

## **BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of the **BABERGH CABINET** held in the King Edmund Chamber - Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Thursday, 16 January 2020 at 5:30pm

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor: John Ward (Chair)

Councillors:	Jan Osborne	Derek Davis
	David Busby	Michael Holt
	Elisabeth Malvisi	Lee Parker

### **In attendance:**

Councillor(s): Alistair McCraw

Officers: Chief Executive Officer (AC)  
Strategic Director (KN)  
Assistant Director – Corporate Resources (KS)  
Deputy Monitoring Officer (JR)  
Governance Officer (CP)

### **204 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Clive Arthey.

### **205 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**

There were no declarations of interest declared.

### **206 BCA/19/29 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 09 JANUARY 2020**

The Chair noted that due to the short time frame between meetings that a draft of the minutes could not be completed before the meeting today. As such the minutes were deferred to the next available meeting

### **207 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME**

There were no petitions received.

### **208 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

There were no questions received.

**209 MATTERS REFERRED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

There were no matters referred.

**210 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

The Forthcoming Decisions List was noted.

**211 BCA/19/30 DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2020/21**

The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced report BCa/19/30 which contained details of the draft revenue and capital budgets and the Councils strategic financial aims. Councillor Ward advised that the report enabled Members to consider key aspects of the draft budget and make any recommendations to the final budget which would be presented to Full Council in February.

Councillor Ward provided Members with an overview of the budget. This included proposed increases in council tax charges, new homes bonus funding and earmarked reserve levels.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Councillor Ward and seconded by Councillor Malvisi.

Councillor Parker raised a query with regard to the council tax reduction for unoccupied and unfurnished properties and which exemptions would apply to this rule. Councillor Ward explained that in circumstances where the occupant has become deceased an exemption would apply for a set period of time.

Councillor Osborne commented on how well briefed Members had been regarding the budget and thanked officers for the production of a well-balanced budget with no reduction in services to residents.

Councillor Busby expressed his concern over the long-term future and the changes that would be required to the services provided in order to meet the demand on communities and commented that this would need attention over the next year. Councillor Ward agreed that reassessment of the budget would be required, and the transformation fund would play a part in financing future projects.

Councillor Ward commented that Officers had carried out excellent work in the production of a balanced budget.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- 1.1 **That the draft General Fund Budget proposals for 2020/21 and four-year outlook set out in the report be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 26 February 2020, subject to further consideration at**

**the next Cabinet meeting on 11 February 2020.**

- 1.2 **That the draft General Fund Budget for 2020/21 is based on an increase to Council Tax of £5 per annum (10p per week) for a Band D property, which is equivalent to 3.1%, to support the Council's overall financial position, which will be considered further at the February Cabinet meeting.**
- 1.3 **That from 1 April 2020 properties that are unoccupied and unfurnished (Class C discount) receive a 25% reduction for the first 28 days as set out in section 11 of the report.**

**Reason for Decision:** To bring together all the relevant information to enable Cabinet Members to review, consider and comment upon the Council's General Fund budget before the February Cabinet and recommendations to Council.

## **212 BCA/19/31 DRAFT HRA BUDGET 2020/21**

The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report and provided Members with details of the budget proposals laid out in the report. The recommendations were moved by Councillor Ward and seconded by Councillor Osborne.

Councillor Busby commented that he was not happy with the proposed increases in rent. The Assistant Director for Corporate Resources advised that the proposed increases were those recommended by Government and even with this increase tenants would be paying less than four years ago. Councillor Osborne confirmed that residents on a low income would be eligible to apply for an increased benefit to cover these rent increases. She went on to comment that this additional income would help to ensure that the Council could continue to provide better quality homes.

In response to a question from Councillor Parker regarding the projected number of Right To Buy properties sold, Councillor Ward confirmed that this figure had been based on previous years' experience.

Councillor Busby enquired whether the rental income figures detailed in Appendix B of the report reflected the potential building of new council houses, or are based on existing figures. The Assistant Director for Corporate Resources confirmed that these figures are in accordance with the Capital Programme and therefore factor in numbers for proposed building plans over the forthcoming years.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- 1.1 **That the draft HRA Budget proposals for 2020/21 and four-year outlook set out in the report and detailed below be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 26 February 2020, subject to further**

consideration at the next Cabinet meeting on 11 February 2020.

- 1.2 That the CPI + 1% increase of 2.7% in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent increase of £2.38 a week be implemented.
- 1.3 That garage rents are kept at the same level as 2019/20.
- 1.4 That Sheltered Housing Service charges be increased by £2 per week to ensure recovery of the actual cost of service.
- 1.5 That Sheltered Housing utility charges are kept at the same level as 2019/20.
- 1.6 That the budgeted surplus of £298k be transferred to the HRA reserves in 2020/21.
- 1.7 That in principle, Right to Buy (RTB) receipts should be retained to enable continued development and acquisition of new council dwellings.
- 1.8 That the revised HRA Business Plan in Appendix B be noted.

**Reason for Decision:** To bring together all the relevant information to enable Cabinet Members to review, consider and comment upon the Councils Housing Revenue Account budget before the February Cabinet and recommendations to Council.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 5.58 pm.

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Chair (and date)