

**COUNCIL (BUDGET MEETING)****23 January 2014****7.00 pm – 9.55 pm****Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud****3****Minutes****Membership:**

Dennis Andrewartha**	P	Chas Fellows	A	Andy Read	A
Liz Ashton	P	Paul Hemming	P	Mark Rees*	P
Dorcas Binns	P	Nick Hurst	P	Frances Roden	P
Rowland Blackwell	P	Haydn Jones	P	Mattie Ross	P
Philip Booth	P	John Jones	P	Roger Sanders	P
Tim Boxall	P	Daniel Le Fleming	A	Emma Sims	P
Chris Brine	P	Graham Littleton	P	Paul Smith	P
Paul Carter	P	Stephen Lydon	P	Ken Stephens	P
Molly Cato	P	John Marjoram	P	Nigel Studdert-Kennedy	P
Miranda Clifton	P	Brian Marsh	P	Brian Tipper	P
Nigel Cooper	P	Russell Miles	P	Geoff Wheeler	P
June Cordwell	P	Stephen Moore	A	Martin Whiteside	A
Doina Cornell	P	Keith Pearson	P	Rhiannon Wigzell	P
Gordon Craig	P	Elizabeth Peters	A	Tom Williams	P
Karon Cross	P	Simon Pickering	P	Penny Wride	P
Paul Denney	A	Gary Powell	P	Debbie Young	P
David Drew	P	Nigel Prenter	P	Vacancy	

\*\* = Chair of Council

\* = Vice Chair of Council P = Present A = Absent

**Officers Present**

Chief Executive

Strategic Head (Corporate Services)

Legal Services Manager & Monitoring  
Officer

Accountancy Manager

Democratic Services Assistant

Strategic Head of Finance & Business  
Services**CL.043****APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Denney, Daniel Le Fleming, Stephen Moore, Elizabeth Peters and Martin Whiteside.

**CL.044****DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

**CL.045            BUDGET SETTING PARAMETERS****(a)                    Council Tax Base 2014/15**

The Leader of the Council presented the background to the above report which sought approval of the calculation for the Council's tax base for 2014/15, which had been calculated as 40,871.90.

The Leader moved the proposal set out in the report, which was seconded by Councillor Chris Brine.

Officers agreed to circulate the calculation of tax base in a tabular format showing how it related to each parish.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was CARRIED.

**RESOLVED        (a) That the report for the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year be approved; and**  
**(b) That pursuant to this report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Stroud District Council as its tax base for the year 2014/15 shall be 40,871.90.**

**(b)                    Estimation of Surpluses or Deficits on the Collection Fund 2013/14**

The Leader of the Council informed Members of the position regarding the estimation of any surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund 2013/14.

The Leader moved the proposal set out in the report, which was seconded by Councillor Chris Brine.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was CARRIED.

**RESOLVED        The sum of £824,856 is the estimated surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund at 31 March 2014.**

**CL.046            CALCULATION OF BUSINESS RATES 2014/15 (NNDR1)**

The Leader of the Council presented the report which sought authority to be delegated to the Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services) to approve the final NNDR1 form and make budget adjustments accordingly.

The Leader moved the proposal set out in the report, which was seconded by Councillor Chris Brine.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was CARRIED.

**RESOLVED        That delegated authority is given to the Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services) to approve the final NNDR1 form and adjust the budget accordingly.**

**CL.047                    BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL FROM THE STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Strategy and Resources Committee – 9 January 2014**

**(a)    Housing Revenue Account Revised Estimates 2013/14 and Original Estimates 2014/15**

The Leader of the Council presented the report following consideration by the Strategy and Resources Committee, detailing the revised estimates for the Housing Revenue Account for 2013/14 and the original estimates for 2014/15. He moved the proposal set out on the agenda, which was seconded by Councillor Mattie Ross.

The following is a summary of points raised:

- It was noted that the headings for the tables on page 7 of the report were incorrect. The heading on the first table should refer to CPI and the heading on the second table should relate to RPI and not vice versa.
- The Leader agreed to provide further information to all Members on the statement at paragraph 5.5 of the report which related to the £3.45m or 18% of Right to Buy receipts committed to housing development.
- There was a debate concerning the links between the shortage of social housing and the Right to Buy.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was CARRIED.

- RESOLVED**
- (a)    The revised HRA budget for 2013/14 and original HRA budget for 2014/15 are approved;**
  - (b)    That from 1 April 2014 the following increases to existing rent and service charges as detailed in Appendix A are applied;**
    - i)    Dwelling rents increase by 3.2%, being CPI of 2.7% + 0.5%. (For an explanation of rents please see Appendix H);**
    - ii)    Garage Rents increase by CPI, i.e. 2.7% (see details in Appendix A);**
    - iii)    Other Landlord Service Charges increase by CPI i.e. 2.7% (see details in Appendix A);**
    - iv)    Landlord Service Charges at Sheltered Housing Schemes are increased by CPI i.e. 2.7% (see details in para 4.5 Appendix A);**
    - v)    Support Service Charges – The charge remains the same but will cease in October 2014 and be replaced by new contractual arrangements as per paragraph 4.5;**
  - (c)    That the Capital Programme for 2014/15 be approved;**
  - (d)    That authority be delegated to the Strategic Head (Tenant Services) to agree the detail of the 2014/15 Housing Repair and Maintenance Capital Programme.**

**(b) General Fund Revised Estimates 2013/14 and Original Estimates 2014/15**

The Leader of the Council presented the report following consideration by the Strategy and Resources Committee, detailing the General Fund revised estimates for 2013/14 and the original estimates for 2014/15. It was reported that, since the Strategy and Resources meeting on 9 January there had been a small revision to the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2014/15, as a result of a mis-statement on the budget for Members Allowances.

The Leader moved the proposal set out on the agenda, which was seconded by Councillor Simon Pickering.

There was a discussion about the number of interim staff who earned in excess of the £400 per day limit and the potential implication of this on the ratio between the lowest and the highest paid employees of the Council. The Chief Executive reported that at its meeting in February 2014 the Strategy and Resources Committee would consider a report on the Senior Pay Policy Statement which would set out this ratio.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was CARRIED.

- RESOLVED**
- (a) That the estimates set out in Appendix B of the report be approved;**
  - (b) That growth and investment, as set out in Appendix C is included in the Council's budget plans for 2014/15;**
  - (c) That charges for Environmental Health Services, as recommended by Environment Committee and set out in Appendix D for the Environment Committee Estimates report from 5 December 2013, be approved.**

**(c) Capital Programme and Proposed Schemes**

The Leader of the Council presented the report following consideration by the Strategy and Resources Committee, which sought to revise the current year's capital programme, to inform Members of the estimated capital resources for 2013/14 to 2017/18 and to identify the capital projects to be funded. He moved the proposal set out on the agenda, which was seconded by Councillor Simon Pickering.

The following points were raised during Members' questions and debate:

- The Leader was satisfied that the level of spend for the 2013/14 and 2014/15 revised capital programme, consisting mainly of activity from the Housing Revenue Account, would be achievable.
- There was a question on the detail of the spend relating to the Private Sector Housing Strategy as set out in Appendix A. The Leader suggested a report could be presented to a future meeting of the Community Services Committee on this.
- Particular thanks was given to the officer involved in the development of the Walled Garden project which had seen large amount of funding being secured through external funding applications.

- It was reported that the Council had been successful in securing £100,000 match funding from the Veolia Environment Trust towards the dredging of the canal between Lower Wallbridge Lock and Lodgemore Bridge.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was CARRIED.

- RESOLVED**
- (a) That the revised current year's programme in Appendix A to the report is approved;**
  - (b) That the programme is funded by the capital resources shown in Appendix B.**

**(d) The General Fund Revenue Budget 2014/15 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2013/14 - 2017/18**

The Leader of the Council presented the report to enable the Council to consider its financial position over the medium term and to set a budget requirement and the level of Council Tax for 2014/15. He moved the proposal set out on the agenda, which was seconded by Councillor Paul Hemming.

The Strategic Head of Finance & Business Services/Section 151 Officer explained that under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Financial Officer was required to make a statement on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of financial reserves when considering its budget, Council Tax and housing rents. To adhere to the Act Members must have regard to the report in making decisions at the Council's budget, Council Tax and rent setting meeting. The full statement was set out within the main body of the report where the risks, opportunities and uncertainties were set out.

The following is a summary of the main points raised during Members' questions and debate:

- Upon request, the Strategic Head of Finance and Business Services provided details on the demand and process for business rate appeals.
- A variety of points were raised on the proposal for a fitness extension at Dursley Swimming Pool as follows:
  - There was a discussion about proportionate cost of the scheme compared to the other proposals. It was, however, noted that the investment for the scheme would provide an income return to the authority which would eventually pay for itself.
  - The facility would serve and benefit residents from the district as a whole and not just the local area from both a financial (reduced subsidy) and a health and well being perspective.
  - Employment opportunities as well as benefits to the local economy were discussed.
- Clarity was given on the potential impact on Parish and Town Councils if they took grants as part of the local Council Tax support funding.
- The proposal for a lift at Ebley Mill had been an aspiration for the Council for some time and it would provide better accessibility and be more attractive to outside bodies wanting to use the Council Chamber.
- With regard to the change to a committee system there was some concern at informal discussions with regard to the budget setting process. Members were

reminded that there was an opportunity at each of the relevant committee meetings to add any items to the workplan.

- Concern was expressed at the review of the New Homes Bonus and the potential impact on the level of funding the Council received if planning applications were determined by appeal.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was CARRIED.

**RESOLVED That subject to the Government's final settlement announcements:**

- To approve the budget proposals as set out in Appendix A including a proposed council tax Band D rate of £186.93 (0% increase) for the services provided by Stroud District Council;**
- To approve the changes to the reserves as set out in paragraphs 47 to 52 of the report and Appendix C;**
- To approve the Medium Term Financial Plan as set out in Appendix B subject to any decisions made at (a) and (b) above;**
- That the LCTS funds of £67,007 set aside in 2013/14 is paid directly to those parish and town councils who did not receive the funds in the current year in proportion to the amount of Council Tax support given in each parish or town area;**
- That £206,233 is the amount of LCTS funding paid to all parish and town councils in 2014/15 in proportion to the amount of Council Tax support given in each parish or town area.**

**CL.049                      CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL FOR THE REASON FOR NON ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

The Chief Executive presented the report which asked Council to consider a request for the approval of non attendance of Councillor Daniel Le Fleming at meetings on the grounds of ill health, until 22 May 2014, in order to avoid disqualification for his non attendance at any meeting of the Council for six consecutive months.

**RESOLVED That the Council approves the ill health reason for non attendance of Councillor Daniel Le Fleming at meetings until 22 May 2014, in order to avoid his disqualification for his non attendance at any meeting of the Council for six consecutive months.**

**CL.050                      APPOINTMENTS TO VACANCIES ON COMMITTEES**

Council was asked to consider making appointments to the vacancies which had arisen on each of the Audit and Standards Committee, Development Control Committee and Environment Committee for the remainder of this Civic Year.

It was reported that the appointment to the Development Control Committee was no longer needed.

**RESOLVED** That the following appointments are made to the vacancies on committees for the remainder of this Civic Year:

**Committee**

**Councillor**

Audit and Standards Committee  
Environment Committee

Dennis Andrewartha  
Mark Rees

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

**Chair of Council**