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COUNCIL

25 FEBRUARY 2015

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Bruce Dowling (in the Chair), Councillors Rogers, Batsford, Birch, Cartwright, Charlesworth, Chowney, Clark, Cooke, Davies, Forward, Hodges, Howard, Poole, Pragnell, Roberts, Sabetian, Scott, Sinden, Turner, Webb, Westley, Wincott, Beaver, Charman, Lee, Lock, Fitzgerald, Beaney, Atkins and Edwards

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Street

26. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2015/16 TO 2017/18

It was proposed that the recommendations set out in minute number 66 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16 February 2015 be approved.

Councillor Dowling, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, proposed a motion, seconded by Councillor Cartwright, and agreed unanimously as follows: -

RESOLVED that in order to facilitate full discussion on Cabinet’s proposal for the corporate plan and any proposed amendments to cabinet’s recommendations, Council suspends Rule 16.6.(b) of Council Procedure Rules (only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time. No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of) to permit the Deputy Leader’s motion and all amendments to be on the table and open for discussion at the same time.

Councillor Atkins moved an amendment to the Corporate Plan, seconded by Councillor Pragnell, as follows: -

1. Replace the current vision with:

We believe Hastings Borough Council should be committed to focusing its efforts on reigniting the local economy as a whole. Hastings will become a “Borough of Aspiration”, in which economic prosperity and quality of life is at the forefront thanks to sustainable, long term economic plan for this council. Together we will build a town where aspiration and ambition become synonymous with the 1066 brand that Hastings is so famous for. Through a long term economic plan we will develop a two pronged approach to economic prosperity; through the high tech industries, manufacturing and engineering and by building upon our creative heritage – creating the most famous digital technology hub on the South Coast. A culture of aspiration will, in turn, drive the educational changes needed throughout the town to ensure new businesses have the skilled workforce needed to work towards an economically prosperous town.

The council will develop a long term plan to stand on its own two feet as a council, free from the reliance and uncertainty of government grants, free to fulfil its duties to provide well paid local jobs, warm and affordable homes, high quality health care and good quality infrastructure. We will do everything we can to build

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transport links to and from the capital, encouraging visitors and widening our tourism offering; opening up the town and properly marketing and preserving the fantastic cultural, creative and historical heritage that we have inherited.

2. Council Values (c)

Amend statement to say

We believe that the council should be doing all it can to promote business, entrepreneurship and aspiration in the town. As a result we believe all local people (including employees of the council) will receive a high standard of education and decent jobs that pay a living wage, where they are treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

3. Turning our vision into a reality

Add priority 'H' which reads

An aspirational borough: to promote practices that lead to lean, we run services. To do all we can as a council to promote and become an entrepreneurial, aspirational town, through inward business investment and skill development.

4. Programmes and Projects (External Funding Programme (page 18)):

Amend statement to say

To make discovering how the council can draw in external funds and generate additional income a top priority, in order to support the council's overarching priorities.

The amendment was lost by 8 votes to 22.

Councillor Chowney moved that the corporate plan be approved.

RESOLVED (by 22 votes for 0 against with 8 abstentions) that: -

- 1) The content of the documents, as appended to the report to Cabinet on 16 February 2015, form the basis of the council's corporate plan 2015/16 to 2017/18, subject to the proviso that any significant amendment made to the council's draft budget be reflected in the final corporate plan text;**
- 2) Delegated authority be given to the Director of Corporate Resources, after consultation with the Leader of the Council. To make further revisions as is considered necessary to the plan prior to publication to reflect decisions made on the council's budget;**
- 3) A retrospective year-end report on performance and the actual performance indicator information for 2014/15 be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in June 2015, prior to consideration by the Cabinet meeting in July 2015, and that the Council delegate authority to that Cabinet meeting to agree 2015/16 performance indicators based on previous year's performance, and;**

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4) All who submitted views as part of the consultation process be thanked for their contributions

The reason for this decision was:

The council needs to approve the corporate plan as it is a statement of Hastings Borough Council's strategic direction to 2018. It sets out how we will ensure that we successfully address our priorities, meet the needs of our communities, and ensure we have a strong dedicated and motivated workforce to deliver our strategic priorities.

27. REVENUE BUDGETS 2014/15 (REVISED) AND 2015/16, PLUS CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014/15 TO 2017/18

It was proposed that the recommendations set out in minute number 67 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16 February 2015, be approved.

Councillor Dowling, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, proposed a motion, seconded by Councillor Cartwright, and agreed unanimously, as follows: -

RESOLVED – that in order to facilitate full discussion on Cabinet's proposal for the budget and any proposed amendments to Cabinet's recommendations, Council suspends Rule 16.6.(b) of Council Procedure Rules (only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time. No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of) to permit the Leader's motion and all amendments to be on the table and open to discussion at the same time.

Councillor Pragnell moved an amendment to the revenue budget, seconded by Councillor Atkins, as follows: -

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. Remove money from general reserves: | £1,000,000 |
| Place money in an 'Aspiring Millions' reserve | £1,000,000 |
| 2. Reduction in I.T. budget | £15,000 |
| Working with the I.T. department to transfer all LOCAL server services to the Cloud / Amazon Web Services | |
| Reductions / Savings | £15,000 |
| 3. Generate revenue from sources: | £60,100 |
| A. Website advertising revenue | £10,000 |
| B. Roadside billboard and town wide digital advertising revenue | £26,000 |
| C. Charging for pre-planning application advice | £9,700 |
| D. Charging other authorities for officer advice on grant application and sourcing | £14,400 |
| Total Revenue / Income | £75,100 |
| 4. Expenditure from revenue budget: | £75,100 |
| A. 2 additional annual cuts for grass verges | £15,000 |
| B. Additional funds for the Chess Congress | £10,000 |

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for 2015/16, followed by £10,000 for
2017/18

C. Annual upkeep of the Old Town Museum / Creative and Digital Tech Hub	£45,000
D. Balance to contingency fund	£5,100
Total Expenditure	£75,100

The proposed amendment was lost by 8 voted to 22. Councillors Atkins, Beaver, Charlesworth, Cooke, Edwards, Lee, Lock and Pragnell voted in favour of the proposed amendment to the revenue budget. Councillors Batsford, Beaney, Birch, Cartwright, Charman, Chowney, Clark, Davies, Fitzgerald, Forward, Hodges, Howard, Poole, Roberts, Rogers, Sabetian, Scott, Sinden, Turner, Webb, Westley and Wincott voted against the proposed amendment.

Councillor Birch moved approval of the Revenue Budgets 2014/15 (Revised) and 2015/16, plus Capital Programme 2014/15 to 2017/18.

Councillors Batsford, Beaney, Birch, Cartwright, Charman, Chowney, Clark, Davies, Fitzgerald, Forward, Hodges, Howard, Poole, Roberts, Rogers, Sabetian, Scott, Sinden, Turner, Webb, Westley and Wincott voted for approval of the Revenue Budgets 2014/15 (Revised) and 2015/16, plus Capital Programme 2014/15 to 2017/18. No votes were cast against the motion. Councillors Atkins, Beaver, Charlesworth, Cooke, Edwards, Lee, Lock and Pragnell abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED (by 22 votes for 0 against with 8 abstentions) to: -

- 1) Approve the revised budget for 2014/15 (appendix A to the Cabinet report)
- 2) Approve the draft 2015/16 budget (appendix A to the Cabinet report)
- 3) Approve a 1.9% increase in the borough council's part of the council tax
- 4) Approve the coastal space initiative, a grant of £875,000 being payable, as detailed in appendix P and the main body of the report
- 5) Approve the capital programme 2014/15 (revised) to 2017/18 (appendix R to the Cabinet report)
- 6) Approve the proposed expenditure from the renewal and repairs reserve, and information technology reserve (appendices J and I to the Cabinet report respectively) and those items from other reserves shown in appendix H that can proceed without further reference to Cabinet or Council
- 7) Approve that the use of the monies identified in the budget for invest to save schemes be determined by the Head of Finance in consultation with the Leader of the Council
- 8) Approve the revised Land and Property Disposal Programme (appendix L to the Cabinet report) and agree that disposals can be brought forward if market conditions make it sensible to do so
- 9) Agree that schemes marked with an asterisk in the capital programme can proceed without further reference to Cabinet or Council
- 10) Agree work on priority income and efficiency reviews (PIER) should continue and where possible identify a sustainable budget for a period

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in excess of 1 year. A mid-year review, for members and officers, to be undertaken in light of the continuing severe government grant reductions

- 11) Approve the revised parking charges as per appendix M to the Cabinet report from April 2015 with no further increase for a period of 24 months
- 12) Approve the detailed recommendations in Appendix N to the Cabinet report, which relate to the setting of council tax in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Act 1992

The reason for the decision was:

The level of government funding to the council continues to fall and is expected to carry on falling until at least 2018-19. Since 2010/11 funding has been reduced by more than 50% in cash terms on a like for like basis.

Major reductions in funding in 2015/16 are set to continue to 2018/19 and possibly beyond and this will impact heavily upon the council's ability to provide services and grants across all areas of existing activity. To ensure key corporate priorities are achieved it remains imperative that the limited resources available are properly targeted.

The council needs to be in a position to match its available resources to its priorities across the medium term and to maintain sufficient reserves and capacity to deal with potentially large and unexpected events in addition to fluctuations in income and expenditure levels.

The council is exposed to a much greater degree of volatility in the level of funding it receives through non domestic rates. In addition it is also exposed to a much higher degree of volatility in terms of council tax support claims – the council now receiving an upfront sum as part of the annual grant statement rather than reimbursement of actual costs.

Further reductions in grant funding have major implications for the council and as such work needs to continue to identify and make savings in order to produce balanced budgets in 2016/17 and beyond.

28. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2015/16

It was proposed that the recommendations set out in minute number 68 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16 February 2015 be approved under rule 13.3 (items which have not been reserved are not to be discussed).

RESOLVED that: -

- 1) The Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy and Annual Investment Strategy 2015/16 be approved;
- 2) The current year's strategy remains unaltered

The reason for this decision was:

The council seeks to minimise the costs of borrowing and maximise investment income whilst ensuring the security of its investments. The sums involved are large and the assumptions made play an important part in determining the annual budget.

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Compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice represents best practice and ensures compliance with statutory requirements.

(The Mayor declared the meeting closed at. 8.25 pm)