
COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 21 February 2018 from 7.00 pm - 10.05 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Sarah Aldridge, Mike Baldock, Cameron Beart, Bobbin, Monique Bonney, Andy Booth, Tina Booth, Lloyd Bowen, Bowles, Roger Clark, Derek Conway, Mike Cosgrove, Adrian Crowther, Richard Darby, Mike Dendor, Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Mark Ellen, Paul Fleming, June Garrad, Sue Gent, Nicholas Hampshire, Harrison, Mike Henderson, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Ken Ingleton, Nigel Kay, Samuel Koffie-Williams (Deputy Mayor), Gerry Lewin, Peter Marchington, Padmini Nissanga, Prescott (Mayor), Ken Pugh, George Samuel, David Simmons, Ben Stokes, Roger Truelove, Anita Walker, Ghlin Whelan, Mike Whiting, Ted Wilcox, Tony Winckless and John Wright.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Billy Attaway, Katherine Bescoby, Donna Price, Mark Radford, Nick Vickers and Phil Wilson.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Mick Galvin, James Hall, Lesley Ingham and Bryan Mulhern.

498 PRAYERS

Authorised Lay Minister, Stephanie Wolfe, said Prayers.

499 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Mayor outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

500 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 January 2018 (Minute Nos. 446 - 456) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

501 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared Disclosable Non Pecuniary Interests in respect of being Members of the following:

- Councillor Mike Henderson – Faversham Swimming Pools and Oare Gunpowder Works
- Councillor Monique Bonney – Faversham Swimming Pools
- Councillor Nicholas Hampshire – Citizen’s Advice Bureau
- Councillor Ted Wilcox – Citizen’s Advice Bureau
- Councillor Derek Conway – Citizen’s Advice Bureau
- Councillor Anita Walker – Faversham Swimming Pools

502 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor drew attention to the tabled paper, which advised that he had attended 18 engagements since the last full Council meeting. This had included seeing Swale's own Paralympian Steve Brown being installed as patron of Swale Youth Development Forum; Visiting Swale Hospital Radio; and the pantomime at the Avenue Theatre.

The Mayor advised that no more tickets were available for his Ball.

503 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC

The Mayor advised that four questions had been submitted by members of the public, the answers to which have been provided, can be viewed on the Council's website and are attached as Appendix I to these minutes. The Mayor invited the members of the public who were present to ask a supplementary question.

In respect of Question Three, Mr Eddie Thomas handed in a petition regarding Ospringle Street Car Park, Faversham, to the Mayor. He referred to correspondence from Parking Services and asked the Cabinet Member if he would consider prohibiting long wheel-based vehicles from using the car park, which would enable more spaces to be marked out? The Cabinet Member for Safer Families and Communities gave his initial view on the suggestion, but advised that he was happy to look at this and would provide a written answer.

There were no further supplementary questions.

504 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

The Mayor advised that seven questions had been submitted by Members, the answers to which have been provided, can be viewed on the Council's website and are attached as Appendix II to these minutes. The Mayor invited Members present to ask a supplementary question. There were no supplementary questions for Questions One and Two as Councillor Harrison arrived after this item had been considered.

Question Three

Councillor Roger Truelove asked the Cabinet Member for Planning if 1054 dwellings per annum was a sound number, or should it be challenged as part of the consultation response?

The Cabinet Member responded by saying that they needed to be prepared for all eventualities and the figure had been challenged in a letter to the Minister.

Question Four

Councillor Ghlin Whelan said it would be interesting to know how much remained in the budget, even if some of it would be carried forward. The Cabinet Member accepted this and agreed to provide this information.

Question Five

Councillor Mike Henderson asked the Leader if he was aware of the disastrous 60% drop in apprenticeship starts which had been caused by a levy scheme for large employers and the awarding bodies delaying programme approvals? He asked the Leader if he would consider a small working group to work with training organisations and businesses to stimulate new apprenticeship starts?

The Leader advised that he was happy to consider this request although he was not sure a working group would be the best approach.

Question Six

Councillor Roger Truelove asked the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing how long it would be before Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) were replaced by Commissioners with the power to contract out to the private sector? The Cabinet Member responded by saying that this was supposition, and that he should contact the CCG direct.

Question Seven

Councillor Ghlin Whelan asked the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing what would be done now it was confirmed the plan to adapt the Sheerness Military Hospital for homeless accommodation was a non-starter, and what else would be done other than to increase the budget for homelessness?

The Cabinet Member advised that the Military Hospital was not viable, and they were constantly looking at all options available. He encouraged Members to come forward with ideas.

505 LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Leader presented his Statement, which gave updates on HGV Parking; Local Development Framework (LDF) Consultants report; Mayor of London's Consultation; and Rural Crime. The Leader invited Members to ask questions.

HGV Parking

In response to questions, the Leader advised that when a response to the letter was received it would be shared with Members; and he hoped that a lorry park could be found in Swale, if suitable space was found.

LDF Consultant's report

The Leader of the UKIP Group asked the Leader if he agreed that the report for the area around Rodmersham/Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, had been drafted by Quinn Estates?

The Leader of the Labour Group referred to views expressed previously by the Leader and commented on the way the report had been written to imply that there was 'blue-water' between the views in the report and the Leader's view.

The Leader of the Independent Group advised they would have to wait and see what the Government figure was and hoped that it would not be considered at the June LDF meeting.

A Member asked whether lessons had been learnt from the online consultation last time to ensure that it was easy for the public to respond?

Another Member referred to the last LDF meeting held on 8 February 2018, and referred to an Freedom of Information (FOI) request that she had submitted. She asked where the division was between this Council and a developer, and asked who was the Leader representing, who was he serving and what did he want to achieve?

The Leader advised that he did not want any more housing in the Borough, and still felt the figure in the current Local Plan was too high. The Secretary of State had indicated he wished to increase the target for housing in the South East and so the Council had to look at the opportunities available. He had always been a supporter of a link between the A2 and the M2 to relieve traffic and even more so now when considering air pollution. He emphasised that the figure was from Central Government, and that whilst he did not want any more housing, if a figure was imposed then he would favour one, two or three large settlements rather than new housing all across the Borough. It was important to consider what was the least detrimental/most advantageous, and to consider what was the 'most good for most people' in the Borough. It would be wrong to ignore the situation and to not engage in preliminary discussions or investigations. He agreed to speak with officers regarding the suggestion that the consultants had been referred to in an email as colleagues; and agreed it would not be appropriate for Quinn Estates to have written the first draft.

Mayor of London's Consultation

A Member asked the Leader if there was a new Lower Thames Crossing, would he be supporting the widening of the M2 between Gillingham and Faversham to meet the increase in demand?

Another Member asked for clarification on the figure in the fourth bullet point, which was confirmed as being 10,000 in total, and asked if the Leader would be accepting residents in the housing numbers?

Another Member questioned if the Mayor of London knew what he was doing, referring to residents who had relocated to his Ward from London who wished to return to London.

Another Member asked the Leader if he was concerned about the impact on affordable housing?

The Leader responded by saying he was very concerned about the impact on affordable housing, given the difficulties in building enough for Swale, and very concerned about the Plan saying that 'London should consume its own smoke'. He also considered planning was a matter for the local planning authority and that he did not agree that the Planning Inspectorate should have the power to overrule.

In respect of the Lower Thames Crossing, he agreed that the M2 would need to be widened as suggested, and that he had taken this matter up at recent meetings. Gravesham was currently opposing the plan, as it proposed to direct traffic through Gravesham and away from Dartford, and if this went forward he would also oppose it as it was essential that the M2 was widened.

Rural Crime

Members commented favourably on the Rural Crime training and referred to the Urban Crime training session that would be taking place on 26 March 2018, and asked if the Leader was looking forward to the session? The Leader was also asked if he would join in congratulating the Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and the Community Safety Partnership for the organisation of the Rural Crime session, and acknowledge that Swale was an exemplar in its relationship with the Police and National Farmers Union. Another Member referred to the increasing problem of fly-tipping and asked if CCTV could be deployed in rural areas to combat this?

The Leader responded by adding his congratulations to the Cabinet Members and that he was looking forward to the Urban Crime session, which he was hoping to attend. He also acknowledged the positive relationship with the Police and the innovative and progressive approach taken by Swale. In response to a query about definition of rural and urban and wards, the Leader advised that the definitions were not focused on ward boundaries but the area itself.

506 BUDGETS AND COUNCIL TAX FOR 2018/19

The Interim Deputy Head of Legal Partnership outlined the procedure for the discussion on the Budget.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance presented the Budget, referring to work that had been undertaken in the last year on the priorities in the Corporate Plan and to prepare for the future. A key aspect of this was financial sustainability to ensure that the Council could continue to provide services vital to residents. Whilst austerity would continue over the medium term and the world economy was volatile, the Cabinet Member advised that the Council would continue to handle its finances in a prudent and professional manner, so that any impact could be cushioned. The Council would continue to play a key role in reviving the local economy and would continue to encourage new businesses and to support those already established in the Borough. Major projects were designed to bring about improvements that would pay dividends over the long-term whilst also boosting the local jobs market.

The Cabinet Member acknowledged that difficult challenges were ahead as a result of Central Government cuts and these were significant for the Council. He considered that the Council must 'shout from the roof tops' for local government to be put back on a sustainable financial footing, and he referred to the way in which Swale had made sure all the cuts in the past decade had been implemented in a way that shielded residents as much as possible. Whilst the Government's reduction in funding to the public sector would continue, the Council would become more resilient by becoming more self-financing.

In presenting a balanced budget for 2018/19, the Cabinet Member advised that they had dealt with a government funding reduction of almost £1.4m compared to the position in 2017/18. He spoke of the increasing importance of business rates to the authority, referring to the Kent and Medway pilot area for the localisation of business rates, and that it was predicted that Swale would be the largest gainer of any of the lower tier councils, with a projected increase in funding of £700,00. The actual figure would depend on the 2018/19 National Non-Domestic Rate return and it was prudent to assume some gain in revenue in the base, but the position would be much clearer for 2019/20. As a result of being in the pilot, the Council would not receive the Revenue Support Grant in 2018/19, but that would be offset by an equivalent reduction in the tariff to be paid on business rates by the Council.

The Cabinet Member then referred to staff pay, and that whilst a 1.2% increase had been assumed in the report to Cabinet in December 2017, a 2% increase had been agreed nationally, which locally Unison had also agreed. Pay increases had been kept at 1% for the last six years, however, given the higher level of inflation being experienced and the high level of commitment and contribution made by staff across the Council, the Cabinet Member considered that a 2% increase should be awarded. This would result in a funding increase of around £80,000, and he referred to the link to Members' allowances.

In respect of Capital Budget proposals, the Cabinet Member advised that for many years the Council had a very limited capital budget, although the position changed significantly in 2018/19 and beyond. Details were set-out within the report which included the Sittingbourne town centre work; £2m of improvements to the Sittingbourne and Sheerness Leisure Centres, and £0.5m to improve equipment in play areas.

The Cabinet Member referred to the £1.3m funding gap predicted for 2018/19 and a further £400,000 the following year. £677,000 had been set aside to help smooth across the 2 years. In the proposals, the Budget was being balanced by using £316,000 of the £677,000 and there was now a manageable gap of £550,000 for 2019/20. The Cabinet Member emphasised that 2018/19 was an extremely difficult year for the Council and there was a fine line to tread in setting an achievable budget which allowed core services to be developed and improved for residents.

In respect of Council Tax, the Cabinet Member advised that Band D Council Tax payers would be asked to pay 10p extra per week, which was £4.95 a year towards Swale Borough Council services. This was only the second time in eight years that an increase was being proposed, but it was necessary to help manage the dramatic reduction in direct grant from Central Government of 90% over the last eight years, whilst continuing to invest in local facilities. A typical band D household would be paying just £3.27 a week for Council services, which he considered to be excellent value for the range of services provided. He reminded Members that the Council Tax bill also included charges for Kent County Council, Kent Police, Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Service, and, where they existed, parish or town councils. These charges were set by the respective organisations, and were collected on their behalf by Swale Borough Council.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Council had the second lowest Council Tax of any Kent Council and he was proud of that and would work to keep increases to a minimum in the future. Whilst not being complacent, he was confident that residents would understand that this increase was out of necessity and still offered good value for money to protect services.

The Cabinet Member referred to his commitment to invest and become an active commercial authority, referring to Sittingbourne regeneration coming to fruition and other regeneration projects in the Borough that were being considered. He referred to the Visitor Economy Strategy which would seek to enhance and attract tourism for the benefit of particular communities, which was being funded by £0.25m from business rates. The Council was keen to address the housing crisis, but there were no quick or easy wins. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing and senior officers engaged very closely with Optivo, who were crucial in how the Council handled short term homelessness. The Cabinet Member was keen for the Council to make its own direct contribution to increasing supply but it had to be financially viable, and it was possible that capital budget proposals could come forward in the year if a suitable option was found.

In respect of reserves, the Cabinet Member said that whilst some might say the level of reserves were too high, the Cabinet Member considered that the level of reserves allowed the Council to invest in capital items and deliver services. Given the uncertainty ahead, the reserves were an important secure element for the Council's future and to protect against any immediate problems, referring to the Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board increase last year. He advised that he would continue to look at assets, to maximize benefits and to follow the example of other authorities who had found ways of offering traditional council services to the private sector, to generate income.

The Cabinet Member paid tribute to the highly efficient Financial Team, the Chief Executive, Director of Regeneration and officers throughout the Council, as well as the Leader, Cabinet Members and Deputy Cabinet Members, for their work and welcomed suggestions from all Members of the Council. He also praised the Council staff for the quality of their work, dedication to projects, and achieving the best outcomes for residents. He had every confidence over the coming year that the Chief Executive, Director, Officers, Heads of Service, Finance Team and staff would continue to work to ensure Swale Borough Council balanced the books whilst still providing all the services to a high standard.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Budget for 2018/19 was very important because there would be extremely tough decisions to make in two year's time. The Council had a responsibility now to make certain that the new Administration, whatever the political makeup was, would have a sound financial base to work from.

In reaching a conclusion, the Cabinet Member considered there was a lot of good news in the budget, and a lot of development and growth in Council services. He referred in particular to the following points:

- The proposed Council Tax increase was less than 10p per week on a Band D property;

- £250,000 savings were being made in the management structure of the Council;
- In light of the Council motion on air quality on 24 January 2018, provision would be made within the budget for an extra £50k being allocated from reserves for Air Quality initiatives;
- Significant investment would be made in the Planning Service - £260,000 extra spend;
- £250,000 extra money to tackle homelessness - for bed and breakfast costs and extra prevention;
- Increasing the staff pay award to 2% to recognise the high level of commitment from staff;
- Spending £2m to improve the leisure centres;
- Spending £500,000 on play area equipment;
- Committing £250,000 to support the Visitor Economy Strategy; and
- Supporting a £32m investment in Sittingbourne Town Centre and £3.5m in a new Multi Storey Car Park.

The Cabinet Member proposed the recommendations in the report, with an additional recommendation to include provision for an extra £50k to be allocated from reserves for Air Quality Initiatives.

This was seconded by the Leader, who reserved his right to speak.

The Mayor advised that the Independent Group had submitted amendments to the Budget, which would be taken in two sections.

Amendment No. 1

The Leader of the Independent Group proposed the following amendments to the Budget:

“Expenditure

1. Remove the proposed expenditure of £60,000 for “data protection resource”. This should not be necessary and no justification for it has been provided.
2. Increase staff savings to £350,000 from present £250,000. There is already a saving of approximately £100,000 from removal of the corporate services director and a further £250,000 saving equates to a productivity gain of 4% which should be achievable.
3. Increase planning fee income by £50,000. In 5 of the last 6 years planning income has exceeded budget and the drive for housing plans to meet the

needs of the local plan should lead us to expect further substantial planning application fees.

These proposals together reduce expenditure for the year 2018/19 by £210,000.

Use of savings

4. Each 1% increase in Council Tax brings in £70,000. We propose reducing the Council Tax increase by 2% thus using up £140,000 of the proposed savings.
5. The remaining £70,000 of available savings should be used to reduce by £70,000 the amount taken from the General Fund.
6. These proposals leave a balanced budget.”

This was seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Independent Group, who reserved her right to speak.

The Leader advised that he could not support the amendment and referred to the need for Councils to keep reserves rather than ‘raid them’.

The Leader of the UKIP Group gave his views, and referred to the cuts in Government funding and the fact that Swale Borough Council did not pass on any funding to town and parish councils.

Members then debated the motion, during which attention was drawn to the parish precept increases shown in Appendix 3, 25 of which had either reduced or kept increased below the rate of inflation; that increased planning fee income would be offset by the need for additional resource to meet the demand; and the need for additional resource to meet the requirements of the new Data Protection legislation.

The seconder spoke in support of the amendment which would provide for a balanced budget. She considered that planning fee income was always under-budgeted and suggested it was an LDF ‘slush-fund’ and that officers could be asked to work harder to increase productivity.

The proposer of the original motion gave his views on the amendment, referring to the level of fine for any breach in the new data protection regulations; resourcing levels needed to deliver Council services; that the Government had assumed that all Councils would be raising Council Tax this year; that Swale had the second lowest Council Tax in Kent; and that he could not support the amendment.

In accordance with SI 2014 No. 165, a recorded vote was taken on the amendment and voting was as follows:

For = Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Crowther, Richard Darby, June Garrad, Mike Henderson and Mini Nissanga. Total = 7

Against = Councillors Sarah Aldridge, Cameron Beart, George Bobbin, Andy Booth, Tina Booth, Lloyd Bowen, Bowles, Roger Clark, Derek Conway, Mike Cosgrove, Mike Dendor, Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Mark Ellen, Paul Fleming,

Sue Gent, Nicholas Hampshire, Harrison, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Ken Ingleton, Nigel Kay, Samuel Koffie-Williams, Gerry Lewin, Peter Marchington, Prescott, Ken Pugh, George Samuel, David Simmons, Ben Stokes, Roger Truelove, Anita Walker, Ghlin Whelan, Mike Whiting, Ted Wilcox, Tony Winckless, John Wright. Total = 36

The Mayor advised that the amendment had been lost, and discussion moved to the second amendment.

Amendment No.2

The Leader of the Independent Group proposed the following amendment:

7. The £250,000 proposed to be spent over 5 years on the Visitor Strategy does not impact on the budget. It is proposed that this should be spent over 3 years rather than 5 in order to impact on increasing visitor numbers and income to the borough more quickly.
8. The proposal to spend £500,000 over 5 years on updating play equipment is a capital item. The capital is available now so it is proposed that this should be spent over 3 years to carry out the improvements more quickly.
9. The project to restore a bridge over the leats at Oare Gunpowder Works will mainly use S106 money. The cost of the project, having been delayed for so long, has increased. It is proposed to allot £10,000 of capital to allow this project to be completed in 2018/19.
10. £2,000,000 of capital has been included to improve the Sittingbourne and Sheppey leisure centres. With these leisure centres costing SBC a minimum of £600,000 pa that means an expenditure of £5,000,000 over 5 years. It is proposed that a further £1,000,000 is put into the capital budget to provide for renovation of Faversham Swimming Pools which have been supported over the last 5 years by a total of £550,000 before taking account of the estimated extra parking fees to SBC of £90,000 pa.
11. It is finally proposed that a clear commitment is given as to how much further and future increase will be allowed in reserves. Total reserves are expected to be £17,208,000 at the end of 2017/18 which is considered too high."

This was seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Independent Group, who reserved her right to speak.

The Leader advised that he could not support the amendment and whilst he was pleased that capital funding was being allocated as set out in Nos.7 and 8, he did not agree with condensing the time period as there would be resource implications. He also suggested that decisions for the award of funds to leisure centres were based on individual merits.

The Leader of the UKIP Group said he had some sympathy with the proposals in terms of doing more in the year ahead and speeding up timings; project delays often resulted in extra costs, however, he did not support No.10.

The Leader of the Labour Group congratulated the Leader of the Independent Group on putting forward amendments, and whilst some were difficult to support, he advised that he would support them.

A debate ensued on the amendments during which the following points were raised:

Concerns about the impact of changing the timescales as proposed in No.7 and No.8; that the funding could be front-loaded; concerns that the proposer and seconder had declared interests in respect of Faversham Pools (No. 10); praise that amendments had been put forward on the Budget to stimulate debate, even if not supported; discussion at the Policy Development and Review Committee (PDRC) regarding the timescale for the Play Strategy; and a complaint about the management of the Faversham Pools in respect of the showers. During the discussion, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs advised that he would be happy to look at the suggestion made in No. 9.

The seconder of the amendment, who had reserved her right to speak, emphasised that the Visitor Strategy was significant in all areas, not just Faversham and Sittingbourne, but the whole Borough including the rural areas; that the timeframes could be sped up as referred to in No.7 and No.8; that it had been difficult for some Members to attend the recent PDRC as it was during half-term; and that any of the Faversham Pools Trustees could be approached at any time with any complaints.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, as mover of the original motion, responded to the comments, acknowledging that the Visitor Strategy did apply to the whole of the Borough and rural areas; reasons why the timescale for the projects in No.7 and No.8 should not be altered; agreed with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs that No. 9 could be looked at outside of the budget setting meeting; in respect of No. 10, that the Council did want good facilities for all of the Borough; and that the reserves were there for a purpose and would be maintained at a level which had the support of the Section 151 Officer and External Auditors. He could not support the amendments.

In accordance with SI 2014 No. 165, a recorded vote was taken on the amendment and voting was as follows:

For = Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Crowther, Richard Darby, Mark Ellen, Paul Fleming, June Garrad, Harrison, Mike Henderson, Mini Nissanga, Ghlin Whelan and Tony Winckless. Total = 12

Against = Councillors Sarah Aldridge, Cameron Beart, George Bobbin, Andy Booth, Tina Booth, Lloyd Bowen, Bowles, Roger Clark, Derek Conway, Mike Cosgrove, Mike Dendor, Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Sue Gent, Nicholas Hampshire, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Ken Ingleton, Nigel Kay, Samuel Koffie-Williams, Gerry Lewin, Peter Marchington, Prescott, Ken Pugh, George Samuel, David Simmons, Ben Stokes, Mike Whiting, Ted Wilcox, and John Wright. Total = 29

Abstain = Councillor Anita Walker. Total = 1

Debate then returned to the substantive motion.

The Leader of the UKIP Group advised that he would find it difficult to explain to residents why their Council Tax was increasing and what the money was being spent on; and considered that the Council should be passing some funds on to parish and town councils. He could not support the Budget.

The Leader of the Labour Group said that many residents did not understand that Swale Borough Council collected other authorities' tax with the Swale Borough Council tax, and so whilst the increase was £4.95 for Swale, the aggregate increase was £77.97 in total. He considered that the Budget was alright, but he could not support it given that it included funding for the Sittingbourne Town Centre scheme and there was no capital provision to tackle homelessness.

The Leader of the Independent Group advised he could not support the Budget, referring to the amendments he had put forward which had not been supported, and that he did not consider it was prudent to raise the Council Tax by 3%, as it was not required.

Debate then ensued regarding the substantive motion, which centred on the following themes:

The sound financial management of the Council, whilst also securing key improvements, referring to the Auditor's unqualified opinion and value for money; the introduction of new initiatives such as the Swale Fusion Festival; the inclusion of additional funding following the Motion debated at the previous Council meeting on Air Quality; the need for commercial acumen to generate income; that the increase in charge from the Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board should not have been a shock for Members as Members were appointed to the Committee; the importance of not just saving money but also raising money, which meant that the proposed increase in Council Tax was lower than it could have been; praise for the Cabinet Member and officers; the Council was becoming a property developer and the increase in Council Tax could not be supported; there was nothing in the Budget to help with Homelessness and there should be investment in housing; support for additional provision to focus on Air Quality initiatives; the pressure to generate income to maintain services given Central Government cuts; and the need to attract additional business rates by attracting new businesses and jobs.

The Leader, as seconder of the original Motion (who had reserved his right to speak), advised that he was proud of the Budget. The Council was driving forward services without massive demands on Council Tax payers, referring to efficiencies and value for money and providing the best services that were affordable. He advised that the wider economy in Swale was growing; the number of people in work was increasing and the number of unemployed was reducing, and all indices were moving in the right direction. He encouraged Members to support the Budget.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, as proposer of the original Motion, encouraged Members to support the Budget.

In accordance with SI 2014 No. 165, a recorded vote was taken on the amendment and voting was as follows:

For = Councillors Sarah Aldridge, Cameron Beart, George Bobbin, Andy Booth, Tina Booth, Lloyd Bowen, Bowles, Roger Clark, Derek Conway, Mike Cosgrove, Mike Dendor, Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Sue Gent, Nicholas Hampshire, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Ken Ingleton, Nigel Kay, Samuel Koffie-Williams, Gerry Lewin, Peter Marchington, Prescott, Ken Pugh, George Samuel, David Simmons, Ben Stokes, Anita Walker, Mike Whiting, Ted Wilcox, and John Wright. Total = 30

Against = Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Crowther, Richard Darby, Mark Ellen, Paul Fleming, June Garrad, Harrison, Mike Henderson, Mini Nissanga, Roger Truelove, Ghlin Whelan and Tony Winckless. Total = 13

Resolved:

(1) That the Chief Finance Officer's opinion on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves be noted.

(2) That Minute Number 472/02/18 of the Cabinet Meeting held on 7 February 2018 on the report on the Medium Term Financial Plan and the 2018/19 Revenue and Capital Budgets be approved.

(3) That the resolutions contained in Appendix I be approved.

(4) That an extra £50k be allocated from reserves for Air Quality Initiatives.

507 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/19

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance outlined the approach in the Strategy, proposed the recommendation in the report, which was seconded by the Leader.

Resolved:

(1) That the Treasury Strategy 2018/19 and the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators be approved.

508 DRAFT TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2018/19

The Leader proposed and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations in the report. In response to comments regarding the dates suggested for Joint Transportation Board meetings, the Leader advised that the draft timetable had been circulated to Group Leaders for comments prior to the meeting. Another Member clarified that Member Training would not take place on all three of the dates suggested in the timetable for September, and asked if consideration could be given to avoid holding Policy Development and Review Committee meetings during half-term.

Resolved:

(1) That the timetable of meetings as attached to the report be agreed.

509 ELECTION OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2018/19

The Mayor advised that one nomination had been received for Mayor, namely Councillor Samuel Koffie-Williams, which had been proposed by Councillor Mike Dendor and seconded by Councillor Ken Pugh.

The Mayor advised that one nomination had been received for Deputy Mayor, namely Councillor Ken Ingleton, which had been proposed by Councillor Mike Whiting and seconded by Councillor Alan Horton.

Resolved:

(1) That the Mayor elect for the civic year 2018/19 is Councillor Samuel Koffie-Williams.

(2) That the Deputy Mayor elect for the civic year 2018/19 is Councillor Ken Ingleton.

510 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL

The Council was asked to note the following recommendations, as separate reports on the items had been considered earlier in the meeting.

Resolved:

(1) That recommendations in Minute Nos. 472 and 473 of the Cabinet Meeting held on 7 February 2018 be noted.

511 ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The Mayor adjourned the meeting for ten minutes at 9.43pm, following consideration of the Budget.

512 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

At 10pm Members agreed to the suspension of Standing Orders so that the meeting could complete its business.

Mayor

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel