

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Cabinet

Date: Thursday, 18th January, 2018

Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor J Lamb (Chair)
Councillors A Holland (Vice-Chair), T Byford, J Courtenay, M Flewitt,
A Moring and L Salter

In Attendance: Councillors C Mulroney, F Waterworth and P Wexham
A Griffin, J K Williams, S Leftley, A Lewis, J Chesterton, J Ruffle,
C Gamble, I Ambrose, P Geraghty and C Fozzard

Start/End Time: 2.00 p.m. - 2.35 p.m.

643 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cox.

644 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

(a) Councillor Flewitt – Agenda Item Nos. 3 (Council Tax Base and National Non Domestic Rating Base 2018/19), 4 (Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget 2018/19 and Rent Setting), 5 (Draft Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2021/22), 6 (Draft Fees and Charges 2018/19) and 7 (Draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2018/19) – Non-pecuniary interest: Friends and family are tenants of South Essex Homes;

(b) Councillor Holland – Agenda Item Nos. 4 (Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget 2018/19 and Rent Setting) and 5 (Draft Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2021/22) – Non-pecuniary interest: Son might be involved with housing projects;

(c) Councillor Mulroney – Agenda Item Nos. 3 (Council Tax Base and National Non Domestic Rating Base 2018/19) and 7 (Draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2018/19) – Non-pecuniary interest: Member of Leigh Town Council.

645 Council Tax Base and National Non Domestic Rating Base 2018/19

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2017/18 and the submission of the National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR1) form to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) by 31st January 2018.

Resolved:

1. That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended by the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base)(Amendment)(England) Regulations 2003) and Local

Government Finance Act 2012 (Calculation of billing authority's council tax base Section 15):

(i) The Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19 approved by Council on 14 December 2017, be incorporated into the Council Tax base setting as outlined in Appendices A and B to the submitted report.

(ii) That the following changes to Council Tax discounts and exemptions approved by Cabinet on 5 January 2016 will remain unchanged from 1st April 2018 and these are incorporated into the Council Tax Base:-

- Properties requiring or undergoing structural alteration or major repairs (Class D) as allowed by Section 11A of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 is set at 0%; and

- Vacant and substantially unfurnished properties (Class C) as allowed by Section 11A of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 to be entitled to receive a discount of 100% for up to 1 month.

(iii) That it be noted that the further discounts and exemptions that were approved by Council on 13 December 2012 will remain unchanged from 1st April 2018 and these are incorporated into the Council Tax Base;

- Second homes (Classes A and B) as allowed by Section 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 is set at 0%.

- Long-term empty homes (Class C) as allowed by Section 11A of the Local Government Finance Act 2012, a surcharge of 50% is set allowing a full charge of 150% where they have been unoccupied for more than 2 years; and

- That a continuous 6 week period of occupancy is required between empty periods before a further discount can be awarded.

2. That the amount calculated by Southend-on-Sea Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2018/19 shall be 57,611.55.

3. That the amount calculated by Southend-on-Sea Council as the Council Tax Base in respect of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council for the year 2018/19 shall be 8,779.95.

4. That the NNDR1 form attached at Appendix C to the submitted report be approved for submission to DCLG.

Reason for Decision

To comply with the relevant statutory requirements.

Other Options

None.

Note:- This is an Executive Function.

Referred direct to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Executive Councillor:- Lamb

646 Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget 2018/19 and Rent Setting

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) and the Director of Finance and Resources setting out the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2018/19 together with the information necessary to set a balanced budget as required by legislation.

Resolved:-

1. That a rent reduction of 1% on secure tenancies, as required by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, be endorsed.
2. That an average rent increase of 6.04% on shared ownership properties, be endorsed.
3. That the proposed rent changes in 1 and 2 above to be effective from 2 April 2018, be endorsed.
4. That the increases in other charges as set out in section 5 of the submitted report, be endorsed.
5. That the management fee and increases in service charges and heating charges proposed by South Essex Homes, as set out in section 6 of the report, be endorsed.
6. That the appropriations to the Repairs Contract Pensions earmarked reserve and the HRA Capital Investment earmarked reserve, as set out in section 8 of the report, be endorsed.
7. That subject to 1 - 6 above, the HRA budget as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be endorsed.
8. That the value of the Council's capital allowance for 2018/19 be declared as £23.197M, as determined in accordance with regulation 16 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations.

Reason for Decision

Part of the process of maintaining a balanced budget for the HRA is to consider and set a rent rise (and associated increases in other income streams). Full Council need to approve the HRA budget prior to the start of the financial year.

Other Options

As set out in the submitted report

Note:- This is an Executive Function save that approval of the final budget following Cabinet on 13th February 2018 is a Council Function.
Referred direct to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.
Executive Councillor:- Flewitt

647 Draft Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2021/22

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Management Team setting out a draft programme of capital projects for the period 2018/19 to 2021/22.

Resolved:

1. That the current approved Programme for 2018/19 to 2020/21 of £166.5m, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be noted.
2. That the changes to the approved Programme, as set out in Appendix 2 to the submitted report, be noted.
3. That the proposed new schemes and additions to the Capital Programme for the period 2018/19 to 2021/22 totalling £20.1m for the General Fund as set out in Appendices 6 and 7 to the submitted report, be endorsed.
4. That the proposed scheme subject to external funding approval for the period 2018/19 to 2021/22 totalling £19m as set out in Appendices 2 and 7 to the submitted report, be endorsed.
5. That it be noted that the proposed new schemes and additions, as set out in Appendices 6 and 7 to the submitted report, and other adjustments as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, will result in a proposed capital programme (excluding schemes subject to external funding approval) of £184.9m for 2018/19 to 2021/22.
6. That it be noted that of the total programme of £184.9m for the period 2018/19 to 2021/22, the level of external funding supporting this programme is £71.7.2m as set out in paragraph 7.1 of the submitted report.
7. That it be noted that a final review is being undertaken on the 2017/18 projected outturn and that the results will be included in the report to Cabinet on 13th February 2018.

Reason for Decision

The proposed Capital Programme is compiled from a number of individual projects which either contribute to the delivery of the Council's objectives and priorities or enhance the Council's infrastructure.

Other Options

The proposed Capital Programme is compiled from a number of individual projects, any of which can be agreed or rejected independently of the other projects

Note:- This is an Executive Function save that approval of the final budget following Cabinet on 13th February 2018 is a Council Function.

Referred direct to all three Scrutiny Committees.

Executive Councillor:- Lamb

648 Draft Fees and Charges 2018/19

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Management Team detailing fees and charges for services included in the budget proposals for 2018/19.

Resolved:

That, subject to the annual commuters car park charge (East Beach) being amended to £100, the proposed fees and charges for each Department as set out in the submitted report and appendices, be endorsed.

Reason for Decision

Part of the process of maintaining a balanced budget includes a requirement to consider the contribution that fees and charges make towards that aim. This report is in fulfilment of that requirement.

Other Options

None.

Note:- This is an Executive Function save that approval of the final budget following Cabinet on 13th February 2018 is a Council Function.

Referred direct to all three Scrutiny Committees.

Executive Councillor:- Lamb

649 Draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2018/19

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Management Team presenting the draft revenue budget for 2018/19.

Members of the Cabinet conveyed their thanks and appreciation to the Director of Finance & Resources and his team for their sterling work in preparing the draft budget.

Resolved:

1. That the 2018/19 draft revenue budget and any required commencement of consultation, statutory or otherwise, be approved.

2. That it be noted that the 2018/19 draft revenue budget has been prepared on the basis of a Council Tax increase of 4.49%, being 2.99% for general use and 1.5% for Adult Social Care.

3. That it be noted that the 2018/19 draft revenue budget has been prepared using the provisional local government finance settlement and that the outcome from the final settlement will need to be factored into the final budget proposals for Budget Cabinet and Budget Council.

4. That the 2018/19 draft revenue budget, as endorsed, be referred to all three Scrutiny Committees, Business sector and Voluntary sector to inform Cabinet, which will then recommend the Budget and Council Tax to Council.

5. That the schools budget position and the recommendations to the Education Board on 16th January 2018, as set out in Appendix 14 and 14(i) to the submitted report, be noted and referred to People Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet and Council.

6. That the direction of travel for 2019/20 and beyond, as set out in section 15 of the submitted report, be endorsed.

Reason for Decision

Budget scrutiny is at the core of the Council's corporate planning framework. It is a complex process that is fully integrated with strategic service planning. Annually, prior to the start of the year, the Council agrees the budget using a consistent, transparent and prudent approach.

Other Options

None

Note:- This is an Executive Function save that approval of the final budget following Cabinet on 13th February 2018 is a Council Function.

Referred direct to all three Scrutiny Committees.

Executive Councillor:- Lamb

650 Adoption of SCAAP

The Cabinet received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) that sought Members approval to recommend that the Council adopts the Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP). If adopted the SCAAP would form part of the Southend Development Plan, providing a set of up-to-date local planning policies for positively managing development and would be used to assess development proposals within the Southend Central Area, including the Town Centre and Central Seafront.

The Chairman acknowledged all the hard work that had been undertaken in preparing the SCAAP and conveyed his thanks and appreciation to the officers concerned.

Recommended:

1. That all the recommendations within the Inspector's Report, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, and the revised version of the SCCAP, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be approved.

2. That Council adopts the SCAAP as set out in Appendix 2 to the submitted report, in accordance with Planning Regulations.

3. That it be noted that the SCAAP Proposed Submission version, approved by Council for publication and submission in September 2016, has been amended as per:

(a) the main modifications recommended by the Inspector in his report and agreed for consultation under delegated authority in July 2017 (attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report);

(b) the minor modifications agreed for consultation under delegated authority in July 2017 (attached at Appendix 3 to the submitted report); and

(c) the further minor modifications as set out in Appendix 4 of the submitted report.

Reason for Recommendations

This report recommends that the Cabinet supports the conclusions of the Inspector's Report and recommend to full Council that the plan be adopted. It is clearly advantageous for the Council to have a new planning policy document in place as soon as possible. This would avoid the risk of new planning applications in the central area being considered without an up-to-date plan – one of the consequences being a lack of certainty regarding where new development will take place in the future and whether such development is appropriate in the Plan area.

Other Options

As set out in the submitted report.

Note: This is a Council function
Referred direct to Place Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Councillor Flewitt

Chairman: _____