

## **COUNCIL**

**Date and Time:** Thursday 22 February 2024 at 7.00 pm

**Place:** Council Chamber

**Present:**

### **COUNCILLORS -**

Smith	Collins	Makepeace-Browne
Axam	Crisp	Neighbour
Bailey	Davies	Oliver
Blewett	Delaney	Quarterman
Butcher	Dorn	Radley
Butler	Farmer	Southern
Clarke	Forster	Thomas
Coburn	Harward	Worlock
Cockarill	Kennett	Wright

### **Officers Present:**

Daryl Phillips, Chief Executive

Graeme Clark, Executive Director, Corporate & S151 Officer

Emma Evans, Committee and Member Services Officer

Claire Lord, Information Governance and Data Support Officer

Councillor Butler invited Members to pause for a minute's silence to remember the late Russian Opposition Leader Alexei Navalny.

## **61 PRESENTATION FROM VISION4YOUTH**

Abby Roper from Vision4Youth gave a presentation on the work of the organisation.

- an independent community charity, providing youth clubs for over 20 years
- providing services to young people aged 11 to 25 years in Yateley and surrounding villages
- Over 160 young people use their services each week
- Provide recreational youth groups, a supportive youth group, youth social prescribing and a holiday activities and food programme

Councillor Forster declared an interest as a Hampshire County Councillor in relation to funding for the organisation.

Members thanked Vision4Youth for all their efforts and discussed:

- what impact the groups are having on the young people involved
- Links with Fleet Phoenix

- Challenges the organisation faced
- Volunteer/staff/young people ratio's

## **62 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of 25 January 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record with one amendment to Minute 60, the process is called "FASI-South" (Future Airspace Strategy Implementation - South).

It was also agreed that the written answer provided to a question asked under Minute 56 would be published.

## **63 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor's Crampton, Engström, Hale, Vernon, Wildsmith and Woods.

## **64 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations made.

## **65 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 - QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

No questions received.

## **66 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14 - QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

No questions received.

## **67 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman's engagements since the last meeting were noted:

4 February East Hants Civic Service  
 11 February Mayor Gosport Civic Service  
 17 February Church Crookham and Fleet Men's Shed meeting  
 23 February To attend - Ukraine Invasion Anniversary - One Minute Silence  
 outside Civic Offices

The Vice Chairman encouraged Members to join the One Minute Silence for the Ukraine Invasion anniversary on 23 February at 11am outside the Civic Offices at 11am.

## **68 CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The Leader of the Council, and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Direction, and Partnerships, Councillor Neighbour** had nothing to report.

**The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Radley** had nothing to report.

**The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Councillor Bailey** reported that:

- the budget 2024/25 includes a £45K growth item for additional staff resources in the Housing team to help meet the growing demands across the district.
- the capital budget includes funding allocated to help deal with the shortage of affordable homes in the district.
- Working with our Registered Social Landlord partners, £1.5m has been allocated to purchase larger 3 and 4 bedroom properties and £1m for properties that will be suitable for residents who are wheelchair users.

**The Portfolio Holder for Digital and Communications, Councillor Clarke** had nothing to report.

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy and Place, Councillor Cockarill** had nothing to report.

**The Leader of the Council on behalf of The Portfolio Holder for Regulatory, Councillor Collins** announced that the budget 2024/25 contained:

- £25K increase in resources to tackle fly-tipping
- £65K allocated to fund additional tree-work to reduce the back-log.

**The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Development Management, Councillor Oliver** informed Members that:

- Community Safety Forward Strategy has been developed and extended thanks to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their assistance.
- There will be funding for additional staff resource to work with our CSP neighbours and the Police in tackling ASB and investing in a rolling programme of CCTV replacement and review. Liaising with the Police and PCC, who are now moving to a neighbourhood policing model and actively looking for a new police station site in Fleet (in addition to the Yateley site), on where cameras should be located for maximum effect.
- Parking payment machines are being replaced across the district with touch screen in major carparks. A budget for annual maintenance has been identified to ensure the carparks are safe and secure both for residents and the council. They are a significant revenue earning asset for this council and need to be maintained.
- the staffing challenges faced at the beginning of the municipal year within Planning and Development Control have now mostly been addressed. Backlogs have reduced by over 50%. The Planning Application service is now meeting all its KPIs and this was noted in the recent service panel review. Work continues to return service to a timely responsive service for Hart residents. Additional resources to eliminate the remaining backlogs on Tree work and Householder planning applications have been included in the budget.

A Member asked a question about the original pilot scheme for the carpark machines. A Member praised the work of the Planning Department.

**The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Corporate Services, Councillor Quarterman** urged Council to support the budget in relation to Climate Change.

## **69 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chief Executive made no announcements.

## **70 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

The Minutes of the following Committees, which met on the dates shown, were received by Council.

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet	01 February 2024
Overview and Scrutiny (draft)	16 January 2024

## **71 BUDGET 2024/25**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, introduced the budget for 2024/25 and Members noted the following points:

- A balanced budget has been submitted which contains significant additional investment (£418K) in existing services.
- The budget enables a strong position to face the challenges of inflationary pressures, reductions in government funding, waste recycling credits waste contract changes ahead.
- The contributions to a budget pressure fund to enable investment in cost saving initiatives and revenue generation to prepare for the difficult future ahead.
- The recommendations were outlined.

Councillor Blewitt left at 19.39 returning at 19.42.

Members thanked everyone involved in preparing the budget for their hard work.

Councillor Radley proposed. Councillor Neighbour seconded.

Members discussed:

- Revenue increase: an increase in central government funding received, increase in interest rate returns on investment, increase in Leisure Centre management fees, and an increase in council tax (approx. £1.5M).
- Support for the freezing of car park and green waste disposal charges and CCTV investment.

- Clarity on projects allocated against the Climate Change funding allocation and the need for a fully costed Climate Change Plan.
- The geographical spread of recent UK Shared Prosperity Funding allocations.
- Proposed planning service improvements.
- Forward projection of Council finances, the three-year forecast and the implications of this on reserves and future council tax rates.
- An increase in staffing costs.
- Funding for flood alleviation schemes in Crondall and Mill Lane in North Warnborough.
- Environment Agency Report on proposed natural flood risk management.

Councillor Dorn proposed an amendment to the budget. Cllr Kennett seconded.

That £30K be allocated for the North Warnborough Flood Alleviation works in response to the Environment Agency report.

Councillor Dorn proposed that the funding be provided by reducing by £10K funding allocated to Whitewater SANG, £10K allocated to the Kingsway Flood Alleviation scheme and £10K from existing Environment Agency grant allocation.

Members queried where the funding should be taken from to enable a balanced budget to be passed.

Members were advised that the Environment Agency grant was not suitable, funds must be allocated from a specific budget.

Councillor Dorn clarified the amendment:

That £30K be earmarked for the North Warnborough Flood Alleviation works. The funding to be provided by a reduction of £15K each in allocated funding for works at Whitewater SANG and the Kingsway flood alleviation scheme.

Members debated the motion noting:

- The Environment Agency are the lead authority for flooding works, they are expected to deliver a report shortly on the issue and that they have a mechanism to fund this type of scheme.
- Any scheme proposed by the Environment Agency will be considered at Cabinet for funding later if required.
- Historically monies had been allocated to address flooding which then was unable to be spent due to the Environment Agency not supporting the schemes.
- Funding should not be removed from other vitally needed schemes to fund this scheme.
- Concerns around delays in the delivery of Environment Agency schemes after funding agreements have been made, referencing flood alleviation schemes in Phoenix Green.

A recorded vote was taken on the amendment:

For: Butcher, Dorn, Farmer; Forster; Kennett, Southern; Wright (7)

Against: Axam; Bailey; Blewett; Butler; Clarke; Coburn; Cockarill; Collins; Crisp; Davies; Delaney; Harward; Makepeace-Browne; Neighbour; Oliver; Quarterman; Radley; Smith; Thomas; Worlock. (20)

Abstain: None.

The amendment was therefore defeated.

Members then debated the substantive motion. Members discussed:

- The reporting schedule to members against the Climate Change plan, noting delays in costings beyond Hart's control.
- Delays in central government clarification of future funding schemes such as New Homes Bonus and the Fair Funding Formula.
- Increase in salaries due to nationally agreed pay increases and that many roles are fully funded fixed-term project posts directly funded by government grants. Additionally, the in-housing of several departments (Finance and Reception) from Capita.

A recorded vote was held on the substantive motion.

For: Axam; Bailey; Blewett; Butler; Clarke; Cockarill; Collins; Crisp; Davies; Delaney; Harward; Makepeace-Browne; Neighbour; Oliver; Quarterman; Radley; Thomas (17)

Against: Butcher; Coburn; Dorn; Farmer; Forster; Kennett; Southern; Worlock; Wright (9)

Abstain: Smith (1)

## **DECISION**

Cabinet is recommending to Council that it:

- i. approves a 2.99% increase in Hart District Council's Band D Council Tax Charge for 2024/25,
- ii. agrees changes to fees and charges for 2024/25 in line with the principles set out in this report, and approves the full schedule included at Appendix 4,
- iii. approves the draft Revenue Budget for 2024/25 as summarised in paragraph 15 and Appendix 1, incorporating the baseline net service cost variations included at paragraph 17 and Appendix 1,
- iv. approves the Capital Bids as detailed in Appendix 2,
- v. approves the Medium-Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendix 3,
- vi. notes the emerging pressures and risks set out in the report and the S151 Officer's intention to undertake a mid-year review of detailed budgets

- vii. approves the continuation of the capital receipt flexibility strategy detailed in the report under the Direction issued by the Government early in 2022.
- viii. approves not to change the Council's existing Council Tax Support Scheme other than the required statutory updating.

**COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2024/25**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the item. It was noted that this was a technicality following the preceding budget item that agreed the level of Council Tax to be set. Hampshire Fire Authority had not yet set their budget. A delegated authority to the S151 officer is included in the recommendations should any change be necessary.

A member queried a matter of relating to a potential declaration of an interest.

Proposed by Cllr Radley. Seconded by Cllr Farmer.

**DECISION**

It is recommended that Council agrees to the following council tax resolutions:

- A. The Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish precepts) is £8,460,069.52
- B. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 and 34 to 36 of the Act:

38,849,929 being the aggregate of the amounts the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act takes into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.

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£26,175,014 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

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£12,674,915 being the amount by which the aggregate at B(i) above exceeds the aggregate at B(ii) 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(1) of the Act).

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£296.90 being the amount at B(iii) above divided by 42,690.97, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year

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(including Parish precepts).

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£4,214,846 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per Column 2 of Appendix 1A).

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£198.17 being the amount at B(iv) above less the result given by dividing the amount at B(v) above by 42,690.97, 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.

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The amounts set out in column 6 of Appendix 1A for each part of the Council's area being the amounts given by adding to the amount at B(vi) above the amounts of the parish precepts relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned in Appendix 1A divided in each case by the dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish Precept relates, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34 of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

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The amounts set out in columns 1 to 9 of Appendix 1B for each part of the Council's area being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at B(vii) 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 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 dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

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- C. For each financial year, a major precepting authority shall issue a precept or precepts in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The draft Hampshire County Council's precept figures are subject to approval on 22 February 2024 and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority's on 26 February, and these draft figures are listed below. In the event of



changes arising for decisions made by the major precepting authorities (i.e. Hampshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire, and Hampshire Fire and Rescue), it is recommended that the Executive Director for Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance, be authorised to update the final council tax calculations to reflect the final decisions of the major precepting authorities. The Council Tax requirement for the Hart District Council's own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish precepts) is £8,460,069.52

Valuation Band	Hampshire County Council (HCC) (£)	HCC Adult Social Care (£)	Police & Crime Commissioner for Hampshire (£)	Hampshire Fire and Rescue (£)
A(R)	729.07	122.73	145.26	46.02
A	874.88	147.28	174.31	55.23
B	1,020.69	171.83	203.36	64.43
C	1,166.51	196.37	232.41	73.64
D	1,312.32	220.92	261.46	82.84
E	1,603.95	270.01	319.56	101.25
F	1,895.57	319.11	377.66	119.66
G	2,187.20	368.20	435.77	138.07
H	2,624.64	441.84	522.92	165.68

- D. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at B(viii) and Recommendation C above, the Council, in accordance with section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby **AGREES** to set the amounts shown in Appendix 1E of the report as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2024/25 for each of the categories of dwellings in each of the Parishes.
- E. That for the purposes of section 35 (2) (d) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, any expenses incurred by the District Council in the financial year 2024/25 in performing functions in a part of the district where elsewhere in the district are performed by a Parish Council, shall not be special expenses of the District Council.
- F. That the Council concludes the 2.99% increase in Council Tax for Hart District Council for 2024/25 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

### 73 TREASURY MANAGEMENT, STRATEGY STATEMENT, ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND CAPITAL STRATEGY

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced this item, informing members that the approach taken during the last financial year had been successful. This included recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Proposed by Councillor Radley. Seconded by Councillor Makepeace-Browne.

## **DECISION**

Cabinet is recommending to Council that it:

- i. approves the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 and the revised Minimum Revenue Provision policy contained within it,
- ii. approves the Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25 and;
- iii. approves the Capital Strategy 2024/25.

## **74 OUTSIDE BODIES - FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS**

Councillor Dorn requested that Members consider the recent request from the Here for Hart Team in relation to the Military Covenant regarding any personal connections to the military.

The Vice Chairman reminded Members who serve as representatives on Outside Bodies submit their annual report to Committee Services by 31 March 2024.

The meeting closed at 8.18 pm