amount at 3 (c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
- e) £10,000 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Feckenham Parish precept) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act;
- f) £244.15 being the amount at 3 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3 (e) above by Item T (1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates;
- g) £271.36 being the amount given by adding to the amount at 3(f), the amount of the special item relating to the Parish of Feckenham 3(e), divided by the amount in 1(b) above;
- h) the amounts below given by multiplying the amounts at 3(f) and 3(g) 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 Band 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 dwelling listed in different valuation bands;

Valuation Band	Proportion of Band D tax paid	Parish of Feckenham £	All other parts of the Council's area £
A	6/9	180.91	162.77
B	7/9	211.05	189.89
C	8/9	241.21	217.02
D	1	271.36	244.15
E	11/9	331.67	298.41
F	13/9	391.96	352.66
G	15/9	452.27	406.92
H	18/9	542.72	488.30

- 4) it be noted that for the year 2020/21, Worcestershire County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwelling in the Council's area as indicated below:

	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Worcestershire County Council	874.03	1,019.71	1,165.38	1,311.05	1,602.39	1,893.74	2,185.08	2,622.10
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	150.13	175.16	200.18	225.20	275.24	325.29	375.33	450.40
Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority	57.33	66.88	76.44	85.99	105.10	124.21	143.32	171.98

- 5) having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 4(h) and 5 above, Redditch Borough Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the amounts shown below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2020/21 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings:

Valuation Band	Proportion of Band D tax paid	Parish of Feckenham £	All other parts of the Council's area £
A	6/9	1,262.40	1,244.26
B	7/9	1,472.80	1,451.64
C	8/9	1,683.21	1,659.02
D	1	1,893.60	1,866.39
E	11/9	2,314.40	2,281.14
F	13/9	2,735.20	2,695.90
G	15/9	3,156.00	3,110.65
H	18/9	3,787.20	3,732.78

- 6) the Executive Director of Finance and Resources be authorised to make payments under Section 90(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund by ten equal instalments between April 2020 to March 2021 as detailed below:

	Precept £	Surplus on Collection Fund £	Total to pay £
Worcestershire County Council	34,449,805.00	615,263.00	35,065,068.00
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	5,917,373.31	105,668.00	6,023,041.31
Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority	2,259,515.68	41,638.00	2,301,153.68

- 7) the Executive Director of Finance and Resources be authorised to make transfers under Section 97 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund to the General Fund the sum of £6,543,127 being the Council's own demand on the Collection Fund (£6,415,355.00) and Parish Precept (£10,000) and the distribution of the Surplus on the Collection Fund (£117,772);
- 8) the Executive Director Finance and Resources be authorised to make payments from the General Fund to Feckenham Parish Council the sums listed above (£10,000) by instalment after 1st April 2020 in respect of the precept levied on the Council;

- 9) the above resolutions 4 to 6 be signed by the Chief Executive for use in legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the recovery of unpaid Council Taxes; and
- 10) notices of the making of the said Council Taxes signed by the Chief Executive are given by advertisement in the local press under Section 38(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

78. REGULATORY COMMITTEES

Members considered recommendations that had been proposed at a meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on 30th January 2020 in respect of the Council's Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Capital Strategy as an appropriate overarching strategy for the Council be approved;
- 2) the Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 and the associated MRP policy be approved;
- 3) the policy for Flexible use of Capital Receipts be approved; and
- 4) the Investment Strategy be approved.

79. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

There were no urgent decisions to note at this meeting.

80. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

There was no general urgent business for consideration on this occasion.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.38 pm