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SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
21 FEBRUARY 2024

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Present:

The Mayor, Councillor Laurent  
The Sheriff, Councillor Shields  
Councillors Allen, J Baillie, P Baillie, Blackman, Mrs Blatchford, Barbour,  
Barnes-Andrews, Beaurain, Bogle, M Bunday, T Bunday, Chapman, Cox,  
Denness, Every, Fielker, Finn, Fitzhenry, A Frampton, Y Frampton, Galton,  
Goodfellow, Greenhalgh, Houghton, Kataria, Kaur, Kenny, Keogh, Lambert,  
Letts, McCreanor, McEwing, Mrs Mintoff, Moulton, Noon, Dr Paffey,  
W Payne, Powell-Vaughan, Quadir, Rayment, Renyard, Savage, Ugwoeme,  
Whitbread, Winning and Wood

54. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies had been received from Councillors Leggett and Windle.

55. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LORD MAYOR AND LEADER

(i) FILMING

The Lord Mayor announced that the meeting is being live streamed and will also be available for members of the public to view online after the meeting. For any member of the public filming the right to film is limited to the duration of the meeting and recording must cease when I close the meeting. Filming or recording is not permitted if the effect would be to interrupt or disturb the proceedings or if it is intrusive of a specific individual or individuals. If this is occurring, it would not be permitted, and would be asked to stop. Similarly, some members of the public attending the meeting may object to being filmed, photographed or recorded and would expect that these wishes are complied with.

(ii) WELCOME TO ANDREW TRAVERS

The Lord Mayor formally welcomed Andrew Travers to Council, Andrew had been appointed as Southampton's Interim Chief Executive. We all looked forward to working with Andrew in his new role.

(iii) GOODBYE TO MIKE HARRIS

The Lord Mayor formally said goodbye to Mike Harris former Chief Executive and thanked him for all his hard work, dedication and commitment to the City Council and Residents of Southampton and wished him well for the future.

56. RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL FOR INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

Report of the Leader of the Council appointing the Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

**RESOLVED:** that Andrew Travers be appointed to the position of Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

57. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

Report of the Leader of the Council detailing the Members' Allowance Scheme.

**RESOLVED:** that the premise for the original recommendation for increases by the Independent Remuneration Panel be accepted but agreed that these would be frozen until the expiration of the current adopted Member Allowance Scheme in May 2027.

58. ENERGY PROCUREMENT CONTRACT

Report of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development detailing the Energy Procurement Contract.

**RESOLVED:** that the procurement of the Council's energy needs over 4 years, equating to a total of £60M, via the Laser Energy Procurement Framework - October 2024 through to September 2028 be approved.

59. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - EXEMPT PAPERS INCLUDED IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM (IF NEEDED)

The Lord Mayor moved in accordance with the Council's Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in respect of any consideration of the exempt appendix 6 to the following Item.

Appendix 6 was exempt from publication by virtue of category 3 of rule 10.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules i.e. information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person. It was not in the public interest to disclose this information due to an ongoing commercial dispute which was subject to a protected alternative dispute resolution procedure. If the information was disclosed then the Council's financial position would be available to other parties to the dispute and prejudice the Council's ability to achieve best value.

60. THE HRA BUDGET 2024/25 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 TO 2028/29

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing detailing the HRA Budget 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2028/29 and a 40-year business plan. The report provided details to inform Council in setting rents, service charges and landlord-

controlled heating charges for 2024/25. The report also sets out the HRA capital programme HRA for the period 2023/24 to 2028/29 and identifies how the 2024/25 HRA budget had been balanced and contained the outcome of the formal consultation on proposals for rent and landlord-controlled heating charges.

The recommendations therein, were moved by Councillor Frampton and seconded by Councillor Fielker.

The Council agreed to suspend Council Procedure Rules 14.2, 14.5, 14.6, 14.7, 14.8, 14.9 and 16.2:-

- (i) to enable any amendments to be proposed, seconded and considered at the same time;
- (ii) to enable any amendment to be re-introduced later into the meeting; and
- (iii) to revise the time allowed for speakers as follows:-

- Movers of motions - 20 minutes
- Seconders - 10 minutes
- Green Party/Independent Members – 5 minutes
- Honorary Alderman - 5 minutes
- Right of Reply (Executive only) – 10 minutes

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) Following consultation (paragraphs 14 to 25) to approve that, from 1 April 2024, an average rent increase would be applied to dwelling rents of 7.7% in line with Government guidance, as detailed in paragraph 14, equivalent to an average increase of £7.15 per week in the current average weekly dwelling rent figure of £92.75 for Social rent, and £10.58 per week in the current average weekly rent for affordable rent of £151.16. Rents for Shared Ownership rents would also increase by 7.7%.
- (ii) That there was no increase in weekly service charges to be applied from 1 April 2024, pending further work as detailed in paragraph 21 be approved.
- (iii) That the Housing Revenue Account revenue estimates as set out in Appendix 4 and 5 be approved.
- (iv) That the 40-year business plan for revenue and capital expenditure set out in Appendix 1 and Confidential Appendix 6 respectively, that based on current assumptions were sustainable, maintaining a minimum HRA balance increasing from £2.0M agreed for 2023/24 to £7M from 2027/28 in every financial year in line with current policy be approved.
- (v) That the increase in landlord-controlled heating charges as detailed in paragraph 25. which represent a 5% increase (reduced from the 10% increase previously anticipated in the MTFS update in July 2023) be approved.
- (vi) That the revised Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme, which totals £280.01M (as detailed in paragraph 60 & 61 and the associated use of resources be approved.
- (vii) That the capital projections in the HRA Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2028/29 as detailed from paragraph 60, and that spend between 2023/24 and 2027/28 had been increased following the decision of Cabinet on 6 February 2024 on the future delivery of Plots 2,9 and 10 Townhill Park, to deliver plots 2 and 9 through the Affordable Homes Framework and adjusted for known slippages at Quarter 3 be approved.
- (viii) That an increase in the HRA working balance from the current £2m, to £7m by 2027/28 be approved.

NOTE: FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS: Councillors Allen, Barne-Andrews, Blatchford, Bogle, M Bunday, Cox, Denness, Every, Fielker, Finn, A Frampton, Y Frampton, Goodfellow, Greenhalgh, Kataria, Kaur, Kenny, Keogh, Lambert, Letts, McCreanor, McEwing, Mintoff, Noon Paffey, Payne, Quadir, Rayment, Renyard, Savage, Shields, Ugwoeme, Webb, Whitbread, Winning and T Bunday.

NOTE: AGAINST THE RECOMMENDATIONS: Councillors J Baillie, P Baille, Beurain, Fitzhenry, Galton, Houghton, Laurent, Moulton, Powell-Vaughan, Blackman, Chapman, Wood and Barbour.

61. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

It was noted that following recent changes within the Administration urgency powers under the Officer Scheme of Delegation had been by the Director Legal and Governance to appoint:-

- (i) Councillor Leggett to Governance Committee to replace Councillor A Frampton.
- (ii) Councillor Cox to take up the vacancies on Health Overview Scrutiny Panel and Children and Families Scrutiny Panel.
- (iii) Councillor Letts to take up the vacancy on Licensing Committee.

It was also noted that Councillor Leggett would replace Councillor Greenhalgh on Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.