

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Mid Sussex District
Council Cabinet held on Monday, 13 February 2017
from 4.00 p.m. to 4.27 p.m.**

Present: Councillors: Jonathan Ash-Edwards, Andrew MacNaughton, Gary Marsh, Garry Wall (Leader), Mandy Thomas-Atkin and Norman Webster.

Also present: Councillors: Bruce Forbes and Rod Clarke.

Officers: Kathryn Hall, Tom Clark, Judy Holmes, Peter Stuart, Simon Hughes, Terry Stanley and Mark Bristow.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

2. APOLOGIES

None.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

5. BUDGET MANAGEMENT REPORT 2016/17 – PROGRESS REPORT APRIL TO DECEMBER

The Head of Corporate Resources introduced the Report which outlined the financial position of the Council as the end of year approached. Overall it was a satisfactory position which allowed the Council to transfer funds into various reserves. Owing to prudent financial management it was possible for the Council to invest in services as outlined in Paragraph 25 of the Report.

The Leader welcomed the Report which clearly identified financial pressures and savings. The financial management of the Council had been both prudent and sensible and would continue to be so. This has a direct impact on how the Council delivers services. The Council is well placed for the future.

The Deputy Leader reiterated that the strategy of the Council was to be financially independent. The proposed uses of funds contained in the recommendations of the Report demonstrate this commitment and allows the Council to improve key frontline services for residents.

The Cabinet Member for Community welcomed the Report which highlights progress in many areas. The Council continues to be fit for the future particularly around ICT. The Council has been restructured in order to ensure it continues to have a strong strategic focus. Environmental Health performance in particular has seen

improvement and this is a service area that will become increasingly important as the population of Mid Sussex grows.

The Cabinet Member for Planning noted the increased income from Development Management fees and confirmed that this was owing to the level of interest in living and developing in Mid Sussex. Whilst the increased fee income was welcome he was mindful of the pressures on the existing community.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services thanked staff for their work and noted that ICT projects were moving forward and the use of social media by the community was increasing. This being the case it was necessary for the Council to invest in ICT to facilitate the various methods of communications that residents now expect.

The Leader welcomed the increased income from Development Management and confirmed that this income was reinvested into services. The Report demonstrates the strong financial position of the Council and it was important for proactive budget management to continue. He then took Members to the recommendations which were agreed.

RESOLVED

To recommend to Council for approval:

- (i) that £7,705 grant income relating to Property Searches New Burdens funding be transferred to a General Reserve as detailed in paragraph 22;
- (ii) that £20,000 grant income relating to Neighbourhood Planning funding be transferred to a Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 23;
- (iii) that £200,000 of the revenue underspend be transferred to General Reserve as detailed in paragraph 25 (a);
- (iv) that £150,000 of the revenue underspend be transferred to the ICT Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 25 (b);
- (v) that £50,000 of the revenue underspend be transferred to the CenSus Transition Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 25 (c);
- (vi) that £100,000 of the revenue underspend be transferred to Asset Management Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 25 (d);
- (vii) the variations to the Capital Programme contained in paragraph 37 in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B4.

To note:

- (viii) the remainder of the report;

6. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2017/18

The Head of Corporate Resources introduced the Report and thanked Members of the Scrutiny Committee Leader, Resources and Economic Growth for their scrutiny of the draft Plan and Budget. He wished to draw Members attention to the fact that the

Final Settlement from Central Government was still pending. Feedback from the Scrutiny Committee on the draft Corporate Plan and Budget had resulted in two alterations which are outlined in paragraph 11 of the Report.

The Leader welcomed the Draft Budget which indicates a clear vision for being self-sufficient. The Council continues to be service focused and delivers value for money. He is happy to recommend to Council this draft Budget which does not lose sight of the Council's core values of customer focussed service delivery and clearly sets the direction of travel.

The Deputy Leader thanked officers and Members and stated that it was fortunate to be able to focus on the Council's priorities. He also wished to thank the Members of the Scrutiny Committee for their detailed work. The Council was now able to move from a position of funding constraint to one of growth. He further noted that Revenue Support Grant had reduced from £6 million a few years ago to £128,000 in 2017/18. Despite this the Council was in a strong place financially and he was pleased to see money being invested in Burgess Hill. He further welcomed the £220,000 earmarked for Economic Development Grants which supports the local economy and community of Mid Sussex.

The Portfolio Holder for Community welcomed the support for the voluntary sector and stated that he was keen to see this support continue for the benefit of our communities.

The Leader noted that it had been a challenging journey over the past few years. Revenue Support Grant would be non-existent in year 2 of the current Medium Term Financial Plan and this is accounted for as part of the sound financial strategy of this Council. Council Tax is set to increase by 1.99% and it is prudent that the Council takes this step to remain resilient in future years. The Council remains prudent, looking forward, and will continue to support the voluntary sector and the economy. He then moved to the recommendations which were agreed.

RESOLVED

To recommend to Council the proposals for 2017/18, as set out in the report to the Scrutiny Committee and as amended by the report, specifically:

- (i) The proposed increase in Council Tax;
- (ii) The proposed placements in the Specific Reserves;
- (iii) The proposed Capital Programme; and
- (iv) The service commentaries and supporting summary budget tables for each business unit.

The meeting was closed at 4.27 p.m.

Chairman.