

Executive – 9 February 2005

Present: Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris (Vice Chairman in the Chair)
Councillors Bishop, Mrs Bradley, Cavill, Garner, Hall and Leighton

Officers: Mrs P James (Chief Executive), Ms S Adam (Head of Resources), Mr P Carter (Financial Services Manager), Mr C Brazier (Head of Housing) and Mr G P Dyke (Member Services Manager)

Also Present: Councillors Bowrah, Henley, House, Paul, Wedderkopp, Mrs Whitmarsh

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

10. Apologies

Councillors Williams (Chairman) and Edwards.

11. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 12 January 2005 were taken as read and were signed.

12. Public Question Time

- (a) Glenys Gill, Artistic Director, The Brewhouse Theatre addressed the Executive and emphasised the valuable contribution made to the community by the Brewhouse Theatre. It provided an opportunity to take part in many activities and she emphasised the importance of its work to both people and art. She drew attention to the impact that any reduction in funding would have on the Brewhouse and asked that the Council consider very carefully any proposed funding reductions.

Councillor Mrs Bradley thanked Glenys Gill for her full resume of the work of the Brewhouse Theatre and assured her that the Council were well aware of the contribution made to the community by the Theatre. However, the Council had a responsibility to manage its overall budget and had therefore looked at everything that the Council was doing. It was in this context that a reduction in the funding of the Brewhouse was proposed.

Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris replied that funding of the Brewhouse although reduced, would continue and that the Council were committed to and supportive of the work that the Theatre did.

- (b) Councillor Henley as a member of the public asked the following questions.
- (i) A Council tenant in Wellington who had been convicted of dealing in drugs and served a prison sentence was to be allowed to return to his Council dwelling. This appeared to have been dealt with differently to that of a Taunton Council tenant who had similarly been convicted of a drugs offence and was being evicted from his Council property.

Councillor Garner explained that the difference in these two cases was that drugs had been found on the Council premises in the

property at Taunton and not within the property at Wellington. The case in Wellington was not within the confines of Council property and therefore was remote from its jurisdiction. Councillor Garner assured Councillor Henley that the Council would continue to act robustly in cases where drugs were found on Council property.

- (ii) Attention was drawn to the increasing problem that was being experienced in the High Street, Taunton where birds were creating a nuisance for both shoppers and shop workers. This problem had been exacerbated by the continued insistence of a particular individual to feed the birds on a regular basis. Councillor Henley asked if there was anything the Council could do to reduce the problem by perhaps erecting signs and carrying out regular cleaning of this area of High Street.

Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris undertook to pass this question on to Councillor Edwards, the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environmental Services.

- (iii) Attention was drawn to the Little Big Screen project where cinema releases were sent out to village halls and rural areas. A proposed cut in the budget would mean that this project would cease and Councillor Mrs Bradley was asked if anything could be done to retain it.

Councillor Mrs Bradley replied that in view of the Councils budget problems it had been necessary to look at core funding to those organisations and activities that contributed to community life. Funding for special projects such as this could be obtained from other sources.

12. General Fund Revenue Estimates 2005/2006

Considered report previously circulated regarding the Executive 2005/2006 budget proposals prior to submission to Council on 22 February 2005 for approval. The report contained details on:

- 1) the General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2005/2006 including the proposed Council Tax increase and the Prudential Indicators and
- 2) draft figures on the predicted financial position of the Council for the following two years.

The report had been considered in detail by the Review Board and details of its views were submitted. The Executive's response to the issues raised at that meeting were submitted. The Executive had agreed to reinstate two budget changes namely the subsidies for Pest Control and the introduction of 10 new dog waste bins. The total cost of these additions was £6,420. The Revenue Contribution to Capital (RCCO) would be reduced to finance these items. The final RCCO would now total £294,750.

As a result the proposed total Council Tax increase was 4.5%.

Members were encouraged to consider the Medium Term position when making budget decisions and it was now a requirement for the Council to prepare not only budgets for the following financial year but also to provide indicative figures for the two years after that. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provided an indication of the expected budget gap going forward into 2006/2007. It was noted that it was

likely that the Council would have to further review services and continue the good work set out in this year's budget strategy and the profile of services.

The 2003/2004 Statement of Accounts had been formally signed off by the Council's Auditors and had received an unqualified audit opinion. A summary of the predicted General Fund Reserve position prior to the budget setting decision was submitted.

The Council Tax calculation and formal tax setting resolution was to be considered separately. The proposed budget for Taunton Deane would result in a Band D Council Tax of £121.88 an increase of £5.25 (4.5%) on 2004/2005. This represented an increase of 10 pence per week. The Band D taxpayer would receive all the services provided by the Council in 2005/2006 at a cost of £2.34 per week.

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2005/2006 amounted to £26,520 an increase of 3% and this formed part of the total net expenditure of the Council. The precept in 2004/2005 was £25,750.

As part of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance there was a requirement for Council to approve the indicators set out in the report. These included the borrowing limits which were previously detailed in a separate report to the Executive.

The Local Government Act 2003 imposed a duty on the Councils Section 151 Officer to comment as part of the budget setting process upon the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves. The Head of Resources had thoroughly reviewed the procedures outputs and outcomes of the budget setting process and felt that the Councils reserves were adequate and the budget estimates used in preparing the 2005/2006 budget sufficiently robust.

RESOLVED that the Council be recommended that the budget for general fund services for 2005/2006 as outlined in the report be agreed and that

- (a) the transfer for any under spend in 2004/2005 back to General Fund Reserves be agreed
- (b) the proposed 2005/2006 budget, being Authority expenditure of £11,504,690 and Special Expenses of £26,520 be agreed in accordance with the Local Government Act 1992
- (c) the predicted General Fund Reserve balance at 31 March 2006 of £1,304,309 be noted
- (d) the Prudential indicators for 2005/2006 as set out in the report be agreed.

13. Capital Programme 2005/2006 – 2007/2008

Submitted report which detailed the proposed General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue account (HRA) capital programmes for the period 2004/2005 to 2007/2008.

For the General Fund the estimated resources available for this period amounted to £15,211k. The proposed capital programme amounted to £14,774k leaving £437k of unallocated capital resources available for future schemes.

For the Housing Revenue Account the estimated resources available for 2005/2006 amounted to £5,485k. The proposed capital programme for 2005/2006 amounted to £4,760k leaving £725k of unallocated capital resources available for additional schemes.

Details were submitted of the schemes that were currently in the capital programme and those which the Executive proposed to make a priority for the new programme.

RESOLVED that

- (a) Council be recommended that a suggested investment plan for the additional £350,000 HRA RCCO as outlined in Appendix D of the report be agreed and
- (b) Council be recommended that both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme be agreed.

14. Housing Revenue Account, Revenue estimates and rent levels, Deane Helpline and Deane Building DLO account 2005/2006

Submitted report previously circulated which outlined the proposed Housing Revenue Account for 2005/2006. It also included details relating to the new rent level, service charges and other housing related charges such as garage rents. Finally it provided information on the Deane Helpline Trading account and Deane Building DLO Trading account.

Both the Housing Review Panel and the Review Board had considered the 2005/2006 budget report and had made no amendments or suggestions for changes to the proposed budget.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended that the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2005/2006 be agreed.

15. Council Tax Setting 2005/2006

Submitted report which made recommendations to the Council on the proposed level of Council tax for 2005/2006.

The Council was required to make an annual determination which set its gross expenditure (including the Housing Revenue Account and balances brought forward) and gross income (also including the Housing Revenue Account and balances brought forward) with the difference as its budget requirement. (This determination is set out in the resolution). The estimated expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2005/2006 amounted to £26,520 and this formed part of the total net expenditure of the Council. Details were also submitted at the parish precepts levied and the appropriate Council Tax at Band D.

The estimated balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund was a deficit of £197,062. Taunton Deane's share of this amounted to £21,312. This was reflected in the revenue estimates.

The overall debt outstanding on Community Charge had now been written off, as a consequence the Community Charge Collection Fund as at 15 January 2005 had a nil balance. There was therefore no impact on the revenue estimates.

The Council's budget requirement including parish precepts and non-parish special expenses was £11,847,762. This was then reduced by the amount notified in respect of the Borough Council's Revenue Support Grant of £3,739,152 and the Non-Domestic Rates Distribution from the pool which amounted £3,32,288.

The net amount, having taken the Collection Fund position into account of £5,97,634 was used to calculate the Council Tax at Band D reflecting the Parish Precepts by dividing it by the total of the Council Tax Base as approved by the Executive in December 2004.

The Council Tax for the Borough (excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses for the non-parished area) was £121.88 an increase of £5.25 (4.5%) compared to the 2004/2005 Council Tax. The total Council Tax including the County Council and Police Authority precepts was still subject to confirmation.

RESOLVED that the Council be recommended that subject to final determination including the Council Tax for Somerset County Council and the Police Authority which was still to be advised:-

1. That it be noted that at its meeting on 8 December 2004 the Executive calculated the following amounts for the year 2005/2006 in accordance with the regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended):-

- (a) 39,010.22 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year.

(b)

Ash Priors	65.53	Neroche	238.16
Ashbrittle	89.95	North Curry	693.17
Bathealton	80.69	Norton Fitzwarren	722.27
Bishops Hull	1,068.26	Nynehead	149.33
Bishops Lydeard / Cothelstone	1,892.53	Oake	322.79
Bradford on Tone	277.41	Otterford	163.37
Burrowbridge	200.90	Pitminster	436.97
Cheddon Fitzpaine	629.82	Ruishton / Thornfalcon	611.24
Chipstable	115.32	Sampford Arundel	128.32
Churchstanton	310.49	Staplegrove	711.03
Combe Florey	111.69	Stawley	133.37
Comeytrowe	2,058.96	Stoke St Gregory	372.42
Corfe	130.01	Stoke St Mary	197.37
Creech St Michael	922.30	Taunton	15,563.51
Durston	56.60	Trull	982.09
Fitzhead	120.37	Wellington	4,536.05
Halse	143.65	Wellington (Without)	287.37
Hatch Beauchamp	243.63	West Bagborough	152.37
Kingston St Mary	434.64	West Buckland	403.34
Langford Budville	213.60	West Hatch	137.62
Lydeard St Lawrence / Tolland	193.83	West Monkton	1,070.90
Milverton	574.78	Wiveliscombe	1,082.21

Being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

2. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2005/2006 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-
- (a) £61,457,473 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) of the Act.
(Gross Expenditure including amount required for working balance).
- (b) £49,609,711 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act.
(Gross Income including reserves to be used to meet Gross Expenditure).

(c) £11,847,762 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.

(d) £6,750,128 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant, additional grant of SSA reduction grant (increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (*Council Tax Surplus*) and increased by the amount of any sum which the Council estimates will be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charge) directions under Sec. 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 made on 7 February 1994 (*Community Charge Surplus*).

(e) £130.67
$$\frac{(c) - (d)}{1(a)} = \frac{11,847,762 - 6,750,128}{39,010.22}$$

being the amount calculated at (c) above less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year.

(*Average Council Tax at Band D for Borough Including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*).

(f) £343,072 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act. (*Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*).

(g) £121.88
$$\frac{(e) - (f)}{1(a)} = \frac{130.67 - 343,072}{39,010.22}$$

being the amount at (e) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (f) above by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items relate.

(*Council Tax at Band D for Borough Excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*).

(h)

Ash Priors	124.93	Neroche	133.43
Ashbrittle	133.00	North Curry	140.63
Bathealton	129.94	Norton Fitzwarren	140.56
Bishops Hull	134.57	Nynehead	141.97
Bishops Lydeard / Cothelstone	136.31	Oake	131.95
Bradford on Tone	134.50	Otterford	121.88
Burrowbridge	142.80	Pitminster	133.51
Cheddon Fitzpaine	128.23	Ruishton / Thornfalcon	139.42
Chipstable	130.55	Sampford Arundel	156.48
Churchstanton	144.05	Staplegrove	132.85
Combe Florey	136.21	Stawley	131.58
Comeytrowe	133.54	Stoke St Gregory	137.99
Corfe	131.49	Stoke St Mary	133.03
Creech St Michael	135.98	Taunton	123.58
Durston	122.59	Trull	132.06
Fitzhead	136.00	Wellington	138.38
Halse	134.06	Wellington (Without)	134.06
Hatch Beauchamp	132.14	West Bagborough	128.44
Kingston St Mary	135.68	West Buckland	140.47
Langford Budville	129.60	West Hatch	135.96
Lydeard St Lawrence / Tolland	130.39	West Monkton	126.55
Milverton	133.19	Wiveliscombe	136.66

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (g) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(Council Taxes at Band D for Borough, Parish and Special Expenses).

(i) See overleaf.

(The meeting ended at 7.00pm).