

Council

Tuesday, 22 February 2022

7.30 pm

Present:

The Worshipful the Mayor, Cllr Lyn Milner
The Deputy Mayor, Peter Scollard

Councillors:	Derek Ashenden	Bob Lane
	Ejaz Aslam	Jordan Meade
	Gurjit Bains	Shane Mochrie-Cox
	Conrad Broadley	Emma Morley
	John Burden	Diane Morton
	Gurdip Ram Bungar	Elizabeth Mulheran
	John Caller	Leslie Pearton
	Harold Craske	Anthony Pritchard
	Lee Croxton	Tony Rana
	Dakota Dibben	Tony Rice
	Aaron Elliott	Christina Rolles
	Emma Elliott	Lenny Rolles
	Brian Francis	Brian Sangha
	Sarah Gow	Gurbax Singh
	Gary Harding	Lauren Sullivan
	Baljit Hayre	Narinderjit Singh Thandi
	Leslie Hills	Steve Thompson
	Leslie Hoskins	Denise Tiran
	Samir Jassal	Jenny Wallace
	Nirmal Khabra	Frank Wardle

Stuart Bobby	Chief Executive
Nick Brown	Director (Environment) & Deputy Chief Executive
Daniel Killian	Director (Housing)
Melanie Norris	Director (Communities)
Lisa Nyon	Assistant Director (Corporate Services)
Vicky Nutley	Assistant Head of Legal Services (Place)
Simon Walsh	Service Manager (Communities)
Andy Rayfield	Communications Manager
Andrew Barnett	Principal Accountant (General Fund)
Alexandra Jarvis	Principal Accountant (Housing & Exchequer)
Pat Knight	Head of Revenues and Benefits
Carlie Simmonds	Committee Services Manager

Reverend Jaqueline Littlewood Civic Chaplain

51. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Helen Ashenden and Alan Ridgers.

52. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021 were signed by the Mayor.

53. Declarations of Interest

The Chief Executive advised that, in accordance with advice received from the Council's Monitoring Officer, Members only needed to declare interests which had not already been listed within their Disclosable Pecuniary Interests form.

Cllr Peter Scollard declared an interest in agenda item 6. Reserved Minutes as he was the Council representative on Gravesham Community Leisure Limited (GCLL).

54. To answer any questions received from members of the public of which notice has been given under Council Procedure Rule 13

No questions had been received.

55. Minutes of Committees

Motions that proceedings, reports and recommendations of Committees, except those reserved under Council Procedure 5.2(6) as referred to below be received and adopted and where applicable the Orders made by them be ratified and confirmed were duly proposed, seconded and resolved in each case.

- Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 4 January 2022
- Minutes of the meeting of the Overview Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 13 January 2022
- Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 31 January 2022
- Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 2 February 2022
- Minutes of the meeting of the Overview Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 10 February 2022
- Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee held on Monday, 14 February 2022

56. Reserved Minutes

It was moved by Cllr John Burden and seconded by Cllr Lee Croxton that:-

the reserved Minute of Cabinet (Town Pier and Pontoon) held on Monday, 4 January 2022 be ratified and confirmed.

the reserved Minute of Cabinet (Cascades Leisure Centre) held on Monday, 31 January 2022 be ratified and confirmed.

57. Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022-2023

The Council received a report which requested approval of the changes to the Council Tax Reduction scheme 2022-2023 (as recommended by Cabinet on 31 January 2022) and the Financial Support Payment Scheme Policy to be implemented from 1 April 2022.

It was moved by Cllr John Burden and seconded by Cllr Lee Croxton that:-

1. the Council Tax Reduction scheme 2022-2023 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 be approved; and
2. the Financial Support Payment Scheme Policy be approved.

The motion was put to the meeting and declared to be carried unanimously.

58. Council Tax and Budget Setting 2022-23

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.4.1, an extension of time was given to Councillor John Burden and an equal amount of time to Cllrs Jordan Meade and Harold Craske.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that all individual votes in relation to the budget and any amendments thereto would be recorded as required by legislation.

It was moved by Cllr John Burden and seconded by Cllr Lee Croxton that:-

the motion before Council as set out in the order paper be approved.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Jordan Meade and seconded by Councillor Ejaz Aslam that:-

The Conservative Group move that the Budget should be amended to provide additional resources to the Planning Directorate.

It is thus proposed that in order to strengthen our planning enforcement capabilities and to improve both customer service and member engagement on planning matters, that the budget is amended to enable:

- *The recruitment of an additional Planning Enforcement Officer*
- *The recruitment of a new Planning Liaison (Community & Member Engagement) Officer*

Both additional Officers would be employed on a full-time salary and graded at Scale 5/6.

The costing for each post (£36,650) has been based on the estimated 2022-23 staff costs and is inclusive of basic salary, local allowance, Employer Pension and National Insurance Contributions.

Total cost of amendment would be £73,300 (2022/23) plus an additional £4,000 in start-up costs, allowing for each new officer to be issued with laptops, docking stations, screens, licences, etc. to facilitate agile working.

This amendment will be funded from:

The Town Pier & Pontoon Reserve of £135,980 should be transferred into the Planning Policy Reserve, rather than into the Climate Change Reserve.

This would see the revised Planning Policy Reserve stand at a total of: £568,870

The year one cost of this amendment £73,300 + £4k start-up costs will be funded from drawing on the now amended Planning Policy Reserve.

The year two cost of this amendment £74,770 (which includes a 2% inflationary increase) will be funded from drawing on the now amended Planning Policy Reserve.

From year three onwards, the two additional posts will be funded from savings:

The Community Directorate (Specifically found from Community Events & Engagement activities)

<i>Community Engagement G094/34504</i>	<i>£11,000</i>
<i>Community Events G209/34355</i>	<i>£20,000</i>
<i>St George's Arts Centre Events G259/70230</i>	<i>£20,000</i>
<i>Match Funding (to attract external funds) G259/34272</i>	<i>£15,000</i>

With the remaining balance met from the Planning Policy Reserve.

Impact on the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

The funding of the amendment is set out in the table below:

<i>Year</i>	<i>MTFP Year</i>	<i>Total cost of proposed amendment £</i>	<i>Planning Policy Reserve Funding £</i>	<i>Service Codes £</i>	<i>Total funding for proposed amendment £</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2022/23</i>	<i>77,300</i>	<i>77,300</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>77,300</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>2023/24</i>	<i>74,770</i>	<i>74,770</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>74,770</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>2024/25</i>	<i>76,270</i>	<i>10,270</i>	<i>66,000</i>	<i>76,270</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>2025/26</i>	<i>77,800</i>	<i>11,800</i>	<i>66,000</i>	<i>77,800</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>2026/27</i>	<i>79,360</i>	<i>13,360</i>	<i>66,000</i>	<i>79,360</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>2027/28</i>	<i>80,950</i>	<i>14,950</i>	<i>66,000</i>	<i>80,950</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>2028/29</i>	<i>82,570</i>	<i>16,570</i>	<i>66,000</i>	<i>82,570</i>
<i>8</i>	<i>2029/30</i>	<i>84,220</i>	<i>18,220</i>	<i>66,000</i>	<i>84,220</i>
<i>9</i>	<i>2030/31</i>	<i>85,900</i>	<i>19,900</i>	<i>66,000</i>	<i>85,900</i>

The amendment would remove funding of £135,980 planned for the Climate Change Reserve, with this instead being directed to the Planning Policy Reserve.

The year one cost of the amendment could be met from the amended Planning Policy Reserve with no impact on the activity intended to be funded by the Reserve. In year two, only £58,680 of the redirected funding to the Planning Policy Reserve

would be available to meet the cost of the amendment. The balance of £16,090 in year 2 and the draw from the Reserve in year 3 onwards would be diverting funds from the activity intended be met from the Reserve, the purpose of which is “To meet the financial liabilities arising from the development and maintenance of the Gravesham Local Development Scheme”.

There would be an ongoing reduction in the annual funding available to deliver Community Events & Engagement activities.

Approval, comments and sign-off of the Section 151 Officer:

I can confirm that I have examined the amendment put forward by the Conservative Group to the proposed General Fund Revenue Budget for 2022/23. The amendment would continue to produce a balanced revenue budget for 2022/23.

The amendment includes recurring expenditure, the funding of which has been considered and reflected. It has been specifically costed and is therefore considered to be a sufficiently robust estimates to be included in the budget.

The amendment would enable the Community Directorate to fully assess in years one and two how the proposed budget reductions (specifically from community events & engagement activities) could be delivered and any impact on such activity.

The proposal is balanced from 2024/25 only by the use of the Planning Policy Reserve. The use of the Reserve for this purpose is not currently in line with the reason for holding the Reserve.

*Sarah Parfitt
Director (Corporate Services)*

Following a debate, the amendment was put to the meeting and declared to be lost by 22 votes to 18:-

For the motion	Against the motion	Abstain
Cllrs: D Ashenden, Aslam, Bains, Broadley, Dibben, A Elliott, E Elliott, Harding, Hills, Hoskins, Jassal, Lane, Meade, Morton, Pritchard, Rice, Tiran and Wardle.	The Worshipful the Mayor Cllrs: Burden, Bungar, Caller, Croxton, Francis, Gow, Hayre, Khabra, Mochrie-Cox, Morley, Mulheran, Rana, C Rolles, L Rolles, Sangha, Scollard, Singh, Sullivan, Thandi, Thompson and Wallace.	Cllrs: Craske and Pearton.

The substantive motion was put to the meeting and declared to be carried by 23 votes to 18:-

For the motion	Against the motion	Abstain
The Worshipful the Mayor Cllrs: Burden, Bungar, Caller, Craske, Croxton, Francis, Gow, Hayre, Khabra, Mochrie-Cox, Morley, Mulheran, Rana, C Rolles, L Rolles, Sangha, Scollard, Singh, Sullivan, Thandi, Thompson and Wallace.	Cllrs: D Ashenden, Aslam, Bains, Broadley, Dibben, A Elliott, E Elliott, Harding, Hills, Hoskins, Jassal, Lane, Meade, Morton, Pritchard, Rice, Tiran and Wardle.	Cllr: Pearton.

It was therefore resolved that:-

1. It be noted that on 5 January 2022 the Director (Corporate Services) calculated;
 - (a) the Council Tax Base 2022-23 for the whole Council area as **34,829.66** Band D equivalent properties, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011.
 - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as set out below;

Part of the Council's area:	Units
Cobham	671.13
Higham	1,583.41
Luddesdown	104.58
Meopham	3,071.07
Shorne	1,154.76
Vigo	717.40
Gravesham & Northfleet	27,527.31
Total	34,829.66
2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022-23 (excluding Parish precepts) is £7,592,170 (£217.98 per Band D Property).
3. That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2022-23 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011:
 - (a) £74,838,850 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.

- (b) £66,774,820 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- (c) £8,064,030 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
- (d) £231.53 being the amount at 3(c) above, all divided by Item 1a above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
- (e) £471,860 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (f) £217.98 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item 1a above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
- (g) Part of the Council's area:
Parish of:
- | | £ |
|------------|--------|
| Cobham | 270.13 |
| Higham | 295.98 |
| Luddesdown | 287.84 |
| Meopham | 263.08 |
| Shorne | 254.55 |
| Vigo | 392.66 |

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for the dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(h) Part of the Council's area

Parish of:	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cobham	180.09	210.10	240.12	270.13	330.16	390.19	450.22	540.26
Higham	197.32	230.21	263.09	295.98	361.75	427.53	493.30	591.96
Luddesdown	191.89	223.88	255.86	287.84	351.80	415.77	479.73	575.68
Meopham	175.39	204.62	233.85	263.08	321.54	380.00	438.47	526.16
Shorne	169.70	197.98	226.27	254.55	311.12	367.68	424.25	509.10
Vigo	261.77	305.40	349.03	392.66	479.92	567.18	654.43	785.32
All other parts	145.32	169.54	193.76	217.98	266.42	314.86	363.30	435.96

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3(f) and 3(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

Note: During the debate, the Mayor drew attention to the time remaining and stated that under Council Procedure Rule 12 she would extend the time allowed for the remaining business to be concluded.

59. Revised Shadow Cabinet - Conservative Group - for information.

The Council noted the revised Shadow Cabinet.

60. Appointments to Outside Body

Resolved that Councillor Anthony Pritchard to be re-appointed to the Elizabeth Huggins Cottages Charity for a four year term.

61. To consider questions from Members of the Council of which notice has been given under Council Procedure Rule 14.

No questions had been received.

62. To receive the Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor invited Members to attend her Curry and Quiz Night on 30 March 2022 and Dinner Dance on 6 May 2022.

The Mayor invited those present to join her in the Parlour for refreshments.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 10.40 pm