

COUNCIL - 19 February 2002

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **19 February 2002** when there were present: -

Cllr R S Allen (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)

Cllr R Adams
Cllr R A Amner
Cllr Mrs R Brown
Cllr P A Capon
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr D F Flack
Cllr Mrs J E Ford
Cllr Mrs J M Giles
Cllr Mr H L A Glynn
Cllr J E Grey
Cllr J Hall
Cllr D R Helson
Cllr Mrs J Helson
Cllr A Hosking
Cllr Mrs L Hungate

Cllr C C Langlands
Cllr V H Leach
Cllr T Livings
Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr P J Morgan
Cllr S P Smith
Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr P D Stebbing
Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr R E Vingoe
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr P F A Webster
Cllr D A Weir
Cllr Mrs M A Weir

APOLOGIES

Cllrs G Fox, Mrs S J Lemon, JRF Mason and Mrs LIV Phillips.

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	Chief Executive
R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
J Honey	Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration)
D Deeks	Head of Financial Services
A Wyatt	Committee Administrator

70 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2002 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

71 SETTING THE LEVEL OF COUNCIL TAX 2002/2003

Council considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which sought agreement to the level of Council Tax for 2002/2003.

The Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee made the following statement:-

“CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The budget that you have before you tonight was *passed* at the Council meeting of the 7 February. Also at that meeting we agreed the level of Council Tax increase needed to finance it, although regrettably, a special additional percentage increase to progress recycling to another 5000 properties proposed by the Liberal Democrat Group was not supported.

At the same meeting, Council agreed unanimously to enter into a new twenty-year partnership with a leading leisure provider, Holmes Place, for them to manage our leisure facilities. Holmes Place are committed to investing over £7 million into the facilities through the duration of the contract. These improvements will mean our residents will have top class sports and leisure facilities within the District. Within the first two years major improvements will be carried out to Clements Hall Leisure Centre and to the Mill Hall in Rayleigh. The proposals for Mill Hall to become a centre for the promotion of the arts are particularly exciting.

The Council is committed to the provision of a new leisure centre at Park School to be opened by the end of 2005. We will be working in partnership with Holmes Place to build this brand new leisure facility, providing much better services to the people in the west of the District.

Since carrying out the improvements to the Bellingham Lane Car Park it has been an ambition of the Council to open up the Windmill to greater public use. We have made a provision of £65,000 within our Capital Programme to carry out this work. To realise this initiative fully would require significantly greater funding. We are therefore making a bid for a Lottery Heritage Grant in order to complete the project. If we are successful in this it will complement the work being carried out by Holmes Place at the Mill Hall and provide a central attraction in Rayleigh.

Also within our Capital Budget we will be making provision for the continuance of the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park development. In addition we will be carrying out some improvement works at Sweyne Park.

We will also be providing more CCTV in local shopping parades to add to those 4 locations already undertaken during the past year.

As in previous years we are required to carry out a significant number of Central Government initiatives for which we receive inadequate or in

some cases no funding. It is estimated that in next year's budget the cost of these initiatives will exceed £500,000.

In a normal year our estimate for inflation is around £240,000. This year, however, our investment income will reduce by £150,000 owing to low interest rates, which has a major impact on our budget.

Owing to the way Council Tax is calculated, in Rochford, a 1% increase in our expenditure requires a 2% increase in Council Tax. This always places restrictions on our ability to spend, which is even greater this year.

The problems for Rochford are further compounded when the level of Government support has increased by a mere £80,000. This equates to just over £1 per head of our population. This sum is woefully inadequate when set against the levels of cost increases for Government initiatives and inflation. Rochford still receives the worst Government funding in Essex and is now the ninth worst in the Country.

In formulating the budget the Council has ensured that all existing services have been protected. To do this and take into account the impact of the problems I have mentioned, Council agreed to increase the level of Council Tax by £11.88 for a full year on a Band D property. This equates to an increase of just 23 pence a week. To this must be added the precepts levied by Essex County Council, the Police Authority and Parish/Town Councils.

In conclusion, the Council Tax for a Band D property in Rochford will be:-

Essex County Council	£767.88
Police Authority	£77.67
Rochford	£130.50

Depending where you live in the District, the Council Tax for a Band D property will range between £993.26 and £1,016.56, following the addition of the Parish and Town Council precepts."

The Leader of the Conservative Group expressed support for the statement made by the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee except in one respect. The Conservative Group did not regret not supporting the additional 2% increase on Council Tax to progress recycling, considering that decision to be the right one.

Resolved

- (1) That the total for economic development is estimated at £77,500.
- (2) That the total for gross expenditure of the District together with the Parish precepts be £18,400,857.
- (3) That the total of income for the District Council be £10,245,400.
- (4) That the total net expenditure of the District Council together with the Parishes be £8,155,457.
- (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 £3,530,388.
- (6) That the budget requirement for the year of £8,155,457 less the net income receivable of £3,530,388 which, divided by the tax base of £30,239.5 is equal to £152.95, which is the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- (7) That the total of Parish precepts included within the above is £678,757.
- (8) That the Council Tax relating to the District Council without Parish precepts is £130.50.
- (9) That the total tax for both District and Parishes be as set out in the schedule which is included as **Appendix B** (a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of 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) The sums given above for Band D but now shown in the particular valuations bands A–H are set out in the schedule shown as **Appendix C** (a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes).
- (11) The precepts issued to the Council in respect of Essex Country Council and Essex Police Authority for each valuation band A–H as set out in the schedule as shown as **Appendix D** (a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes).

- (12) The total Council Tax for the area for each valuation band A–H is set out in **Appendix E** (a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes). These are the amounts set as Council tax for the year 2002/2003.

The meeting closed at 7.37pm.

Chairman

Date