

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**HELD ON 2 JANUARY 2014 AT 9.15 A.M. IN THE
CONNAUGHT ROOM, TOWN HALL, CLACTON-ON-SEA**

Present: Councillors Steady (Chairman), Bucke, Caines, V E Guglielmi, D R Mayzes, Nicholls, Platt and Wood

In Attendance: Chief Executive (Ian Davidson), Democratic Services Manager (Colin Sweeney), Finance and Procurement Manager (Richard Barrett) and Democratic Services Officer (Michael Pिंगram)

Also in Attendance: Corporate Director (June Clare), Corporate Director (Martyn Knappett), Corporate Director (Paul Price) and Head of Planning (Catherine Bicknell).

54. INTRODUCTION TO THE BUDGET

The Council's Chief Executive provided the Committee with the background to how the budget figures had been reached and explained it had been a difficult process that had required a lot of hard work from staff.

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Miles (Vice Chairman) Councillor D R Mayzes substituting.

56. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 December 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bucke declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 4 (A.1 Updated Financial Baseline 2014/15 and Detailed Budget Proposals for a Revised Budget 2013/14 And Original Budget for 2014/15) by virtue of the fact he was a Holland and Kirby Ward Member.

58. UPDATED FINANCIAL BASELINE 2014/15 AND DETAILED BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR A REVISED BUDGET 2013/14 AND ORIGINAL BUDGET FOR 2014/15

The Committee's comments were sought on the updated Financial Baseline 2014/15 and proposals for a revised budget for 2013/14 and original budget for 2014/15, which had been approved at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13 December 2013 (minute 110/2013 referred).

The Committee had before it a summary of changes to budgets and estimates for 2013/14 (revised) and 2014/15 (original) that had been made since the Cabinet meeting on 13 December 2013.

The Council's Finance and Procurement Manager set out the background and context to the budget, including the updated financial baseline 2014/15 and the Cabinet's initial Council Tax proposals.

The Head of Planning (Catherine Bicknell), and the Corporate Directors for Life Opportunities (Paul Price), Public Experience (June Clare) and Corporate Services (Martyn Knappett) attended the meeting in turn and answered Members' questions on the respective budgets under their control.

The Council's Finance and Procurement Manager then outlined the proposed Capital Programme 2014/15, the proposed contribution from Reserves for capital projects and he identified Cost Pressures 2014/15 and beyond. Questions were raised to specific fees and charges applied to crematoriums.

The Council's Finance and Procurement Manager then outlined the proposed Capital Programme 2014/15, the Council's Reserves position, fees and charges and the identified Cost Pressures 2014/15 and beyond. Questions were raised to specific fees and charges applied to crematoriums.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The contents of the Updated Financial Baseline 2014/15 and Detailed Budget Proposals for a Revised Budget 2013/14 and Original Budget for 2014/15 be noted.
- (b) The Cabinet be informed that, in the opinion of this Committee:
 - (1) Cabinet look again at Council Tax with the concept of freezing it rather than reducing it;
 - (2) There be no requirement for a further meeting with Portfolio Holders to enable the Committee to format at an earlier stage for the 2015/16 Budget;
- (c) In order to adhere to (2), Portfolio Holders be invited to meetings of the Corporate Management Committee; and
- (d) In particular, the Committee:
 - I. Acknowledged the potential for significant increased income through regeneration and welcomed the income that had been generated to date (approximately £15,000) following the introduction of charges in respect of pre-planning application advice and was particularly pleased since this had been as a direct result of a recommendation by the Committee at its meeting held on 18 February 2013.
 - II. Welcomed the increased use of the Council's Legal Services in relation to planning-related matters.
 - III. Congratulated the business-focus approach to running the Council's affairs and, in particular the well-attended productions in the Princes Theatre and substantial income generated through bar sales since the Council took over its running.
 - IV. Was mindful that welfare reform would have an impact on the Council but that, from a financial perspective, this was not significant at this time.
 - V. Encouraged officers to explore any Council-owned sites which may be suitable for residential development and, if necessary, to relocate occupiers to other sites and accommodation.

- VI. Looked forward to the Women's Tour 2014 and hoped that its extensive exposure would generate additional income for the District.
- VII. Recognised the extensive regeneration opportunities that the coastal defence scheme would bring to the District.
- VIII. Understood that the Council's Free Parking Scheme for residents was about giving something much bigger back, financially, to residents than the agreed 0.5% reduction in Council Tax.
- IX. Asked about the review of essential car user allowances and mileage allowances for Members.
- X. Whilst the Committee acknowledged that its' objective in relation to the 2014/15 Budget was to review it, Members wished to gain a better understanding of how each department operated, therefore allowing the Committee to focus on the 2015/16, and beyond, budgets and to become involved in that process at an earlier stage.

59. SPECIAL EXPENSES 2014/15

The Committee gave consideration to the Executive's proposals in respect of Special Expenses for the 2014/15 financial year.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cabinet be informed that the Committee had noted the proposed Special Expenses 2014/15 and thanked the Council's Finance and Procurement Manager for his hard work.

60. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

The meeting was declared closed at 3.57 p.m.

Chairman