

THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF EXETER CITY COUNCIL

Guildhall
Tuesday 21 February 2017

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor (Cllr Thompson)
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Cllr Holland)
Councillors Ashwood, Baldwin, Bialyk, Branston, Brimble, Denham, Edwards, Foale, Foggin, Gottschalk, Hannaford, Hannan, Harvey, D Henson, Mrs Henson, Keen, Lamb, Lyons, Mitchell, Morse, Musgrave, Newby, Owen, Packham, Pearson, Prowse, Robson, Sheldon, Sills, Spackman, Vizard, Wardle, Warwick and Wood

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Leadbetter and Sutton.

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COUNCILLOR PAUL BULL

On behalf of the Council, the Lord Mayor paid tribute to Councillor Paul Bull who had tragically lost his fight against cancer on Sunday and that the Members thoughts were with his wife, Councillor Rachel Sutton as well as his family. Paul was a true community champion and having his own interests in theatre and music, his appointment as Portfolio Holder for Communities and Culture, could not have been more fitting.

The Leader stated that Councillor Paul Bull was an excellent Ward Councillor who quietly got on with ward work. He had done a fantastic job as the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Culture and worked well with Councillors from all political parties. He would be very much missed.

This was endorsed by Members.

The Council observed a minutes silence as a mark of respect for Councillor Paul Bull.

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BUDGET 2017/18

Minute 8 (2017/18 Council Tax Base and NNDR1) of the meeting of Executive held on 10 January 2017 was taken as read and adopted.

The Leader stated that he would be dedicating his budget speech to the memory of Councillor Paul Bull.

The Leader of the Council, moved and Councillor Hannaford seconded the resolution as set out in the agenda and circulated papers in respect of the Council Tax for 2017/18.

The Leader in presenting the budget set the context for this year's budget by stating that the reductions in Central Government Funding received by local authorities like Exeter over the last few years continued to be amongst the most severe cuts the Council had faced in living memory. This Council had a 10.8% reduction in Government Formula Grant for the year 2017/18 on top of equally drastic cuts in previous years. Last year it was a cut of 12.6% and the year before 15.6%.

Between 2010 and 2018 the City Council's government grant had dropped from £12m to £5.2m and the City Council had been proactive in facing this and plan for a future when the money the Council gets from Central Government would have been removed completely.

In the financial year 2016/17 the Council had delivered £1m in savings and additional income on top of £1.4m the previous year. It continued to streamline and modernise the services it offers to residents and businesses by:-

- a new customer platform to interact with the Citizens, providing a more efficient, joined up experience and generating savings of over £250,000 a year from 2020
- continuing to work with its partners in the National Health Services, the voluntary sector and Devon County Council to offer the Integrated Care Exeter project
- working with the Devon Wildlife Trust to transfer the management of the Valley Parks and protect this wonderful green asset.

It was important to stop for a moment and reflect on how far the City has come under this Labour administration.

According to the Centre for Cities Exeter had achieved:-

- fastest rate of population growth of any UK city
- private sector employment growth was among the strongest nationally
- fourth in the country for growth in housing stock providing homes for people
- in top ten (ninth) in the country for growth in workplace wages.

Strong growth, more jobs, more homes for people and better wages was what this Labour Group had helped to deliver.

The Leader stated that in setting a balanced budget for 2017/18 much of the lost formula grant was being replaced by a combination of additional efficiency savings and income. Difficult choices had to be made and for the first time in five years car park charges would rise. The Council had ambitious plans to reduce congestion in the city and a reasonable pricing policy would support these objectives.

The Council continued to build on energy savings projects which included the guaranteed income from the Feed in Tariff payments on solar panels, replacing the inefficient boilers at the Civic Centre and the installation of LED lighting in the offices and car parks. The Energy Strategy was also adopted at the Executive last week. This Strategy would be kept under review to ensure that it aligned with Exeter City Futures strategy to deliver an energy independent City by 2025.

The Council continued to deliver much needed housing:-

- £18million in New Homes Bonus awards since 2011 – delivering 4,887 additional dwellings of which 614 were affordable
- since 2015 alone - 262 affordable homes had been delivered
- planning permissions exist to deliver some 5,000 more homes of which 1,350 were required to be affordable. 747 more affordable homes were already in the pipeline with full planning permission
- about to start building a 53 unit Extra Care facility, the first of its kind in the City

- currently on-site delivering 26 flats for older people next to Rennes House which would be named after Chester Long.

All this is in spite of the Housing & Planning Bill, which had significantly reduced the resources available to the Housing Revenue Account and diminished plans for the future building of council houses.

Exeter's economy had grown by 20% since 2011 with private sector growth among the strongest nationally since 2013. Exeter was one of only five UK cities that had seen real wages return to 2008 levels. The Council was ambitious and determined to ensure that the City achieved its potential and residents receive quality services. This Labour Council had funding to begin a detailed study of the Corn Exchange block to continue the regeneration of the City.

For next year's budget the Council had provided further efficiency savings and income in the region of £1.4m without a reduction in front line services.

The Leader continued that the budget proposed aimed to deliver a balanced budget and protect and maintain the services which the citizens of Exeter need the most. The recommendation set out in the papers would result in the setting of a City Council tax of £145.05 for a Band D property, an increase of £5 a year for a Band D property, less than 10p a week. This would still mean that Exeter had the fourth lowest Council Tax of any district.

A Member of the Opposition commented that Central Government had supported Local Government with the New Homes Bonus monies and the proposed changes to the Business Rates.

Other Members gave their support for the budget noting that there had been no cuts to frontline Council services despite the challenging times that the Council had faced with the reduction of funding from Central Government. This Council was building new homes for local residents, helping the youth of the city with apprenticeships and working in partnership with Exeter City Futures to tackle traffic congestion and to work towards an Energy Neutral City.

Responding, the Leader advised that his party was proud of the achievements that they had brought to the city including the Rugby World Cup, John Lewis, the Radio 1 Big Weekend and the Rugby Sevens.

RESOLVED:-

- 1) That the following, as submitted in the Estimates Book, be approved:-
 - (a) the Revenue estimates for 2017-2018;
 - (b) the Capital programme for 2017-2018;
- (2) that it be noted that, at the meeting of the Executive on the 10 January 2017, the Council calculated the figure of 36,197, as its council tax base for the year 2017-2018 in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992;
- (3) that the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2017-2018 in accordance with Sections 31A of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992:-

- (a) £105,956,285 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act;
- (b) £100,705,910 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act;
- (c) £5,250,375 being the amount by which the aggregate at (3)(a) above exceeds the aggregate at (3)(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year;
- (d) £145.05 being the amount at (3)(c) above divided by the amount at 2 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year;
- (e) Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D
£96.70	£112.82	£128.93	£145.05
E	F	G	H
£177.28	£209.52	£241.75	£290.10

Being the amount given by multiplying the amount at (3)(d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (4) That it will be noted that, for the year 2017-2018, Devon County Council, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall and the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts on precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 83 of the Local Government Act 2003, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:-

Devon County Council
Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D
£845.28	£986.16	£1,127.04	£1,267.92
E	F	G	H
£1,549.68	£1,831.44	£2,113.20	£2,535.84

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall

A	B	C	D
£117.52	£137.11	£156.69	£176.28
E	F	G	H

£215.45	£254.63	£293.80	£352.56
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Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority
Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D
£54.38	£63.44	£72.51	£81.57
E	F	G	H
£99.70	£117.82	£135.95	£163.14

- (5) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (3)(e) and (4) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby set the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2017-2018 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D
£1,113.88	£1,299.53	£1,485.17	£1,670.82
E	F	G	H
£2,042.11	£2,413.41	£2,784.70	£3,341.64

In accordance with Standing Order 30 a named vote on the Resolution was recorded, as follows:

Voting for:

Councillors Ashwood, Bialyk, Branston, Brimble, Denham, Edwards, Foale, Foggin, Gottschalk, Hannaford, Hannan, Harvey, Keen, Lamb, Lyons, Morse, Musgrave, Owen, Packham, Pearson, Robson, Sheldon, Sills, Spackman, Vizard, Wardle, Warwick and Wood.

(28 Members)

Abstain:

Baldwin, Henson D, Mrs Henson, the Deputy Lord Mayor, Mitchell, Newby, Prowse and the Lord Mayor.

(8 Members)

Absent:

Councillors Leadbetter and Sutton.

(2 Members)

1 Vacancy

The Resolution was carried.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 6.50 pm)

Chair