

## COUNCIL MEETING: AS ADJOURNED FROM 24 FEBRUARY 2009

### MINUTES OF SECOND SESSION - 25 FEBRUARY 2009

**Present:** Councillor Beard (Mayor);

Councillors Ayub, Ballsdon, Bayes, Benson, Byrne, Chowdhary, Cumpsty, Duveen, Edwards, Ennis, Epps, Gittings, Goodall, Hanley, C Harris, T Harris, Hartley, Hoskin, Hussain, Janjua, P Jones, T Jones, Khan, Lovelock, Lockett, Maskell, Merriott, Orton, Page, Pugh, Ralph, Ruhemann, Rynn, Singleton-White, Skeats, Stainthorp, Stanway, Steele, Stevens, Swaine, Tickner, Townend, Warman, Watson and Willis.

The Mayor referred to the recent tragic death of Ivan Cameron, son of the Right Honourable David Cameron MP, Leader of the Conservative Party. The Council then stood in silence as a mark of respect.

#### **76. BUDGET 2009/10**

Further to Minutes 70 and 71 of the Council Meeting adjourned on 24 February 2009, the Council reconvened to give further consideration to its Budget and setting of its Council Tax for 2009-10.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Lovelock and seconded by Councillor Page and LOST:

“(1) That the General Fund budget as set out on pages B178 to B207 of the report by the Director of Resources and Head of Finance be agreed, subject to adjustments to the appropriate budget lines, in accordance with the measures in (a) and (b) below:

(a) Budget Savings

- (i) Members’ Allowances to be frozen at the 2008/09 level, at a saving of £12k;
- (ii) Refreshments at Council meetings to be reduced by £8k;
- (iii) Further savings to be identified to total of £141k, to be reported to Cabinet in March for recommendation to Council on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.
- (iv) the Chief Executive to report to the Budget Review Group (as proposed below), for recommendation to Cabinet, on potential in-year savings, over and above those already integrated into the budget, on Marketing & PR, agency staff, consultants, management, home-to-school transport and other areas that do not have adverse impact on front-line services

(b) Budget Increases

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- (i) That as and when savings identified by the exercise set out in (a)(iv) above are agreed, corresponding funds be released to:
    - Reduce charges for bulky waste removal;
    - Create a 'Green Hit Squad' to tackle illegal dumping and other environmental crime (and that the possibility of the University of Reading part-funding this also be explored);
    - Develop an integrated programme of Neighbourhood Policing as part of the Safer Reading communications programme;
    - Obtain 'speed gun' equipment for use in road safety programmes;
  - (ii) That any further savings identified and agreed by this exercise be added to the Council's balances.
- (2) That the Capital Programme as set out on pages B208 to B215 of the report by the Director of Resources and Head of Finance be agreed;
- (3) That, after considering the advice of the Director of Resources and Head of Finance on the adequacy of balances and reserves and the robustness of the Budget, as set out in Sections 6 and 7 of the report, the level of General Fund Balance to be maintained over the year to 31 March 2010 be set at £4m.
- (4) That the increase in fees and charges set out in Appendix 3 be agreed;
- (5) That the minimum budget requirement be set at £120,387,000 for 2009/10 and Council notes that a Council Tax increase of 3.99% is required to fund the overall budget, and that the minimum General Fund Balance will be £4.0m, the minimum recommended by the Director of Resources, but that reviews are in hand in the hope of increasing this;
- (6) That the Budget Risk Management Statement in Appendix 5 be agreed;
- (7) That the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy set out in Appendix 7, the Prudential Indicators set out in Annex A of the Strategy and the review of MRP Policy Statement in Annex B be agreed;
- (8) That the Medium Term Financial Plan 2010/11 to 2014/15 set out in Appendix 8 be agreed;
- (9) That a cross-party Budget Review Group be established for the 2009-2010 financial year, as a Member:Officer working group, to monitor the 2009-10 budget and budget pressures, review in-year savings proposals

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as above, and make recommendations to Cabinet or full Council as appropriate; and that the following Councillors be appointed to the Group on the ratio set out below:

Labour (2)  
Conservative (2)  
Lib.Dem (1)”

With the consent of the Council, the Director of Resources then addressed the Councillors and also circulated a briefing note, drawing attention to:

- The legal position for setting the Budget;
- The powers and duties of the Section 151 Officer/Responsible Financial Officer;
- The status of advice he had given via confidential briefings as Section 151 Officer;
- Related Matters.

No further amendments having been moved, the Meeting was suspended at 7.10pm to enable further Councillor discussions to take place.

The Meeting reconvened at 11.05pm. No further amendments having been moved, it was moved by Councillor Lovelock and seconded by Councillor Page and CARRIED:

**Resolved:**

That pursuant to Standing Order 4.4, the meeting be adjourned until 6.30pm on Monday 2 March 2009.

**77. COUNCIL TAX 2009-10**

See Resolution at Item 76 above.

(The meeting was adjourned at 11.10pm)