

Extraordinary Council – 21 February 2007

Minutes of the meeting of **Extraordinary Council** held on **21 February 2007** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Vice-Chairman: Cllr K A Gibbs

Cllr R A Amner

Cllr Mrs P Aves

Cllr C I Black

Cllr Mrs R Brown

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher

Cllr J P Cottis

Cllr T G Cutmore

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn

Cllr T E Goodwin

Cllr K J Gordon

Cllr J E Grey

Cllr Mrs S A Harper

Cllr K H Hudson

Cllr A J Humphries

Cllr T Livings

Cllr J R F Mason

Cllr Mrs J A Mockford

Cllr R A Oatham

Cllr J M Pullen

Cllr P K Savill

Cllr S P Smith

Cllr D G Stansby

Cllr Mrs M A Starke

Cllr M G B Starke

Cllr J Thomass

Cllr P F A Webster

Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P A Capon, Mrs T J Capon, C A Hungate, Mrs L Hungate, C J Lumley, Mrs J R Lumley, D Merrick and C G Seagers.

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 and Performance Management

J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

45 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX 2007/08

Council considered the report of the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management on the level of Council Tax for 2007/08.

The leader of the Council made the following statement:-

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

This is the third budget that I am presenting as Leader of this Conservative Administration.

I am proposing an increase in the Rochford District Council element of council tax of 4.9%, equivalent to just 16 pence per week for a Band D rated householder. Whilst I do believe that we need to keep any tax increase as low as possible, we need to continue to respond to the needs of our community and the challenges we face. We cannot afford to stand still. If we do, we will simply go backwards over a period of time and fail to meet our residents' growing expectations.

I am pleased to say that, assuming no adverse changes in Government grant(s) and similar increases in council tax in future years, our budget is now sustainable over the medium term. It allows for some provision for what I consider to be inevitable increases for new environmental contracts around refuse collection, street cleaning and grounds maintenance in 2008. In particular, it is likely the costs of recycling will increase significantly as we strive to meet our targets and to reduce landfill.

I will, as always, mention Government grant. This year, due to a new grant formula, it has increased by £347,000. From this we have met:-

- The cost of the enhanced concessionary fares scheme amounting to an additional £90,000 for 2007/08 and a total increase per year of £360,000 compared to the original scheme.
- Costs to meet the additional requirements of the Elections Act which are likely to amount to around £60,000
- Costs around implementing the smoke free legislation

Although increase in grant is welcomed and has helped to balance our budget, we remain the second lowest funded authority in Essex and 31st lowest in England. In addition, the Government is withholding £148,000 worth of grant from Rochford District to give to richer councils that might otherwise have lost out from the grant formula. This is money that the Government's own assessment indicates we are due.

I still prefer to draw the comparison between Brentwood and ourselves whereby we would receive an additional £1.2m worth of grant if we had their allocation.

It is easy to complain about lack of funding, no matter how justified. I would prefer instead that this Council concentrates on its efforts in overcoming these difficulties.

As I outlined last year, over the past few years we have been extremely successful in leveraging additional funding to the benefit of our community. This has supported projects such as the Windmill, Websters Way, Industrial Estate enhancement and additional benefit support to those most in need.

We have made good progress over the past year on a number of key projects for the Authority: -

- In partnership with what is now Virgin Active we opened the £3m plus sports centre in Rayleigh which is already exceeding its targets. How many Districts the size of Rochford can boast such achievements!
- Beside the superbly restored windmill in Rayleigh, now a focal point for the town, we opened a sensory garden in the spring. The Windmill has already attracted over 2,000 visitors.
- We have completed the refurbishment works to Websters Way and the car park, both of which have complemented the work we have done over a period to maintain Rayleigh as an attractive place to work and shop.
- We have improved our recycling rates by continuing to roll out kerbside recycling to all residents and introducing new initiatives to improve recycling levels in the District, such as moving to working in partnership with schools and providing recycling collections at mobile home parks.
- We have secured the purchase of additional land to extend Rochford Cemetery.
- We have continued to develop the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park and will be pursuing the purchase of additional land to extend this important local facility.
- We have launched our environmental campaign, joined by members of the public and local church groups, which has provided additional cleaning of “hot spots” and encouraged our residents to be our eyes and ears to report issues such as litter, fly tipping, abandoned cars and graffiti.
- We completed our consultation process with tenants during the Summer and received a resounding positive vote to go ahead with the creation of a new Rochford Housing Association to run the District Council’s housing in partnership with Sanctuary/Hereward Housing Association. This will bring significant improvements to tenants’ properties. This would not have been possible if they remained under Council control, due to the different funding methods allowed by Government. Over the next 10 years alone, the transfer will ensure £40m is invested in homes and services for tenants.
- We have continued to improve our council tax and benefits service by working with Capita. This now allows contact by the public from 8 am to 8 pm Monday to Friday and from 8 am to 12 noon on Saturdays. This innovation has been a major contributor to our raising the performance standards in that service.

So, Chairman, we may have small budgets, but we do achieve!

What of 2007/8?

As I said at the start, I do not want Rochford District to stagnate. We must work with Thames Gateway South Essex to ensure Rochford does provide the facilities that will enable visitors to appreciate the wide variety of attractions we have on offer. We need to continue to promote our offer as the “Green” part of the Gateway.

We need to realise our long term ambition for the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park. As yet it is in its early formative years and is not as easily accessible to the public as I would like it to be. Now is the time to drive forward on the land purchases necessary to realise the enormous potential of this major asset. It will take time and energy, but this is a key project for the Council as we continue to develop our “Green” portfolio.

Also, as part of our vision, we must continue to build on our successes in rolling out kerbside recycling. We have been successful in attracting grant funding and we must use this to strive to increase usage of the current scheme. However, difficult decisions will have to be taken if we are to move waste reduction and recycling up to the next level. Central Government is setting increasingly stretching targets in this area and we need to ensure that we are in a position to respond positively.

Although the Government is funding free bus concessionary passes, this is for travel within the Rochford District area only. We continue to fund an Essex wide scheme so that our residents’ passes can be used throughout the Essex area.

Our record on the environment is good, but we cannot be complacent. We will continue to make resources available and work with private landowners to tackle issues such as targeting graffiti removal. Our main challenge over the coming 12 months, however, will be to work towards the new environmental contracts for waste collection, street cleansing and grounds maintenance.

To continue to assist the more vulnerable members of our community, we will be increasing our funding of the gardening and handyman service. We have supported this initiative for a number of years and its value within our ageing community continues to grow.

The Council also recognises that we can do more to provide facilities for the young people of the District. With this in mind, we will start looking in detail at developing facilities in the Great Wakering area. We will be working with the young people to make sure that we take on board what they would like to see in place.

With our fellow District Councils, Essex County Council and other public partners, we will continue to make our contribution towards the Local Area

Agreements, which aim to achieve local solutions for local needs and achieve the standards set by government.

To achieve all of these initiatives we will be adding around £1/2 m to our annual budget.

The budget strategy provides for the identification of £150,000 per annum as part of the Gershon efficiency savings demanded by Government. The irony is that, with our levels of funding, we need to find these savings whether or not there was a Gershon requirement.

Turning now to our capital programme, the completion and opening of the Rayleigh Leisure Centre in May was our landmark project for last year. The next step is to develop the remaining open space around the Centre so that it can be used and add to the facilities available in Rayleigh. We have completed the land purchase for the extension of the Rochford Cemetery and will now be working towards developing the site.

We will also be seizing the opportunity to increase our land holdings at Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park, although this may require the use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers over time.

There are many other things we would like to do, and, if we had the same level of grant as some of our neighbours, we would do them. We have had to prioritise and some of the things we would like to have done will be held in abeyance.

Housing rents will once again increase in accordance with central Government direction.

Chairman, I am proud of the way Members of this Council construct the budget process. I think others could learn from us. Although it is a large Conservative administration, we do listen to our colleagues of the opposition group and Independent Members. They have participated fully in the budget discussions. It is in this way that Members work together to benefit the District and its residents.

Our council tax will increase for a Band D property from £170.91 a year to £179.28. I repeat, this is an increase of around 16 pence per week.

Our share of the council tax bill for a resident is one eighth of the total.

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

Essex County Council	£1,003.95– an increase of 4.54%
Essex Police Authority	£116.46 – an increase of 4.95%
Essex Fire Authority	£59.94 – an increase of 2.94%
Rochford District Council	£179.28 – an increase of 4.9%

Average Parish/Town Council £29.06 – a reduction of 0.14%.

Total Band D average council tax will be £1,388.69 – an increase of £59.09, which is just under 4.5 % (4.44%).

I commend the council tax for Members' approval."

During discussion, specific reference was made to the value of the Rayleigh Leisure Centre Project and work to tackle graffiti across the District and develop facilities for young people in the Great Wakering area. Reference was also made to the effective background work undertaken by Members and officers in budget strategy development. Members concurred with the observation of the Leader of the Council that thanks should be extended to officers for their diligent work on the Council's finances over the last year.

Resolved

- (1) That the total for economic development is estimated at £105,600.
- (2) That the total for gross expenditure of the District together with the Parish precepts be £30,138,166.
- (3) That the total of income for the District Council be £18,881,700.
- (4) That the total net expenditure of the District Council together with the Parishes be £11,256,466.
- (5) That the total of the sums payable into the general fund in respect of redistributed non domestic rates, revenue support grant, together with adjustments from the collection fund be £4,828,761.
- (6) That the budget requirement for the year of £11,256,466 less the net income receivable of £4,828,761 which, divided by the tax base of 30,851.63 is equal to £208.34, which is the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- (7) That the total of Parish precepts included within the above is £896,625.
- (8) That the Council Tax relating to the District Council without Parish precepts is £179.28.
- (9) That the total tax for both District and Parishes be as set out in the schedule which is attached as Appendix A to these minutes. These sums are calculated as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
- (10) That the sums given for Band D but now shown in the particular valuations bands A–H be as set out in the schedule attached as Appendix B to these minutes.

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- (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 as 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 2007/08.

The meeting closed at 7:49 pm.

Chairman

Date

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

APPENDIX A

	<u>2007/08</u> Band D Equivalents	Parish Precept	Parish Charge	District Charge	Total Charge
Ashingdon	1,217. 16	33,830	27. 79	179. 28	207. 07
Barling	626. 16	28,326	45. 24	179. 28	224. 52
Canewdon	547. 53	14,500	26. 48	179. 28	205. 76
Foulness Island	66. 50	2,700	40. 60	179. 28	219. 88
Great Wakering	1,965. 28	50,000	25. 44	179. 28	204. 72
Hawkwell	4,498. 42	117,595	26. 14	179. 28	205. 42
Hockley	3,790. 99	162,352	42. 83	179. 28	222. 11
Hullbridge	2,350. 16	77,412	32. 94	179. 28	212. 22
Paglesham	103. 44	3,500	33. 84	179. 28	213. 12
Rawreth	428. 89	7,750	18. 07	179. 28	197. 35
Rayleigh	12,035. 11	280,000	23. 27	179. 28	202. 55
Rochford	2,937. 93	105,354	35. 86	179. 28	215. 14
Stambridge	230. 65	8,800	38. 15	179. 28	217. 43
Sutton	53. 41	4,506	84. 37	179. 28	263. 65
	<u>30,851. 63</u>	<u>896,625. 16</u>			

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APPENDIX B

						BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
	Band D Equivalents	Parish Precept	Parish Charge	District Charge	Total Charge	6/9	7/9	8/9	1	11/9	13/9	15/9	2
Ashingdon	1,217. 16	33,830	27. 79	179. 28	207. 07	138. 05	161. 05	184. 06	207. 07	253. 09	299. 10	345. 12	414. 14
Barling	626. 16	28,326	45. 24	179. 28	224. 52	149. 68	174. 63	199. 57	224. 52	274. 41	324. 31	374. 20	449. 04
Canewdon	547. 53	14,500	26. 48	179. 28	205. 76	137. 17	160. 04	182. 90	205. 76	251. 48	297. 21	342. 93	411. 52
Foulness Island	66. 50	2,700	40. 60	179. 28	219. 88	146. 59	171. 02	195. 45	219. 88	268. 74	317. 60	366. 47	439. 76
Great Wakering	1,965. 28	50,000	25. 44	179. 28	204. 72	136. 48	159. 23	181. 97	204. 72	250. 21	295. 71	341. 20	409. 44
Hawkwell	4,498. 42	117,595	26. 14	179. 28	205. 42	136. 95	159. 77	182. 60	205. 42	251. 07	296. 72	342. 37	410. 84
Hockley	3,790. 99	162,352	42. 83	179. 28	222. 11	148. 07	172. 75	197. 43	222. 11	271. 47	320. 83	370. 18	444. 22
Hullbridge	2,350. 16	77,412	32. 94	179. 28	212. 22	141. 48	165. 06	188. 64	212. 22	259. 38	306. 54	353. 70	424. 44
Paglesham	103. 44	3,500	33. 84	179. 28	213. 12	142. 08	165. 76	189. 44	213. 12	260. 48	307. 84	355. 20	426. 24
Rawreth	428. 89	7,750	18. 07	179. 28	197. 35	131. 57	153. 49	175. 42	197. 35	241. 21	285. 06	328. 92	394. 70
Rayleigh	12,035. 11	280,000	23. 27	179. 28	202. 55	135. 03	157. 54	180. 04	202. 55	247. 56	292. 57	337. 58	405. 10
Rochford	2,937. 93	105,354	35. 86	179. 28	215. 14	143. 43	167. 33	191. 24	215. 14	262. 95	310. 76	358. 57	430. 28
Stambridge	230. 65	8,800	38. 15	179. 28	217. 43	144. 95	169. 11	193. 27	217. 43	265. 75	314. 07	362. 38	434. 86
Sutton	53. 41	4,506	84. 37	179. 28	263. 65	175. 77	205. 06	234. 36	263. 65	322. 24	380. 83	439. 42	527. 30
	<u>30,851. 63</u>	<u>896,625</u>											

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APPENDIX C

County	Police	Fire	Total	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
Charge	Charge	Charge	Charge	6/9	7/9	8/9	1	11/9	13/9	15/9	2
1,003. 95			1,003. 95	669. 30	780. 85	892. 40	1,003. 95	1,227. 05	1,450. 15	1,673. 25	2,007. 90
	116. 46		116. 46	77. 64	90. 58	103. 52	116. 46	142. 34	168. 22	194. 10	232. 92
		59. 94	59. 94	39. 96	46. 62	53. 28	59. 94	73. 26	86. 58	99. 90	119. 88

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APPENDIX D

									BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND	BAND
	Band D	Parish	Parish	District	County	Fire	Police	Total	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	Equivalents	Precept	Charge	Charge	Charge	Charge	Charge	Charge	6/9	7/9	8/9	1	11/9	13/9	15/9	2
Ashingdon	1,217. 16	33,830	27. 79	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,387. 42	924. 95	1,079. 10	1,233. 26	1,387. 42	1,695. 74	2,004. 05	2,312. 37	2,774. 84
Barling	626. 16	28,326	45. 24	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,404. 87	936. 58	1,092. 68	1,248. 77	1,404. 87	1,717. 06	2,029. 26	2,341. 45	2,809. 74
Canewdon	547. 53	14,500	26. 48	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,386. 11	924. 07	1,078. 09	1,232. 10	1,386. 11	1,694. 13	2,002. 16	2,310. 18	2,772. 22
Foulness Island	66. 50	2,700	40. 60	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,400. 23	933. 49	1,089. 07	1,244. 65	1,400. 23	1,711. 39	2,022. 55	2,333. 72	2,800. 46
Great Wakering	1,965. 28	50,000	25. 44	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,385. 07	923. 38	1,077. 28	1,231. 17	1,385. 07	1,692. 86	2,000. 66	2,308. 45	2,770. 14
Hawkwell	4,498. 42	117,595	26. 14	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,385. 77	923. 85	1,077. 82	1,231. 80	1,385. 77	1,693. 72	2,001. 67	2,309. 62	2,771. 54
Hockley	3,790. 99	162,352	42. 83	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,402. 46	934. 97	1,090. 80	1,246. 63	1,402. 46	1,714. 12	2,025. 78	2,337. 43	2,804. 92
Hullbridge	2,350. 16	77,412	32. 94	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,392. 57	928. 38	1,083. 11	1,237. 84	1,392. 57	1,702. 03	2,011. 49	2,320. 95	2,785. 14
Paglesham	103. 44	3,500	33. 84	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,393. 47	928. 98	1,083. 81	1,238. 64	1,393. 47	1,703. 13	2,012. 79	2,322. 45	2,786. 94
Rawreth	428. 89	7,750	18. 07	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,377. 70	918. 47	1,071. 54	1,224. 62	1,377. 70	1,683. 86	1,990. 01	2,296. 17	2,755. 40
Rayleigh	12,035. 11	280,000	23. 27	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,382. 90	921. 93	1,075. 59	1,229. 24	1,382. 90	1,690. 21	1,997. 52	2,304. 83	2,765. 80
Rochford	2,937. 93	105,354	35. 86	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,395. 49	930. 33	1,085. 38	1,240. 44	1,395. 49	1,705. 60	2,015. 71	2,325. 82	2,790. 98
Stambridge	230. 65	8,800	38. 15	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,397. 78	931. 85	1,087. 16	1,242. 47	1,397. 78	1,708. 40	2,019. 02	2,329. 63	2,795. 56
Sutton	53. 41	4,506	84. 37	179. 28	1,003. 95	59. 94	116. 46	1,444. 00	962. 67	1,123. 11	1,283. 56	1,444. 00	1,764. 89	2,085. 78	2,406. 67	2,888. 00
	<u>30,851. 63</u>	<u>896,625</u>														