

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of The Council

Date: Thursday, 22nd February, 2024

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor S Habermel (Chair)
Councillors K Robinson, B Beggs, M Berry, M Borton, H Boyd, K Buck, S Buckley, L Burton, P Collins, J Courtenay, D Cowan, T Cowdrey, T Cox, M Davidson, A Dear, M Dent, F Evans, N Folkard, D Garston, S George, I Gilbert, J Harland, L Hyde, D Jarvis, A Jones, D Jones, J Lamb, A Line, R McMullan, J Moyies, C Mulroney, D Nelson, M O'Connor, M Sadza, M Stafford, M Terry, S Wakefield, C Walker, N Ward, J Warren, P Wexham, R Woodley, S Aylen, C Campbell, O Cartey, G Leroy, R Longstaff, C Nevin and D Richardson

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 10.38 pm

107 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Murphy.

108 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

- (a) Cllr Buck – Minute 112 (Budget Proposals) – Member of Belfairs Golf Club.
- (b) Cllr Buckley – Minute 112 (Budget Proposals) – partner is a Leigh Town Council member.
- (c) Cllr Ann Jones – Minute 112 (Budget Proposals) – family member is a Council employee.
- (d) Cllr Lamb – Minute 112 (Budget Proposals) – Chair of Essex Fisheries.
- (e) Cllr Mulroney – Minute 112 (Budget Proposals) – Member of Leigh Town Council.

109 Communications

There were no communications from the Mayor.

110 Questions from the Public

The relevant Cabinet Members responded to questions received from the public.

111 Questions from Councillors

The relevant Cabinet Member responded to written and supplementary questions received from Councillors.

112 **Budget Proposals - 2024/25 to 2028/29**

The Council considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the Cabinet's revenue budget and Council Tax level for 2024/25 financial year and a Capital Investment Programme for 2023/24 to 2028/29, including the associated Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management arrangements, together with the Minutes 93 to 95 of Cabinet held 13th February 2024.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 23.12 Councillor Cowan, had submitted one amendment to the Budget, which was circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting and tabled this evening (the amendment was also added as a supplementary document on the website).

The amendment was voted on by way of a named vote as required by law. The voting was as follows:

For the Budget Amendment:

Cllrs Berry, Borton, Burton, Collins, Cowan, Cowdrey, Dent, George, Gilbert, Hyde, A Jones, Leroy, Line, Longstaff, McMullan, Mulroney, Nevin, O'Connor, Richardson, Robinson, Sadza, Stafford, Terry, Wakefield, Ward, Wexham and Woodley (27)

Against the budget amendment:

Cllrs Ayles, Beggs, Boyd, Buck, Buckley, Campbell, Cartey, Courtenay, Cox, Davidson, Dear, Evans, Folkard, Garston, Harland, Jarvis, D Jones, Lamb, Moyies, Nelson, Walker and Warren (22)

Abstentions:

Cllr Habermel (Mayor) (1)

Absent

Cllr Murphy (1)

The amendment to the budget was carried.

The budget proposals (as amended) were then voted on by way of a named vote as required by law. The voting was as follows:

For the (amended) budget:

Cllrs Berry, Borton, Burton, Collins, Cowan, Cowdrey, Dent, George, Gilbert, Hyde, A Jones, Leroy, Line, Longstaff, McMullan, Mulroney, Nevin, O'Connor, Richardson, Robinson, Sadza, Stafford, Terry, Wakefield, Ward, Wexham and Woodley (27)

Against the (amended) budget:

Cllrs Ayles, Beggs, Boyd, Buck, Buckley, Campbell, Cartey, Courtenay, Cox, Davidson, Dear, Evans, Folkard, Garston, Harland, Jarvis, D Jones, Lamb, Moyies, Nelson, Walker and Warren (22)

Abstentions:

Cllr Habermel (Mayor) (1)

Absent:

Cllr Murphy (1)

The Council Budget 2024/25 proposals as amended were carried, as set out as follows:

Resolved:

1. That the Section 151 Officer's statement on the robustness of the proposed budget (including the amendment) , the adequacy of the Council's reserves and the Council's Reserves Strategy, be approved.
2. That a 2024/25 revenue budget (as amended), be approved:
 - A Council Tax increase of 4.99% for the Southend-on-Sea element of the Council Tax for 2024/25, being 2.99% for general use and 2.0% for Adult Social Care.
 - The use of £1 million of the collection fund surplus for the 2024/25 budget.
 - Note the increase in the Council Tax level of 2.91% for the precepting authority the Essex Fire and Rescue Services.
 - Note the increase in the Council Tax level of 5.55% for the precepting authority the Essex Police.
 - Note the increase in the Council Tax level of 2.31% for Leigh-on-Sea Town Council.
3. That the final levy position for 2024/25, be approved.
4. That the Capital Investment Programme for 2023/24 to 2028/29 (as amended), be approved.
5. That the recommendations from Cabinet held 13th February 2024 for the HRA and associated rent levels, service charges and heating charges, Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators, be approved.
6. That the statutory Budget Determinations and amount of Council Tax for Southend-on-Sea City Council (as amended and set out below), be approved.
7. That the Council's five-year financial forecast and associated Medium Term Financial Strategy, be approved.
8. That the direction of travel for 2025/26 and beyond and the approach and key elements proposed for the development and implementation of a new transformation programme for the Council, be approved.

Council Tax Resolutions:

1. That it be noted that on 11 January 2024 the Cabinet calculated the Council Tax Base 2024/25 as:

(a) for the whole Council area as 60,409.19

(b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates (Leigh-on-Sea Town Council) as 9,017.50.

2. That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding town/parish precepts) be determined as £103,495,441.

3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):

(a) £432,010,656 – 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 town/parish councils.

(b) -£328,048,559 – Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

(c) £103,962,097 – 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 (including town/parish precepts).

(d) £1,720.96 – Being the amount at 3(c) above, divided by the Council Tax Base shown at 1(a) above, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including town/parish precepts).

(e) £466,656 – Being the aggregate amount of all special items (town/parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act and set out below:

Band A: 34.50; Band B: 40.25; Band C: 46.00; Band D: 51.75; Band E: 63.25; Band F: 74.75; Band G: 86.25; Band H: 103.50.

(f) 1,713.24 – Being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by the Council Tax Base shown at 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 Town/Parish precept relates.

4. That it be noted that the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner and the Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Act for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated below:

Essex Policy Authority:

Band A: 164.28; Band B: 191.66; Band C: 219.04; Band D: 246.42; Band E: 301.18; Band F: 355.94; Band G: 410.70; Band H: 492.84.

Essex Fire Authority:

Band A: 55.08; Band B: 64.26; Band C: 73.44; Band D: 82.62; Band E: 100.98; Band F: 119.34; Band G: 137.70; Band H: 165.24.

5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Act, hereby sets the aggregate amounts show below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2024/25 for each part of its area and for each categories of dwellings:

Band A: 1,361.52; Band B: 1,588.44; Band C: 1,815.36; Band D: 2,042.28; Band E: 2,496.12; Band F: 2,949.96; Band G: 3,403.80; Band H: 4,084.56.

6. That the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 be determined as not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Act, and as shown in the calculation below:

(a) Percentage increase defined by the Secretary of State as constituting an excessive increase in 2024/25: 5% (comprising 2% for the Adult Social Care Precept and 3% for other expenditure).

(b) Percentage increase in the Council's basic amount of Council Tax:

2023/24 amount - £1,631.88

2024/25 amount - £1,713.24

Percentage increase: 4.99%

The figure at 6(b) is less than the figure at 6(a) above and therefore the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is not excessive and no referendum is required.

7. That the amounts payable in each town/parish at each band, comprising aggregate sums derived from all precepts be determined as set out below:

Unparished area:

Band A: 1,361.52; Band B: 1,588.44; Band C: 1,815.36; Band D: 2,042.28; Band E: 2,496.12; Band F: 2,949.96; Band G: 3,403.80; Band H: 4,084.56.

Parished area:

Band A: 1,396.02; Band B: 1,628.69; Band C: 1,861.36; Band D: 2,094.03; Band E: 2,559.37; Band F: 3,024.71; Band G: 3,490.05; Band H: 4,188.06.

113 Pay Policy Statement 2024/25

The Council considered a report of the Executive Director (Strategy and Change) presenting the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 in the context of the Council's overall Reward Strategy.

Resolved:

That the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25, be approved.

Chair: _____