

**Subject:** Extract from the proceedings of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on the 11 February 2016 – General Fund Revenue Budget & Council Tax 2016/17

**Date of Meeting:** 25 February 2016

**Report of:** Head of Legal & Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer

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**Wards Affected:** All

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE*****Action Required of Council:***

To receive the report referred from the Policy & Resources Committee for decision.

**Recommendations:**

- 1) That the Administration's proposed Council Tax increase in the Brighton & Hove element of the council tax be approved, comprising:
  - (i) A general Council Tax increase of 1.99%;
  - (ii) An Adult Social Care precept increase of 2.00%;
  - (iii) The Council's net General Fund budget requirement for 2016/17 of £209.571m;
  - (iv) The 2016/17 budget allocations to services as set out in Appendix 1;
  - (v) The reserves allocations as set out in paragraph 3.25 and table 2;
  - (vi) The Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix 9 to this report.
  - (vii) The agreed recommendation from the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee that Low Emission Vehicle and Car Club permits be frozen at current rates.
- 2) That it be noted that the Equalities Impact Assessments to cover all budget options and their cumulative effect are set out in Appendices 10 and 11 to the report;

- 3) That the authorised borrowing limit for the year commencing 1 April 2016 of £404m be approved;
- 4) That the annual Minimum Revenue Provision statement as set out in Appendix 8 to the report be approved;
- 5) That the 4-Year Service & Financial Plans including savings proposals for later years up to and including 2019/20 be noted;
- 6) That the approach to managing risk and successful delivery set out in paragraph 4.47 of the report be noted; and
- 7) That it be noted that supplementary information needed to set the overall council tax will be provided for the budget setting Council as listed in paragraph 4.3 of the report.

## BRIGHTON &amp; HOVE CITY COUNCIL

## POLICY &amp; RESOURCES COMMITTEE

4.00pm 11 FEBRUARY 2016  
AUDITORIUM, THE BRIGHTELM CENTRE

## MINUTES

**Present:** Councillors Morgan (Chair), Hamilton (Deputy Chair), G Theobald (Opposition Spokesperson), Mac Cafferty (Group Spokesperson), Bewick, Janio, Mitchell, A Norman, Sykes and Wealls

PART ONE**121 GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET & COUNCIL TAX 2016/17**

- 121.1 The Committee considered a report of the Acting Executive Director for Finance & Resources in relation to General Fund Revenue Budget & Council Tax 2016/17. The report set out the proposals for the General Fund Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2016/17 together with the 4-Year Service & Financial Plans up to 2019/20. In the absence of freeze grant availability, the increase in the Council Tax level was based on the minority Administration's Council Tax proposals of 1.99% together with a further 2% increase in respect of the Adult Social Care precept. All proposals and options took into account feedback and evidence received by the Council through various consultation and engagement processes and Equalities Impact Assessments.
- 121.2 The Chair thanked all Officers that had been involved in drafting the budget, and noted the scale of work that had been undertaken.
- 121.3 Councillor Sykes highlighted pension fund contributions, raising queries in relation to the accuracy of the figures; Officers agreed that this would be checked and the outcome of this communicated to Members.
- 121.4 In response to Councillor Mac Cafferty it was explained that there was corporate oversight of all the equality impact assessments (EIAs) and the drafting of the cumulative impact statement. Officers agreed to take away and look into any potential inconsistencies in the approach.
- 121.5 Councillor G. Theobald also extended thanks to the work put into the budget by Officers up to this point.
- 121.6 In response to queries in relation to the Park Ranger Service and budget provision from Councillor Wealls it was agreed that a briefing note would be sent to the whole Committee outlining the proposed changes. Councillor A. Norman also referenced the Park Ranger Service and stated that it was difficult to operate the service with the seven current staff, and noted they were carrying out much needed and important work.

- 121.7 Councillor G. Theobald asked specific questions in relation to the grants programme and the deferral of the proposed budget savings for a year to coincide with the ending of the current 3 year grants programme and the move to a commissioning structure. In response Officers agreed to circulate a full response to the Committee.
- 121.8 Councillor Sykes also praised Officers for the work they had undertaken on the budget. He went to highlight his disappointment with the level of consultation that had been undertaken, and noted there had been no formal budget Scrutiny meeting. He stated that the cuts approach was 'chaotic' and there was impact identified on protected groups; he added that better scrutiny of the medium term financial strategy during the financial year could better help protect services during the budget setting phase.
- 121.9 Councillor Wealls highlighted the number of services that were currently deemed to be 'poor value for money' and stated his view that the previous Administration's management of the organisation was evident in some of the budget proposals before the Committee.
- 121.10 Councillor Hamilton noted that a recent meeting of the budget review group had looked at the means to undertake more electronic consultation in future, and he highlighted that both of the opposition parties would be able to propose amendments as part of the usual budget setting process. He also extended thanks to the work undertaken by Officers.
- 121.11 The Chair noted that the Customer First in a Digital Age would seek to extend electronic consultation.
- 121.12 The Chair put the following proposed amendment from the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee to the vote:

That the Committee agrees to recommend to Council that Low Emission Vehicle and Car Club permits be frozen at current rates.

The amendment was carried.

- 121.13 The Chair put the amended recommendations to the vote.

121.14 **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

- 1) The Administration's proposed Council Tax increase in the Brighton & Hove element of the council tax, comprising:
  - (i) A general Council Tax increase of 1.99%;
  - (ii) An Adult Social Care precept increase of 2.00%;
  - (iii) The Council's net General Fund budget requirement for 2016/17 of £209.571m;
  - (iv) The 2016/17 budget allocations to services as set out in Appendix 1;

- (v) The reserves allocations as set out in paragraph 3.25 and table 2;
  - (vi) The Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix 9 to this report.
- 2) That Council note the Equalities Impact Assessments to cover all budget options and their cumulative effect are set out in Appendices 10 and 11.
  - 3) That Council approves the authorised borrowing limit for the year commencing 1 April 2016 of £404m.
  - 4) That Council approves the annual Minimum Revenue Provision statement as set out in Appendix 8.
  - 5) That Council note the 4-Year Service & Financial Plans including savings proposals for later years up to and including 2019/20.
  - 6) That the Council note the approach to managing risk and successful delivery set out in paragraph 3.47.
  - 7) That Council note that supplementary information needed to set the overall council tax will be provided for the budget setting Council as listed in paragraph 4.3.
  - 8) That Low Emission Vehicle and Car Club permits be frozen at current rates.

121.15 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee agrees that officers be authorised to make any necessary technical, presentational or consequential amendments to this report before submission to full Council.

