

Minutes

Council Meeting



20th February 2023

These Minutes principally record decisions taken and, where appropriate, the reasons for the decisions. A recording of the meeting is available on the Council's YouTube Channel at <http://www.braintree.gov.uk/youtube>

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
Councillor J Abbott	Yes	Councillor Mrs I Parker	Yes
Councillor D Abram	Yes	Councillor Mrs J Pell	Yes
Councillor J Baugh	Yes	Councillor I Pritchard	Yes
Councillor Mrs J Beavis	Apologies	Councillor M Radley	Yes
Councillor K Bowers	Yes	Councillor S Rehman	Apologies
Councillor G Butland	Yes	Councillor F Ricci	Yes
Councillor J Coleridge	Yes	Councillor B Rose	Yes
Councillor G Courtauld	Apologies	Councillor Mrs J Sandum	Apologies
Councillor Mrs M Cunningham	Yes	Councillor Miss V Santomauro	Yes
Councillor T Cunningham	Yes	Councillor Mrs W Scattergood	Yes
Councillor Mrs C Dervish	Yes	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt	Yes
Councillor P Euesden	Yes	Councillor P Schwier	Yes
Councillor T Everard	Yes	Councillor Mrs G Spray	Yes
Councillor Mrs D Garrod (Vice-Chairman)	Yes	Councillor P Tattersley	Apologies
Councillor M Green	Yes	Councillor P Thorogood	Yes
Councillor A Hensman (Chairman)	Yes	Councillor R van Dulken	Yes
Councillor S Hicks	Yes	Councillor T Walsh	Yes
Councillor P Horner	Apologies	Councillor Mrs L Walters	Yes
Councillor H Johnson	Yes	Councillor Miss M Weeks	Apologies
Councillor Mrs A Kilmartin	Apologies	Councillor D White	Apologies
Councillor W Korsinah	Yes	Councillor Mrs S Wilson	Yes
Councillor D Mann	Yes	Councillor J Wrench	Yes
Councillor T McArdle	Apologies	Councillor B Wright	Yes
Councillor J McKee	Yes	Vacancy	
Councillor A Munday	Yes		

64 **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the Minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 3rd January 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

65 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: There were no interests declared.

Before proceeding to the next Item on the Agenda, the Chairman advised Members that he would like to pause the business for the meeting to make the following special announcement.

It was with deep sadness that we received notification that Councillor David Hume, District Councillor for Halstead St Andrews passed away on Tuesday 14th February.

Councillor Hume had played a huge role within the Council over the 12 years he served as a District Councillor, he had been a huge part of Halstead life, both in his personal capacity but also as a Member of Halstead Town Council, during which time he was also appointed as Halstead's Mayor. He would be deeply missed by so many, and our thoughts were with his family and friends.

The Chairman then invited Councillor Pell to lead the tributes for the evening, followed by Group Leaders, Councillors Butland, Mann and Abbott.

The Chairman thanked Councillors for their tributes and echoed the kind words that had been spoken in memory of Councillor Hume.

Following the tributes from Members, the Council stood for a 2-minute silence in memory of Councillor Hume.

66 **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were three questions asked/statements made. The questions/statements related to Agenda Item 7 and to matters which were not on the Agenda for discussion, as follows: -

Agenda Item 7 - 'Council Budget and Council Tax 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 to 2026/27'

Statement read by Councillor K Evans (Feering Parish Council)

Councillor G Butland, Leader of the Council, responded to the statement.

'Finchingfield Bridge proposals' (not on the Agenda for discussion)

Statement read by Mr Staines

Statement read by Mr Ault

Councillor G Butland, Leader of the Council, responded to the statements.

67 **ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

INFORMATION: The following announcements/statements were made: -

Chairman of the Council - Announcements

The Chairman announced that he was fortunate to receive a number of compliments from residents regarding Council services. This month he had received an email from a member of the public who lived outside of the District who had taken the time to email the Chairman with regards to the continued excellent service and communication she had received from the Operations Team and from Paul Partridge personally.

This person travelled through the District frequently and regularly contacted the Council notifying them of environmental issues she had identified on her travels. She had needed to contact Paul and the team on several occasions and reported that each time the response had been rapid and efficient, and wanted to commend the Operations Team on their excellent service. The Chairman added that this was by no means the only complement the Council had received recently in respect of the Operations team and took the opportunity to pay tribute to the excellent work they had carried out and the high regard in which they were held, not just by residents but by others who were so impressed that they also had taken the time to contact the Council.

The Chairman passed on his congratulations to the Land Charges Team for being shortlisted for the best performing local land charges department at the 2023 Land Data Awards for Excellence. This followed on from their nomination last year where they came third out of over 400 other Authorities. The Chairman wished them well for the Awards ceremony at the end of March.

The Chairman advised Members that since the last meeting of Full Council, he had attended another 6 engagements. Although January was a fairly quiet month, he was pleased to inform Members that the total engagements attended for the year so far had now exceeded 100.

The Leader advised Members that he did not have any announcements at this time.

68 **STATEMENT BY A COUNCILLOR – COUNCILLOR JAMES ABBOTT**
“SUPPORTING, AND INVESTING IN THE COMMUNITY OF SILVER END”

INFORMATION: Prior to consideration of the item, the Chairman advised Members that there would be no right of debate in response to Councillor J Abbott’s statement.

Councillor Abbott, Leader of the Green and Independent Group, made a short statement in regard to the lack of investment in essential services and important local projects in Silver End, in comparison to the rate at which housing was being developed in the village. Councillor Abbott advised members that Silver End was a rapidly growing village with a large Conservation Area based on the original Model Garden Village

initiated almost 100 years ago. The number of homes under construction, recently completed or with consent was now over 600, resulting in the population set to increase by well over 1,000 people. Despite this, and despite the pre-existing needs of the village, there had been little investment in recent years in essential services and important local projects and not one of the new housing areas included any on-site services or facilities.

Councillor Abbott reported that specifically, there were 4 main areas where support and investment was needed, these included:

- The GP surgery which was earmarked for expansion. It was noted that the catchment area for this surgery included both Silver End and Cressing, which was also faced with rapid housing growth. It was also added that there were parking constraints at the GP surgery and at the nearby shops.
- It was reported that the Silver End Conservation Guide was now 24 years old. Councillor Abbott stressed that he had been requesting for this to be updated for some time and that he had been given endless assurances and dates by which it would be completed, but was yet to see any progress be made. It was added that there had been confusion and friction in the village around what home improvements were permitted, this was partly due to the Guide being so out of date.
- Councillor Abbott advised that he had been asking for support and investment for two local groups which used Braintree District Council (BDC) owned property for many years. They were a sports and social club, which benefited many groups in the village, and a pre-school. It was recognised that an additional £5,000 was now included in the 2023/24 Budget to assist with improved parking at the club, however it was noted that this was a fraction of what was requested via the Councillor Capital Grant bid scheme. Councillor Abbott explained that without any reference to himself or the club, the Cabinet sought to change the nature of the bid to an unworkable parking option which would never have been applied for. It was also reported that the club had been out of lease with BDC for many years and repeated promises that the lease would be updated have not been met. With regards to the pre-school, Councillor Abbott advised Members that this had no outdoor play space of its own. It was recognised that early years development was a high priority for all communities and despite his efforts to bring together all relevant parties and having identified what was believe to be a suitable piece of BDC land, which could also help improve a sporting facility, there had been no progress.
- Finally, Councillor Abbott made reference to the old Crittall Factory site which had remained derelict for over a decade. Councillor Abbott advised Members that this was an obvious opportunity to deliver a mixed-use redevelopment on a brownfield site, that could include local homes, potential for some small starter units as well as a community use of the surviving structures such as a village museum and cafe. It was added that the site could also help to ease the significant parking pressures in the village centre. It had previously been requested for the Council to purchase the

site, with the potential of working alongside a housing association, however this request had been unsuccessful.

Councillor Abbott concluded that he was not claiming that there had been zero support, but that the issue was with delivery and extended an invitation to the administration to work alongside him and Councillor Wright as well as key groups in the village to progress these issues as soon as possible, and better support one of the largest growing villages in the District.

Following the statement, Councillor Butland, Leader of the Council responded to the issues Councillor Abbott had raised in relation to the investment opportunities in Silver End. The full statement and response provided can be viewed on the Council's YouTube channel at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig1hR2IEpho>

69 **COUNCIL BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2023/24 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2026/27**

INFORMATION: Members were reminded that Reports relating to this Item had been circulated separately to the Agenda in advance of the meeting together with the Amendments Pack which included five amendments along with technical advice from the Head of Finance, relating to the Council Budget.

Councillor Butland, Leader of the Council, moved the recommendations as set out in the report, these were seconded by Councillor McKee, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation. The Chairman invited Councillor Butland and Councillor McKee, as proposer and seconder of the recommendations, respectively, to speak on the report.

In his opening statement, Councillor Butland congratulated the Council on putting forward a sensible and strong budget, following the approach taken in previous years. It was recognised that it had been a particularly difficult year for budget setting, with regards to the increase in costs and rates that had affected residents and Councils. The Leader expressed his gratitude to officers for all the hard work that had gone into the budget setting process. It was noted that the guiding principles of the budget were to maintain as many of the services that were currently delivered as possible, and to also protect as many residents as possible from the increased demands arising from the cost of living.

The Leader reported that he had, in recent weeks, received notification from the Leader of Essex County Council (ECC) that the Council's levelling up bid for the Millennium Slips had been unsuccessful. The Leader at ECC had advised that in anticipation of the County Council's upcoming budget setting, the Millennium Slips project was unlikely to proceed in the near or foreseeable future, although it was noted that they would remain on the County Council's list for proposed future projects. Following discussions with officers, it was proposed that the £2.5m ringfenced for this project should be used in 2 specific ways. Firstly, that £1m should be allocated towards

a Transformation reserve to enable the District Council to carry out important work that was needed in respect of making services more efficient and effective. And secondly, that the remaining £1.5m should be used in some way to assist in alleviating the proposed Council Tax increases and a proposal was made that a sum of £25 known as the New Homes and Growth Dividend would be made payable to all Council Tax payers across the District.

Councillor McKee, as seconder of the recommendations, then spoke on the report. Full details of the presentation can be found on the Council's YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig1hR2IEpho>

Following the presentation of the report, as amendments to the budget had been received, the Chairman then invited Councillor Abbott to set out and move his five amendments in respect of the Budget, which were as follows:-

Amendment 1: "Recommendation 2.1.17 to be replaced with the following:
A Council Tax Requirement of £10,687,006 resulting in a Council Tax rate for 2023/24 of £191.52 for a Band D Property. This is in accordance with the recommendations by the Joint Scrutiny Review on Cost-of Living measures. The shortfall of £155,685 generated from the difference in the proposed 2.5% increase and the 1% increase set out above to be funded by using available New Homes Bonus funds."

Amendment 2: "That the budget includes a provision for the Council to continue to publish and deliver the annual recycling calendars to each property within the District at an estimated cost of £25,000. This was to be funded by using available New Homes Bonus funds."

Amendment 3: "That the Council confirms an intention that funding from available New Homes Bonus across the above 2 items, plus maintaining the parish council street cleaning payments at current levels funded in 2022/23, namely £87,980, will be included within the MTFS to ensure funding across these three provisions in 2024/25, totalling £210k (plus allowance for inflation)".

Amendment 4: "That the proposed allocation of up to £200k from General Fund balances will not be made to fund one-off initial costs related to the proposed introduction of charging for the collection of garden waste."

Amendment 5: "That in respect of the revoked (ref. addendum Budget report) ringfencing of the allocation of £2.5 million for the Millennium Way slips, the Reserve established from the balance of funds remaining from the Millennium Way Slips provision after the deduction of the cost of a New Homes & Growth Dividend, of approximately £850,000, is allocated to investment projects in cycling routes (aligned with the Cycling Strategy) and investment in sustainable local capital projects in rural parts of the district. The reallocation to cycling and rural projects will support local communities and BDC's Climate Change commitments."

The amendments were seconded Councillor Thorogood.

Members were advised that before commencing with the debate on the Budget, they would first need to respond to the proposed amendments and that there would be a single debate on all proposed amendments. Once the debate had concluded, a recorded vote was taken on each of the amendments, the results of which were as follows:

Amendment 1

For the Amendment:

Councillors: Abbott, Abram, Hicks, Thorogood, Walsh, Wright (6).

Against the Amendment:

Councillors: Baugh, Bowers, Butland, Coleridge, Mrs M Cunningham, T Cunningham, Mrs C Dervish, Euesden, Everard, Mrs D Garrod, Green, Johnson, Korsinah, Mann, McKee, Munday, Mrs I Parker, Mrs J Pell, Pritchard, Radley, Ricci, Rose, Miss V Santomauro, Mrs W Scattergood, Mrs W Schmitt, Schwier, Mrs G Spray, van Dulken, Mrs L Walters, Mrs S Wilson, Wrench (31).

Abstained:

Councillors: Hensman (1).

Absent:

Councillors: Mrs Beavis, Courtauld, Horner, Mrs Kilmartin, McArdle, Rehman, Mrs J Sandum, Tattersley, Miss M Weeks, White (10).

The Amendment was declared **LOST**.

Amendment 2

For the Amendment:

Councillors: Abbott, Abram, Hicks, Thorogood, Walsh, Wright (6).

Against the Amendment:

Councillors: Baugh, Bowers, Butland, Coleridge, Mrs M Cunningham, T Cunningham, Mrs C Dervish, Euesden, Everard, Mrs D Garrod, Green, Johnson, Korsinah, Mann, McKee, Munday, Mrs I Parker, Mrs J Pell, Pritchard, Radley, Ricci, Rose, Miss V Santomauro, Mrs W Scattergood, Mrs W Schmitt, Schwier, Mrs G Spray, van Dulken, Mrs L Walters, Mrs S Wilson, Wrench (31).

Abstained:

Councillors: Hensman (1).

Absent:

Councillors: Mrs Beavis, Courtauld, Horner, Mrs Kilmartin, McArdle, Rehman, Mrs J Sandum, Tattersley, Miss M Weeks, White (10).

The Amendment was declared **LOST**.

Amendment 3

For the Amendment:

Councillors: Abbott, Hicks, Thorogood, Walsh, Wright (5).

Against the Amendment:

Councillors: Abram, Baugh, Bowers, Butland, Coleridge, Mrs M Cunningham, T Cunningham, Mrs C Dervish, Euesden, Everard, Mrs D Garrod, Green, Johnson, Korsinah, Mann, McKee, Munday, Mrs I Parker, Mrs J Pell, Pritchard, Radley, Ricci, Rose, Miss V Santomauro, Mrs W Scattergood, Mrs W Schmitt, Schwier, Mrs G Spray, van Dulken, Mrs L Walters, Mrs S Wilson, Wrench (32).

Abstained:

Councillors: Hensman (1).

Absent:

Councillors: Mrs Beavis, Courtauld, Horner, Mrs Kilmartin, McArdle, Rehman, Mrs J Sandum, Tattersley, Miss M Weeks, White (10).

The Amendment was declared **LOST**.

Amendment 4

For the Amendment:

Councillors: Abbott, Abram, Everard, Green, Mann, Munday, Mrs J Pell, Radley, Thorogood, Walsh, Wright (11).

Against the Amendment:

Councillors: Baugh, Bowers, Butland, Coleridge, Mrs M Cunningham, T Cunningham, Mrs C Dervish, Euesden, Mrs D Garrod, Johnson, Korsinah, McKee, Mrs I Parker, Pritchard, Ricci, Rose, Mrs W Scattergood, Mrs W Schmitt, Schwier, Mrs G Spray, van Dulken, Mrs L Walters, Mrs S Wilson, Wrench (24).

Abstained:

Councillors: Hensman, Hicks, Miss V Santomauro (3).

Absent:

Councillors: Mrs Beavis, Courtauld, Horner, Mrs Kilmartin, McArdle, Rehman, Mrs J Sandum, Tattersley, Miss M Weeks, White (10).

The Amendment was declared **LOST**.

Amendment 5

For the Amendment:

Councillors: Abbott, Abram, Hicks, Thorogood, Walsh, Wright (6).

Against the Amendment:

Councillors: Baugh, Bowers, Butland, Coleridge, Mrs M Cunningham, T Cunningham, Mrs C Dervish, Euesden, Everard, Mrs D Garrod, Green, Johnson, Korsinah, Mann, McKee, Munday, Mrs I Parker, Mrs J Pell, Pritchard, Radley, Ricci, Rose, Miss V Santomauro, Mrs W Scattergood, Mrs W Schmitt, Schwier, Mrs G Spray, van Dulken, Mrs L Walters, Mrs S Wilson, Wrench (31).

Abstained:

Councillors: Hensman (1).

Absent:

Councillors: Mrs Beavis, Courtauld, Horner, Mrs Kilmartin, McArdle, Rehman, Mrs J Sandum, Tattersley, Miss M Weeks, White (10).

The Amendment was declared **LOST**.

Following the vote on the five proposed amendments, the Chairman commenced the general budget debate. Details of the full budget debate can be found on the Council's YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig1hR2IEpho>

Once the debate had concluded, a recorded vote was taken on the substantive budget motion, the results of which were as follows:

Substantive Budget Motion**For the Motion:**

Councillors: Abram, Baugh, Bowers, Butland, Coleridge, Mrs M Cunningham, T Cunningham, Mrs C Dervish, Euesden, Mrs D Garrod, Hensman, Johnson, Korsinah, McKee, Mrs I Parker, Mrs J Pell, Pritchard, Ricci, Rose, Miss V Santomauro, Mrs W Scattergood, Mrs W Schmitt, Schwier, Mrs G Spray, van Dulken, Mrs L Walters, Mrs S Wilson, Wrench (28).

Against the Motion:

Councillors: Abbott, Hicks, Thorogood, Walsh, Wright (5).

Abstained:

Councillors: Everard, Green, Mann, Munday, Radley, (5).

Absent:

Councillors: Mrs Beavis, Courtauld, Horner, Mrs Kilmartin, McArdle, Rehman, Mrs J Sandum, Tattersley, Miss M Weeks, White (10).

The Motion was declared CARRIED

DECISION: That Council approved the following:

1.1 The revenue budget for 2023/24 as set out in Appendices A and B to this

Addendum Report.

- 1.2 To revoke the ringfencing of £2.5m of previously allocated New Homes Bonus for the A120 Access Improvement Package (Millennium Slips).
- 1.3 The Braintree District Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/24 as detailed on the Council's website at Local Council Tax Support Scheme.
- 1.4 The Council Tax Support Fund as set out in Section 15 of the report and in accordance with Government Guidance, and to delegate to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to determine the administration of any discretionary element.
- 1.5 The Council's discretionary fees and charges for 2023/24 as detailed in Appendix C to the report.
- 1.6 Delegated authority is given to the appropriate Cabinet Members to determine the level of charges where these are subject to third party information or agreed with external partners, or where in-year variations are required for commercial or concessionary reasons.
- 1.7 The Council's policy for Discretionary Business Rate Relief Schemes (under section 47 of the Local Government Act 1988, as amended), as detailed in Section 12 of the report, for 2023/24.
- 1.8 The Discretionary Council Tax discounts and exemptions, and premiums as detailed in Section 17 of the report, for 2023/24.
- 1.9 The Council's Pay Policy for 2023/24 as detailed in Appendix D to the main, report, subject to the amounts of pay included being updated in line with the final agreed settlement for the cost-of-living award to be implemented with effect from 1st April 2023.
- 1.10 Establish the following new earmarked reserves: Cost of Living Reserve of £1m and an Economic Growth and Healthy Housing Strategies reserve of £427k, from the Council's 2023/24 allocation of New Homes Bonus; and a new Transformation Reserve is established from the balance of funds remaining from the Millennium Slips provision after the deduction of the cost of a New Homes & Growth Dividend as set out in paragraph 1.18 below.
- 1.11 The estimated movements on earmarked reserves as detailed in Appendix C to the Addendum Report, and the transfer of the residual balance held in the Covid-19 Contingency reserve to the General Fund unallocated balance.
- 1.12 The allocation of £500k of the unallocated New Homes Bonus reserve to provide interim funding for the Strategic Investment Team, including the feasibility reserve.

- 1.13 The allocation of up to £200k from General Fund balances to fund one-off initial costs related to the proposed introduction of charging for the collection of garden waste, such allocation is subject to the introduction of charging for the collection of garden waste being approved by Cabinet.

Capital

- 1.14 The Capital bids for 2023/24 listed in Appendix G to the report.
- 1.15 A Disabled Facilities Grants programme which matches the resources allocated to the Council from the Better Care Fund for 2023/24.

Capital and Investment Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy

- 1.15 The Capital and Investment Strategy as detailed in Appendix H to the report.
- 1.16 The Treasury Management Strategy as detailed in Appendix I to the report.

Council Tax

- 1.17 A Council Tax Requirement of £10,842,691 resulting in a Council Tax rate for 2023/24 of £194.31 for a Band D property.

Growth Dividend

- 1.18 A £25 New Homes & Growth Dividend to be made to eligible households in 2023/24 in accordance with the Dividend Policy (Appendix D to the Addendum Report) estimated cost to be £1.65m.
- 1.19 To delegate to the Section 151 Officer to make technical policy amendments to ensure the Dividend Policy meets the criteria set by the Council.

70 CABINET'S REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Before introducing this item, the Chairman advised Members that as the time allowed for the meeting had been exceeded there would not be sufficient time to consider this report and invited Members to submit written questions to the Cabinet in response to their reports.

At the end of the meeting, the Chairman reminded Councillors that the next meeting of Full Council would be held on 20th March 2023.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 10.19pm.

Councillor A Hensman
(Chairman)