

Extraordinary Council – 16 February 2010

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **16 February 2010** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr A Humphries
Vice Chairman: Cllr D G Stansby

Cllr Mrs P Aves	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr C I Black	Cllr Mrs J A Mockford
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher	Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr J P Cottis	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr S P Smith
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn	Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr K J Gordon	Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr J Thomass
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill	Cllr P F A Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs R Brown, P A Capon, Mrs T J Capon, M R Carter, Mrs L M Cox, T Livings, C J Lumley, Mrs J R Lumley, M Maddocks, J R F Mason, P R Robinson and Mrs B J Wilkins.

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	-	Chief Executive
R J Honey	-	Corporate Director (Internal Services)
G Woolhouse	-	Corporate Director (External Services)
Y Woodward	-	Head of Finance, Audit & Performance Management
S Worthington	-	Committee Administrator

39 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX 2010/11

Council considered the report of the Head of Finance, Audit & Performance Management on the level of Council Tax for 2010/11. It was noted that Essex Police Authority had confirmed that its final precept figure was £132.12 for a Band D property, an increase on the provisional figure of £132.03.

The Leader of the Council made the following statement:-

“Chairman and, through you, Councillors, members of the public and press.

I am delighted to present this, my sixth budget, as Leader of this Conservative Administration.

Rochford District Council has identified a clear set of priorities of making a difference to our people, our community, our environment and our local economy. We have continued to uphold these priorities and have not let services slip even though our spending plans have been constrained by the impact of the economic downturn on the levels of income.

Once again, the restraint in public funding will make the financial position of all local authorities much more difficult. Although Rochford will receive just over £5million for 2010/11, which is a 2.2% increase, the Government is, once again, withholding grant totalling £114,000 from the Authority to give to councils that would otherwise have not received the minimum level of grant due.

Although the government grant settlement was a slight improvement over previous years, Rochford is still the 2nd lowest funded per head in Essex.

I am proposing an increase in the Rochford District Council element of council tax of 1.96%, equivalent to just under 7 pence per week for households living in a Band D rated property. This means that for a Band D property, the annual council tax relating to Rochford District Council will be £201.15 per year or £3.87 per week. I emphasise that this is the lowest Council Tax rise since this tax was introduced in 1993.

Although Rochford District, and indeed the rest of the UK, is still suffering from the effects of the economic downturn, we are still committed to providing an excellent service to our residents and partners. With this in mind we aim “to make Rochford District a place which provides opportunities for the best quality of life for all who live, work and visit here”.

Since 2007/08 our income from investments, building control fees, planning, parking fees and permits and land searches has reduced by almost £1m per year. We are hopeful, however, that although investment income is estimated to reduce further, the other income streams may start to pick up as the economy and property markets start to recover.

During the last budget process, the Council considered other income streams that could be increased or introduced. From 1st April 2009 a charge was introduced for the collection of bulky waste. On forward projections it was thought that this would bring in an estimated additional £110,000 per annum. However, so far this year this charge has netted only around £28,000 with a projected income of £36,000 to the end of the civic year. It is disappointing that such a small amount of income was received but residents are either not replacing old or worn out furniture or prefer to make their own disposal arrangements. It was envisaged by some that fly tipping may increase as a consequence, but that has not been the case.

So now let's look at some good things.

The Council has prioritised its services and identified its key priorities for the coming year which include helping local businesses and the local economy, reducing the impact of the Council on the environment, Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park and extending Hall Road cemetery.

During the year the Council, together with local partners, put together an initiative called ‘Shop at my Local’. This campaign incorporates a range of projects and events to attract people to the main shopping areas in the

District. The initiative encourages residents to rediscover local produce and also helps to sustain local traders to safeguard local jobs. The project rewards residents through exclusive discount vouchers and aims to raise awareness of the need to use and sustain our local shopping areas and also to enjoy the shopping experience. This initiative has been shortlisted for a National Award by the Local Government Information Unit, which addresses how local authorities can build strong local communities whilst preserving the iconic features of their landscape. This project has made a good impact to date and to be nominated for a national award is excellent news.

In 2009 the Council allocated £20,000 to run Rochford in Business. As a result of this, 6 start up businesses in Rochford District received grants to help them set up or grow. The grants were allocated to such things as training, website development and equipment. In addition, I told you last year about the Rochford Business Network that was also being set up. Nearly 300 businesses have signed up and there were over 100 attendees at the 2 business breakfasts that were organised.

The Council is committed to making Rochford District one of the greenest places to live in the country and so has developed and approved a Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy with an associated action plan, called the ClimateCO₂de. The code aims to improve natural resource and efficiency both within Council operations and out in the community and heralds the start of a programme of services that will make it easier for our communities to act in more environmentally conscious ways.

One of the first actions we took was to offer a free thermal imaging service. The trial service was offered free and has been taken up by 78 households. The colour image taken shows where energy is being lost and, therefore, money wasted.

As you are aware, in July 2008, after consulting with residents, the Council launched its Maximise Recycling Scheme. This saw the expansion in the range of materials that could be collected from the kerbside. Since the launch of the new scheme, the recycling rate has remained well above 60%, although this did drop slightly in December due to the adverse weather. I am delighted to report that the Recycling Team gained national recognition after winning a National Recycling Award. The Council won in the Local Authority Target Success category which recognises local authorities right across the country that have achieved high levels of waste reduction and that have excelled with their recycling and waste minimisation targets. This is a fantastic achievement, not only for the Council but for our contractors SITA Suez and especially for our residents whose efforts and enthusiasm to recycle meant we more than met the targets we set ourselves.

Our lovely Windmill in Rayleigh celebrated its 200th birthday this year and hundreds of people joined in the celebrations. The event was a major success and the highlight of a year long programme of activities celebrating the heritage of the Windmill. I must mention here that the Windmill has, this year, been granted museum and quality assured visitor attraction

accreditation and has also won an award for 'best project' at the Essex Museums awards and received a special mention for the Sails in the Wind project. The windmill still remains a popular and very unusual wedding venue and there were 23 weddings held last year.

During the year the Council was subject to an annual Use of Resources assessment. The criteria for assessment were changed this year and the work done to provide evidence was onerous, so we were delighted that we were in the top 26% of Councils and awarded a 3 out of a possible 4. Our external auditors were required to assess us in three main areas: managing finances, governing the business and managing resources - so to gain a score of 3 was a real achievement. It means that we are seen to exceed minimum requirements and perform well.

So, Chairman, we work within limited budgets, but we still achieve!

At this point I would usually tell you about specific new projects that we have earmarked for funding through the budget but, in light of the current financial circumstances, we will be focusing on maintaining and continuing to improve our service delivery and working on key strategies which, if we get them right, will provide the framework for our future prosperity and wellbeing.

Our corporate priorities for the coming year will, therefore, be based around:-

- improving our Council Tax and Benefits capacity
- progressing the joint area action plan for Southend Airport and its surrounding environment
- progressing the 3 town centre studies for Hockley, Rochford and Rayleigh
- progressing the Local Development Framework core strategy
- continuing to deliver target savings
- continuing to improve service access and delivery for our community
- continuing to develop and consolidate our partnership arrangements via the Local Strategic Partnership and other partnerships, such as the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, to develop and improve service provision to our communities particularly around our ageing population
- implementing the ClimateCO₂de mentioned earlier
- implementing the Council's new Economic Development Strategy
- Achieving the 'Excellence' level of the Equality Standard for local government
- Achieving the Member Development Charter

Finally, I would like to talk a little bit about our proposed savings. By 2012/13, the Council has a target to reduce overall annual expenditure by £1.5m. Our strategy for achieving this includes a number of areas but will include reviews of existing services and income streams, contract arrangements and organisational delivery as well as more effective management of vacancies and sickness. In addition, we will continue to work with partners, focus on

high priority services and maintain our strong Performance Management culture. We have already invested a great deal of time making savings with minimum impact on the quality of services we deliver to our residents. For example, during 2008/09 we delivered savings of £426,000 and in 2009/10 we estimate we will deliver savings of at least £357,000.

Clearly the task of balancing our books is becoming harder but we are striving to keep any Council Tax rise to a minimum, while seeking to further reduce costs and maintain our services. Throughout the year we will continue to monitor our budgetary position and service delivery so that we can continue to respond to the challenges we face in a very flexible and pragmatic way. My view is that it will get much tougher, both in budgetary and service delivery terms, and we need to be in a position to deal with that.

Chairman, I am proud of the way Members and Officers of this Council construct the budget process, particularly in these difficult times. As an Authority, and one with finite capacity, resources and funds, we continue to respond positively to the requirements of our residents and communities. We can demonstrate a record of continuous improvement and a willingness to work with others as appropriate to deliver.

In conclusion, the total council tax for a Band D property will be:-

Essex County Council	£1,086.75, an increase of 1.9%
Essex Police Authority	£132.12, an increase of 3.02%
Essex Fire Authority	£66.42, an increase of 2.79%
Rochford District Council	£201.15, an increase of 1.96%
Average Parish/Town Council	£32.19, an increase of 7.12%

Total Band D average council tax will be £1,518.63, an increase of £31.93 or 2.15%.

Chairman, I commend the Council Tax for Members' approval".

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- The Council had developed its current vision statement in response to Audit Commission advice that this should clearly reflect what the Council was trying to achieve.
- Parish precepts were not capped; although the precepts of some Parish Councils, notably Rochford Parish Council and Rayleigh Town Council, remained unchanged from last year, it was disappointing that some Parish Councils, for example Sutton Parish Council, who have the highest parish Band D level, had increased their precepts.

Extraordinary Council – 16 February 2010

- Officers would provide Members with details as to how Rochford District Council compared in terms of funding per head with other Councils in the country.
- The declaration of an Air Quality Management Area does not confer any specific enforcement powers to help tackle the pollution problem; this is also the case for Essex County Council and the Environment Agency. The Council can only monitor pollution levels in West Rayleigh and act with partners to try and resolve the problem.
- The Council aspired, by means of the local development framework, to retain the character of the Rochford District.

Tribute was paid to the hard work by the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management and other officers during the past year on finalising the budget for 2010/11 and seeking ways to make the Council more efficient.

On a Motion, moved by Cllr T G Cutmore and seconded by Cllr C I Black, it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the total for economic development is estimated at £281,500.
- (2) That the total for gross expenditure of the District, together with the Parish precepts, be £36,526,542.
- (3) That the total of income for the District Council be £23,998,792.
- (4) That the total net expenditure of the District Council, together with the Parishes, be £12,527,750.
- (5) That the total of the sums payable into the general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates and Government grant, together with adjustments from the collection fund, be £5,201,315.
- (6) That the budget requirement for the year of £12,527,750 less the net income receivable of £5,201,315 which, divided by the tax base of £31,398.81, is equal to £233.33, which is the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- (7) That the total of Parish precepts included within the above is £1,010,668.
- (8) That the Council Tax relating to the District Council without Parish precepts is £201.15.
- (9) That the total tax for both District and Parishes be as set out in the schedule, which is attached at Appendix A to these minutes. These sums are calculated as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year

Extraordinary Council – 16 February 2010

for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (10) That the sums given above for Band D but now shown in the particular valuations bands A-H be as set out in the schedule attached at Appendix B to these minutes.
- (11) That the precepts issued to the Council in respect of Essex County Council, Essex Fire Authority and Essex Police Authority for each valuation band A-H be as set out in the schedule attached at Appendix C to these minutes.
- (12) That the total Council Tax for the area for each valuation band A-H be as set out in Appendix D to these minutes. These are the amounts set as Council Tax for the year 2010/11. (HFAPM)

The meeting closed at 8 pm.

Chairman

Date

If you would like these minutes in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

Appendix A

Total Council Tax for Parish/Town Council and Rochford District Council

	Band D Equivalents	Parish Precept	Parish Charge	District Charge	Total Charge
Ashingdon	1,231.19	41,000	33.30	201.15	234.45
Barling	630.14	36,858	58.49	201.15	259.64
Canewdon	548.86	29,411	53.59	201.15	254.74
Foulness Island	58.39	2,700	46.24	201.15	247.39
Great Wakering	2,010.63	57,000	28.35	201.15	229.50
Hawkwell	4,563.50	136,494	29.91	201.15	231.06
Hockley	3,855.46	195,092	50.60	201.15	251.75
Hullbridge	2,383.87	85,772	35.98	201.15	237.13
Paglesham	100.56	4,000	39.78	201.15	240.93
Rawreth	437.07	10,000	22.88	201.15	224.03
Rayleigh	12,316.47	280,000	22.73	201.15	223.88
Rochford	2,969.22	112,207	37.79	201.15	238.94
Stambridge	238.32	13,950	58.53	201.15	259.68
Sutton	55.13	6,184	112.17	201.15	313.32
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	31,398.81	1,010,668			

Extraordinary Council – 16 February 2010

Appendix B

District and Parish/Town Council Tax by Bands A – H

	Band D	Parish	Parish	District	Total	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND
	Equivalents	Precept	Charge	Charge	Charge	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
						6/9	7/9	8/9	1	11/9	13/9	15/9	2
Ashingdon	1,231.19	41,000	33.30	201.15	229.13	156.30	182.35	208.40	234.45	286.55	338.65	390.75	468.90
Barling	630.14	36,858	58.49	201.15	259.64	173.09	201.94	230.79	259.64	317.34	375.04	432.73	519.28
Canewdon	548.86	29,411	53.59	201.15	254.74	169.83	198.13	226.44	254.74	311.35	367.96	424.57	509.48
Foulness Island	58.39	2,700	46.24	201.15	247.39	164.93	192.41	219.90	247.39	302.37	357.34	412.32	494.78
Great Wakering	2,010.63	57,000	28.35	201.15	229.50	153.00	178.50	204.00	229.50	280.50	331.50	382.50	459.00
Hawkwell	4,563.50	136,494	29.91	201.15	231.06	154.04	179.71	205.39	231.06	282.41	333.75	385.10	462.12
Hockley	3,855.46	195,092	50.60	201.15	251.75	167.83	195.81	223.78	251.75	307.69	363.64	419.58	503.50
Hullbridge	2,383.87	85,772	35.98	201.15	237.13	158.09	184.43	210.78	237.13	289.83	342.52	395.22	474.26
Paglesham	100.56	4,000	39.78	201.15	240.93	160.62	187.39	214.16	240.93	294.47	348.01	401.55	481.86
Rawreth	437.07	10,000	22.88	201.15	224.03	149.35	174.25	199.14	224.03	273.81	323.60	373.38	448.06
Rayleigh	12,316.47	280,000	22.73	201.15	223.88	149.25	174.13	199.00	223.88	273.63	323.38	373.13	447.76
Rochford	2,968.22	112,207	37.79	201.15	238.94	159.29	185.84	212.39	238.94	292.04	345.14	398.23	477.88
Stambridge	238.32	13,950	58.53	201.15	259.68	173.12	201.97	230.83	259.68	317.39	375.09	432.80	519.36
Sutton	55.13	6,184	112.17	201.15	313.32	208.88	243.69	278.51	313.32	382.95	452.57	522.20	626.64
	<u>31,398.81</u>	<u>1,010,668</u>											

Extraordinary Council – 16 February 2010

Appendix C

Precepts for Essex County Council, Essex Fire Authority and Essex Police Authority

County Charge	Police Charge	Fire Charge	Total Charge	BAND A 6/9	BAND B 7/9	BAND C 8/9	BAND D 1	BAND E 11/9	BAND F 13/9	BAND G 15/9	BAND H 2
1,086.75			1,086.75	724.50	845.25	966.00	1,086.75	1,328.25	1,569.75	1,811.25	2,173.50
	132.12		132.12	88.08	102.76	117.44	132.12	161.48	190.84	220.20	264.24
		66.42	66.42	44.28	51.66	59.04	66.42	81.18	95.94	110.70	132.84

Extraordinary Council – 16 February 2010

Appendix D

Total Council Tax by Bands A-H

	Band D	Parish	Parish	District	County	Fire	Police	Total	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND
	Equivalents	Precept	Charge	Charge	Charge	Charge	Charge	Charge	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
									6/9	7/9	8/9	1	11/9	13/9	15/9	2
Ashingdon	1,231.19	41,000	33.30	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,519.74	1,013.16	1,182.02	1,350.88	1,519.74	1,857.46	2,195.18	2,532.90	3,039.48
Barling	630.14	36,858	58.49	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,544.93	1,029.95	1,201.61	1,373.27	1,544.93	1,888.25	2,231.57	2,574.88	3,089.86
Canewdon	548.86	29,411	53.59	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,540.03	1,026.69	1,197.80	1,368.92	1,540.03	1,882.26	2,224.49	2,566.72	3,080.06
Foulness Island	58.39	2,700	46.24	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,532.68	1,021.79	1,192.08	1,362.38	1,532.68	1,873.28	2,213.87	2,554.47	3,065.36
Great Wakering	2,010.63	57,000	28.35	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,514.79	1,009.86	1,178.17	1,346.48	1,514.79	1,851.41	2,188.03	2,524.65	3,029.58
Hawkwell	4,563.50	136,494	29.91	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,516.35	1,010.90	1,179.38	1,347.87	1,516.35	1,853.32	2,190.28	2,527.25	3,032.70
Hockley	3,855.46	195,092	50.60	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,537.04	1,024.69	1,195.48	1,366.26	1,537.04	1,878.60	2,220.17	2,561.73	3,074.08
Hullbridge	2,383.87	85,772	35.98	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,522.42	1,014.95	1,184.10	1,353.26	1,522.42	1,860.74	2,199.05	2,537.37	3,044.84
Paglesham	100.56	4,000	39.78	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,526.22	1,017.48	1,187.06	1,356.64	1,526.22	1,865.38	2,204.54	2,543.70	3,052.44
Rawreth	437.07	10,000	22.88	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,509.32	1,006.21	1,173.92	1,341.62	1,509.32	1,844.72	2,180.13	2,515.53	3,018.64
Rayleigh	12,316.47	280,000	22.73	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,509.17	1,006.11	1,173.80	1,341.48	1,509.17	1,844.54	2,179.91	2,515.28	3,018.34
Rochford	2,969.22	112,207	37.79	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,524.23	1,016.15	1,185.51	1,354.87	1,524.23	1,862.95	2,201.67	2,540.38	3,048.46
Stambridge	238.32	13,950	58.53	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,544.97	1,029.98	1,201.64	1,373.31	1,544.97	1,888.30	2,231.62	2,574.95	3,089.94
Sutton	55.13	6,184	112.17	201.15	1,086.75	66.42	132.12	1,598.61	1,065.74	1,243.36	1,420.99	1,598.61	1,953.86	2,309.10	2,664.35	3,197.22
	<u>31,398.81</u>	<u>1,010,668</u>														