

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2016  
ADJOURNED TO 3 JANUARY 2017**

**Present** Councillor Mrs Wilson (Chairman), and  
**3 January** Councillors Barned, Mrs Blackmore, Boughton, Brice,  
**2017:** English, Fermor, Garland, Mrs Gooch, Harper, Harvey,  
Harwood, McLoughlin, Perry and Pickett

149. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies had been received from Councillors Cox, Powell and Round.

150. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:-

Councillor English for Councillor Cox  
Councillor Barned for Councillor Powell  
Councillor Perry for Councillor Round

151. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

152. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

153. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Members apart from Councillor Barned stated that they had been lobbied on the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals 2017/18.

154. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT -  
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET PROPOSALS 2017/18

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals 2017/18.

Members noted that there was a shortfall of £4 million on the budget over the next 5 years. The current budget proposals provided a cumulative saving of £3.2 million. If the savings were adopted, this would allow a

balanced budget to be set in 2017/18 since the budget gap of £1.5 million was covered by proposed savings of £1.5 million. However, further work would be required to identify means of closing the budget gap over the five year period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy as a whole.

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement referred to the email received from representatives of the Kent Association of Local Councils which made reference to Local Council Tax Support funding. Members were reminded that the Council agreed in March 2016 that Local Council Tax Support funding would be removed in 2017/18 as the Council itself would no longer receive money from central government to fund it through the Revenue Support Grant.

However, it was proposed that the Parish Services Scheme should be maintained for 2017/18 and a review of the position for future years would be carried out by Communities, Housing and Environment Committee during the course of the year.

In response to questions from Members, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement advised that:-

- The contingency sum of £200,000 had been taken out of the budget in 2016/17 as a temporary expedient and it should be put back in as soon as possible
- A review of the governance of the Museum was taking place and this might provide an opportunity to consider its future budget
- The Committee could recommend that the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee be asked to review the Museum growth item
- The figures for 2020-21 were subject to a lot of uncertainties, therefore it was appropriate to build in some protection
- A paper would be circulated to Members on the item 'Additional Responsibilities'
- 'Other Income' encompassed all other incomes of the Council including planning fees, property investments, shared services etc
- Income from the Community Infrastructure Levy offered considerable future potential and therefore the Council should put in adequate resources to ensure its prompt introduction
- In terms of economic development, there was a need to pursue closer working with other authorities

During the discussion it was suggested that recommendation 3 be amended to read:-

"That the remaining budget proposals as set out in Appendix B to the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement be noted

which would be considered by the relevant Service Committees during the course of January 2017 and that the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee review the growth item and the benefits that it would provide and whether that is justified”.

When put to the vote, the motion was carried.

Voting: 14 – For, 1 – Against, 0 - Abstentions

Following comments from Members, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement advised that:-

- It was good practice to budget on a 5 year basis and that Members should be thinking about what the Council needs to do to close the budget gap.
- A business rates revaluation would be implemented on 1 April 2017 and the most up to date possible information about business rates income would be included in the projections to be presented at the meeting of the Committee in February.
- A breakdown in terms of the number of new dwellings during 2016/17 (including historical data) would be included in the Council Tax Base report due to come to the 18 January Committee meeting.
- The inflationary figure included small items of growth, price increases, service delivery changes, new responsibilities from central government etc.

During discussions it was suggested that recommendation 1 be amended to read:-

“That the Committee agrees to plan on the basis of the updated Strategic Revenue Projections set out at Appendix A over a 3 year period”. This was then put to the vote, this motion was not carried.

Voting: 3 – For, 12 – Against, 0 - Abstentions

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Committee agrees to plan on the basis of the updated Strategic Revenue Projections as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement and requires each Service Committee to demonstrate how its budget proposals for 2017/18 – 2021/22 respond to the priorities expressed in the budget consultation and specifically in relation to Community Safety and Development, Sports & Recreation and Culture and Tourism;

Voting: 8 – For, 6 – Against, 1 - Abstentions

- 2) That the budget proposals for services within the remit of the Committee as set out in Appendix B to the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement be agreed;

Voting: 14 – For, 0 – Against, 0 – Abstentions

- 3) That the remaining budget proposals as set out in Appendix B to the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement be noted which would be considered by the relevant Service Committees during the course of January 2017 and that the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee review the growth item and the benefits that it would provide and whether that is justified.

Voting: 8 – For, 6 – Against, 1 – Abstentions

Councillor English left the meeting at 8.40 p.m. before voting took place on Recommendation 2.

155. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 9 p.m.