



COUNCIL

7.30pm – 9.45pm

21 February 2012

Present: Councillors Lay (Lord Mayor), Ackroyd, Arthur, Banham, Bradford, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Carlo, Driver, Fairbairn, Fisher, Galvin, Gayton, Gee, Gihawi, Gledhill, Grahame, Grenville, Haynes, Henderson, Holmes, Jeraj, Kendrick, Little, Lubbock, MacDonald, Makoff, Offord, Sands (S), Sands (M), Stammers, Stephenson, Storie, Thomas, Waters and Wright.

Apologies: Chris Higgins (Sherriff) and Councillors Altman, George and Westmacott

1. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lord Mayor said that since the last meeting she had attended a celebration of the Chinese New Year at the Chinese Riverside Buffet restaurant where £5,700 was raised in aid of the civic charity. She had attended the evensong service at the cathedral to welcome the visiting judge, Mr Justice Sweeney. She had opened the carnival road show at the Forum to promote the new carnival archive project, and had welcomed a young three year old boy called Oscar to the Lord Mayor's parlour.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Waters declared a prejudicial interest in the liberal democratic amendment which had been circulated in advance for item 6 – General Fund Review Budget.

3. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Lord Mayor said that two public questions had been received in advance of the meeting. However one of the members of the public was not in attendance.

Mr David Rogers to the cabinet member for play parks and open spaces:-

“Residents of Rose Valley would like the disused children's play area near their houses to be made into a boule court with a 1 metre border for a wildlife garden and allotment. Does the council agree that this would be a good use of the land and will the council agree to support residents in creating a boule court, wildlife garden and allotment on this site?”

Councillor Bert Bremner, cabinet member for planning and transport replied:-

Thank you for bringing this to my attention. The council always welcomes ideas from the local community. However, as you will appreciate without a detailed assessment of this site I am not in a position to agree any specific proposals, but I have asked officers to contact you to explore your views in more detail. I look forward to hearing the outcome of these discussions.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2012.

5. CORPORATE PLAN 2012-15

The Lord Mayor advised that the following amendment had been received from Councillor Lubbock and had been circulated –

In the “safe and clean city” section insert after “to maintain a safe highway network and reduce road casualties” –

“...including advocating for the introduction of 20 mph zones in residential areas”.

In the “corporate priority – decent housing for all” section of the key performance measures/targets table change “re-let times for council housing” targets to ...

2012-13 – 16 days

2013-14 – 16 days

2014-15 – 16 days

Councillor Arthur had indicated in advance that she was happy to accept the amendment and with no member objecting, the amendment was accepted and became part of the new substantive motion.

Councillor Arthur moved and Councillor Waters seconded cabinet’s recommendation in the report as amended above.

RESOLVED, with 21 voting in favour, 15 against and 0 abstentions, to adopt the new corporate plan 2012-15, as amended above, as the council’s overarching policy framework.

6. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET

The Lord Mayor advised that amendments had been received in advance from Councillors Stephenson and Wright. Councillor Waters had indicated that he did not accept the amendments and they would both therefore be dealt with in the usual way after the motion had been moved and seconded.

Councillor Waters said that cabinet had met on 15 February 2012 and had agreed to recommend council to approve recommendations (1), (2), (3) and (4) in the report with the prudent level of reserves for the council in (1) being amended to read £5.52 million. A paper detailing the reasons for the change was circulated.

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Driver seconded cabinet's recommendations for the financial year 2012-13 as detailed above.

Councillor Stephenson moved and Councillor Jeraj seconded that the following changes be made to the general revenue fund:-

To amend cabinet's budget recommendations by:

- the addition of a £30,000 budget to plant trees in the city outside conservation areas
- the addition of £30,000 to the revenue and benefits staffing budget to fund additional work
- the reduction of £14,276 in the use of reserves in the financial year.

and consequently to approve recommendations (5), (6) and (7), as amended above of the report instead of cabinet's recommendations (2), (3) and (4).

With 14 voting in favour, 22 voting against and 0 abstentions, the amendment was declared lost.

Councillor Wright moved and Councillor Lubbock seconded that the following changes be made to the general revenue fund:-

Savings

- Total management bill for top 64 managers is £3 million 363,900 – reduce by 5 per cent - £168,195.
- Communications budget is £447,726 – reduce to £225,000 saving £222,726.
- Stop LGiU (Local Government Information Unit) membership - £3,450.
- Cut members expenses/allowances - £23,101.

Total savings - £417,472

Expenditure

Reverse proposed cuts to frontline services:

- Tree planting - £60,000
- Toilet closures - £30,000
- Burial cost increases - £30,000
- 297,472 to be put in reserves

Total - £417,472

With 5 voting in favour, 30 against and 0 abstentions, the amendment was declared lost.

RESOLVED, with 18 voting in favour, four against and 14 abstentions, to –

- (1) set the prudent level of reserves for the council at £5.52 million in accordance with the recommendation of the head of finance;
- (2) set the council's council tax requirement at £9,282,105;
- (3) set council tax for band D at £225.87, which is an increase of 0 per cent; and
- (4) calculate the precept of the collection fund for 2012-13 in accordance with sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 as amended by the Localism Act, 2011 as per the statutory determination at annex 3 of the appended report.

7. NON-HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Lord Mayor advised that the following amendment had been received in advance from Councillor Little –

to amend cabinet's recommendations by the addition to the capital programme of:-

- £50,000 for a new community capital fund
- £150,000 for an eco-investment fund

Councillor Waters had indicated in advance that he was happy to accept the amendment and with no other member objecting, it became part of the new substantive motion.

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Kendrick seconded the recommendations as amended above.

RESOLVED with 32 voting in favour, 0 against and 4 abstentions, to –

- (1) approve the non-housing capital programme 2012-13, as set out in table 2 of the report, as amended above;
- (2) delegate to the Capital Programme Board the authority to agree the asset maintenance programme and the final scheme details, including any adjustment to the financial allocations, of the section 106 works provided that this investment is contained within the total budgetary provisions shown in table 2; and
- (3) note that cabinet had approved the use of £0.181 million section 106 income for investment and transport, and play and open space schemes as detailed in appendix A.

Two hours having passed since the start of the meeting, at the invitation of the Lord Mayor members indicated they were happy to accept items 8, 10 and 11 below as unopposed business.

8. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SELF- FINANCING

RESOLVED, unopposed, to –

- (1) note cabinet agreement to –
 - a) base the HRA capital programme on the “whole home upgrade (Norwich offer)” standard;
 - b) note the impact of HRA self-financing on the HRA business plan;
 - c) note that a report on future government’s arrangements will be presented to cabinet on 12 March 2012;
- (2) authorise the head of finance to make arrangements necessary for the additional borrowing; and
- (3) amend the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for External Debt in the Treasury management strategy 2011-12 as detailed in appendix 2.

9. COUNCIL RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES FOR 2012-13

Councillor MacDonald moved and Councillor Grenville seconded cabinet’s recommendations (1) – (5) and (7) in the report.

RESOLVED, with 32 voting in favour, 4 against and 0 abstentions, to –

- (1) note cabinet’s approval of –
 - a) maintaining garage rent at current levels;
 - b) maintaining service charges for district heating, premises management, communal window cleaning and sheltered housing bulk metered water at current levels pending further consultation and review in 2012;
 - c) increasing service charges for the garden service to £4.30 per week and “one off” garden clearances to £20;
 - d) increasing service charges for communal television aerials by 3 per cent to £0.67 per week in line with the uplift in cost;
 - e) setting sheltered housing support charges at £6.24 per week and sheltered housing service and laundry facility charges at the levels detailed in appendix 1, pending further consultation and review during 2012;
- (2) implement an average rent increase of 6.85 per cent, being an average of £4.60 per week.

10. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2012-13

RESOLVED, unopposed, to approve the –

- (1) housing revenue account budgets for 2012-13 as amended by the impact of the rent increase minuted above as set out in paragraph 23
- (2) minimum level of HRA balances as £2.9 million as advised by the Chief financial officer and detailed in appendix 2.

11. HOUSING CAPITAL PLAN AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012-13

RESOLVED, unopposed, to –

- (1) approve the Housing capital plan 2012-17;
- (2) approve the Housing capital programme 2012-13; and
- (3) note cabinet's approval of the capital allowance set out for 2012-13 and the extinguishing of previous year's capital allowances as set out in appendix 1.

LORD MAYOR