

MINUTES of the meeting of Council held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Friday 4 March 2016 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor DB Wilcox (Chairman)
Councillor PJ McCaull (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: PA Andrews, BA Baker, JM Bartlett, WLS Bowen, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, PE Crockett, PGH Cutter, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, CA Gandy, DW Greenow, KS Guthrie, J Hardwick, DG Harlow, EL Holton, JA Hyde, TM James, AW Johnson, JLV Kenyon, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, RI Matthews, RL Mayo, MT McEvelly, SM Michael, PM Morgan, PD Newman OBE, FM Norman, CA North, RJ Phillips, GJ Powell, AJW Powers, PD Price, P Rone, AR Round, A Seldon, NE Shaw, WC Skelton, J Stone, EJ Swinglehurst, A Warmington and SD Williams

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from councillors MJK Cooper, LC Tawn, JF Johnson, MN Mansell, L Harvey and D Summers.

The chairman confirmed that he would write to Councillor Summers on behalf of council to express their wishes for a speedy recovery.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor RJ Phillips declared a non-pecuniary interest as vice chairman of the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Authority.

59. MINUTES

It was noted that revised draft minutes had been published as a supplement to the agenda following comments on matters of accuracy received prior to the meeting from a member.

Another member expressed concern at what he saw were certain discrepancies in the financial amounts contained in the budget report that were presented at the last council meeting.

RESOLVED: That the revised draft minutes of the meeting the 5 February 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

60. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council noted the chairman's announcements as printed in the agenda papers.

The chairman offered congratulations on behalf of the council to Councillor Roger Phillips on his appointment by the Communities Secretary of State Greg Clarke as chairman of the local government pension scheme advisory board.

He also reminded councillors that there were only 10 days remaining to submit nominations for the Herefordshire community awards with full details available on the council's website.

The chairman also reported the receipt of a petition relating to the Hereford to Worcester 420 bus service.

In addition, he announced his intention to require the chief executive to call an extraordinary meeting of the council at 2.00pm on 20 May 2016 and to include the following items on the agenda:

- local transport plan;
- approval of the Weston under Penyard neighbourhood plan and future approval processes of such plans;
- a review of the council's constitution

Councillor AJW Powers requested clarification regarding the approval of neighbourhood plans and whether all neighbourhood plans require approval by the council.

The chairman confirmed that this would be discussed at the council meeting on the afternoon of 20 May 2016.

A member expressed support for the chairman for his sponsored swim of 90 lengths to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday and to raise funds for the Haven.

Councillor J Stone echoed the member's sentiments and noted that the chairman was continuing with a precedent set when as chairman he swam 40 lengths, 10 in each of the Halo pools in support of the Macmillan Renton Unit for Hereford Hospital.

61. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A copy of the public question and written answer, together with a supplementary question asked at the meeting and the answer is attached to the minutes at appendix one.

62. COUNCIL TAX SETTING

Councillor RJ Phillips declared a non-pecuniary interest as vice chairman of the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Authority. He also requested that the council write to the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service chief fire officer Mark Yates, offering the council's congratulations on his retirement.

Council was asked to approve the council tax amounts for each category of dwelling in Herefordshire for 2016/17, including precepts from West Mercia Police, Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority and parishes.

The leader of the council presented the report. He highlighted a typographical error in the recommendations e (iii) and e (iv) where b(i), b(ii) and b(iii) should read e(i), e(ii) and e(iii) and moved the recommendations (as amended to correct the typographical error) which were seconded.

A member asked what the maximum borrowing ceiling for the council was and whether the recession would have any impact on it.

A member raised a concern that if borrowing rates were to increase this might have a negative effect on council budgets.

The director of resources confirmed that the majority of council borrowing was secured on relatively low fixed rates of interest. The ability to repay borrowing was the main consideration rather than the overall level and he did not consider if there was a return to recession a greater level of risk in relation to council borrowing would result.

A member commented that the sparsity grant was welcomed.

A named vote was held.

For (42) Councillors PA Andrews, BA Baker, JM Bartlett, WLS Bowen, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, PE Crockett, PGH Cutter, BA Durkin, CA Gandy, DW Greenow, KS Guthrie, DG Harlow, EL Holton, JA Hyde, TM James, AW Johnson, JLV Kenyon, JG Lester, RL Mayo, PJ McCaull, MT McEvilly, SM Michael, PM Morgan, PD Newman, FM Norman, CA North, RJ Phillips, GJ Powell, AJW Powers, PD Price, P Rone, A Seldon, NE Shaw, WC Skelton, J Stone, EJ Swinglehurst, A Warmington, DB Wilcox, SD Williams

Against (0)

Abstain (5) Councillors PJ Edwards, J Hardwick, MD Lloyd-Hayes, RI Mathews, AR Round.

RESOLVED

That:

- (a) the net budget requirement for 2016/17, excluding parishes, be approved as £147,979,357:**
- (b) the council tax requirement for the council's own purposes for 2016/17 (excluding parishes) be approved as £88,595,357:**
- (c) the precepting authority details incorporated in appendices 1 to 5, relating to parishes, West Mercia Police and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority be approved in accordance with sections 30(2), 34(3), 36(1) and section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended):**
- (d) it be noted that the tax base used for setting the budget requirement for 2016/17 is:**
 - 1) for the whole council area is calculated as 66,873.00 band D equivalent properties.**
 - 2) allocated to band D equivalent dwellings per precept area as shown in appendix 1; and**
- (e) the following amounts be approved for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Section 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 Regulation 6 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011):**
 - (i) £331,493,602** being the estimated aggregate expenditure of the council in accordance with section 31A (2) of the act, including all precepts issued to it by parish councils;
 - (ii) £239,396,466** being the estimated aggregate income of the council for the items set out in section 31A (3) of the act (including revenue support grant);

(iii) £92,097,136	being the amount by which the aggregate at (e)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (e)(ii) calculated by the council in accordance with section 31A(4) of the act, as its council tax requirement for the year (including parish precepts);
(iv) £1,377.19	being the amount at e(iii) above divided by the amount of the council tax base 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);
(v) £3,501,779	being the aggregate amount of all special items (parish precepts) referred to in section 34(1) of the act;
(vi) £1,324.83	being the amount at (iv) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (v) above by the amount of the council tax base 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 (Herefordshire Council band D council tax, excluding parishes)

63. Leader's Report

The leader presented his report on the activities of cabinet since the meeting of council in December 2015.

A member questioned why after 15 months of attempting to arrive at a new policy regarding open spaces there was still no policy in place to support community groups in managing open spaces.

The cabinet member for infrastructure confirmed that conversations are ongoing with the planning department in bringing forward a proposal as a way forward.

A member asked for confirmation that sufficient resources regarding training were available to train staff in the implementation of Frameworki which is a social care management system serving both adult social care and children's services.

The cabinet member for economy and corporate services confirmed that work had been approved regarding the latest version called 'mosaic' and there was inbuilt provision for the roll out of required training. A written report would be provided.

A member noted the value of litter campaigns and the detrimental effect that litter can have on tourism. The cabinet member for transport and roads encouraged members to

organise litter picks and confirmed that litter bags were available through Balfour Beatty, who will also organise the collection and disposal of litter bags. He also explained that busy roads can require the arrangement of traffic management measures to protect the safety of council operatives when litter picking is being carried out.

A member stated that although he was not querying decisions taken, it would be helpful if future reports from the leader could include more information to increase public transparency.

The leader confirmed that information relating to all decisions was published on the council's website and therefore is in the public domain.

The cabinet member for contracts and assets confirmed the structured disposal of the council's small holding estate was progressing as planned. In addition, the libraries consultation deadline initially set as the end of February had been extended to the end of March.

A member commented on the progress being made regarding 1 Ledbury Road following the recent task and finish review.

A member requested an update regarding the remedial work required in Shire Hall.

A written answer will be provided.

A member requested that the council write to Litter Action noting that most of the laybys on the Hereford/Shropshire border were heavily littered and that Balfour Beatty should concentrate any available resources to cleaning laybys in preparation for the 'Clean for the queen campaign to clean up Britain in preparation for Her Majesty the Queen's 90th birthday.

The cabinet member for economy and corporate services thanked all members who have organised litter picks in their respective wards and in particular the Great Western Way.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

64. FORMAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS TO THE CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN UNDER STANDING ORDERS

A copy of the member questions and written answers, together with supplementary questions asked at the meeting and their answers, is attached to the minutes at appendix two.

The meeting ended at 11.08 am

CHAIRMAN