

COUNCIL
24 FEBRUARY 2021
7.30 - 9.20 PM



Present:

Councillors Ms Merry (Mayor), Gbadebo (Deputy Mayor), Allen, Atkinson, Bhandari, Dr Barnard, Bettison OBE, D Birch, Mrs Birch, Brossard, Brown, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Finch, Ms Gaw, Mrs L Gibson, MJ Gibson, Mrs Hamilton, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE, Ms Hayes, Heydon, Mrs Ingham, Kennedy, Kirke, Leake, Mrs McKenzie, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Mrs Mattick, Mossom, Neil, Porter, Skinner, Temperton, Tullett, Turrell, Virgo and Wade

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Angell, Green and Parker

45. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 January 2021 be approved, and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

46. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

47. Mayor's Announcements

Funeral for Freeman of the Borough and former Councillor Jim Finnie

The Mayor reported that it had been a privilege to attend the funeral of James (Jim) Finnie, the Freeman of the Borough, past Mayor, former Conservative Borough Council colleague and Crowthorne Parish councillor. The Mayor was aware that many people attended the service virtually and looked forward to being able to celebrate his contribution to the Borough when Covid-restrictions allowed. The online condolence messages had been shared with his family.

Thank you messages

The Mayor advised that due to the challenges of Covid it had not been possible to carry out the usual civic engagements which were often an opportunity to say 'thank you' to residents and organisations. The Mayor announced that the Mayor's Office was keen to participate in any community events and meetings that were being run virtually or future events that were being planned.

Mayor's Charity Online Auction

The Mayor announced that she would be running an online auction in support of her chosen charities: Soldiers Sailors Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA Berkshire) and the British Forces Foundation (BFF). She reflected how service personnel had been helping in the pandemic from testing to building Nightingale Hospitals. The Mayor asked for support for these charities by pledging an item for the auction or placing a bid.

Census 2021 – 21 March 2021

The Mayor reminded everyone present that the Census was being held on 21 March 2021. She advised that letters were being sent to each household with a unique access code to enable the census to be completed online, although paper copies would be available.

Executive Member for the Environment

Councillor Mrs Hayes MBE, Executive Member for the Environment was pleased to remind everyone that food waste recycling was being launched in the borough on 1 March 2021. The fleet of new food waste collection vehicles had been named following a competition to come up with food related names. Over 1,700 residents voted and the winners were: The Food Dude, Binderella, Truck Norris, Hank Marvin and Dame Foodie Dench. Actress Dame Judi Dench sent a video message thanking the Council for naming one of its food waste trucks in her honour.

Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning

Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning was proud to report that the transformation of Braccan Walk youth hub was now complete. The ground floor of a car park had been transformed into a modern and colourful youth centre for young people in Bracknell Forest. He concluded that he was looking forward to welcoming young people when restrictions allowed.

Councillor Dr Barnard paid tribute to the hard work of the borough's schools through the pandemic and preparing for the reopening of schools from 8 March 2021. He recognised Rachel Morgan, Assistant Director of Education, who was leaving the Council, for her contribution to improving school performance with more schools now rated good and outstanding, developing good relationship with schools and a child-focused approach to education.

Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

Councillor Birch, Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing advised the meeting of the Young Health Champions programme which was being run in secondary schools. He was proud that the initiative aimed to give young people the skills, knowledge and confidence to act as peer mentors by teaching young people about managing their own health and wellbeing and how to promote health campaigns to their peers. The project had been short-listed for the Children and Young People Now Award.

Fundraising for Careleavers

The Mayor was pleased to announce that £780 had been raised by Councillor Ms Hayes' fundraising collection from councillors.

48. **Executive Report**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bettison OBE, presented his report on the work of the Executive since that reported at the Council meeting on 13 January 2021. The Executive had met twice on 26 January and 9 February 2021.

The Leader highlighted the following matters that had been considered:

- Digital & ICT & Customer Experience Strategies 2021 – 2024 had been approved and were intrinsically linked. The strategies put the customer first with a recognised irreversible trend towards digital and the Council was increasing its migration to cloud-based technology.
- CCTV Deployment & RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act) had been updated.
- Revised Local Development scheme agreed which set out the work programme and timetable for Local Plan and Joint Minerals & Waste Plan:
 - Local Plan to be considered by Executive in March
 - Pre-submission consultation March – May
 - Full Council to consider submission in June 2021
- School Places & Capacity Plan covering until 2025 would reduce surplus capacity in primary schools and facilitate transformation work to support special needs.
- Climate Change Strategy was agreed. As an early signatory to Nottingham Declaration in 2007 the Council had an overall objective to become carbon neutral by 2050 in line with Government Policy. The Strategy included 41 separate key projects and an Advisory Group to support the Executive Member was being established.
- Urgent action had been undertaken to procure Lateral Flow Community Testing. A proposal was submitted on 21 January for 15,000 people, twice weekly, based on up to 9 locations with eligibility focussed on those who have to leave home to work. The scheme was operational by 3 February 2021 currently across four centres with another opening next week.
- Vehicle Emissions & Air Quality agreement to enforce 1986 Regulations relating to vehicle idling in Air Quality Management Areas would focus on engagement before enforcement and give power to adopt enforcement where necessary.
- Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report had been received. There were five findings of “fault” from the Council’s millions of interactions during the year.
- Appropriation of land at Coopers Hill had been agreed to support the regeneration of the town centre. There had been a technical approach to remove development risk and positive discussions with HCA continue on the covenant.

Councillor Temperton asked whether schools could be involved in designing the promotional material to reduce vehicle emissions and improve air quality. Councillor Bettison OBE agreed that this was a helpful suggestion as it was good practice to get young people involved in such projects so that they can help raise awareness to their own parents.

Councillor Temperton asked whether the Climate Change Strategy could be placed in a prominent position on the Council’s website to reflect that it is the core of the Council’s decisions. Councillor Bettison OBE agreed that in all communications, where appropriate, climate change would be central and remain visible.

Councillor Temperton stated that the previous year's school plans plan predicted numbers were more accurate than ever before so queried what had changed in the process. Councillor Dr Barnard replied to this compliment that no algorithm was behind the predictions but the hard work of the officer team to create a modelling tool to assess the data available.

Councillors Bettison OBE advised, in response to Councillor Ms Brown's question, that officers from the Public Protection Partnership would undertake air quality testing and would approach people in cars to explain what they were doing and how reducing emissions would improve air quality. He hoped that educating residents would assist in developing support for these improvements.

49. **Financial Plans and Revenue Budgets 2021/22**

The Council considered the report by the Borough Treasurer which set out the financial plans and revenue budgets for the financial year 2021/22 and the supporting information which presented the Council's spending plans for 2021/22 and detailed budgets for the General Fund and Capital Programme.

Councillor Heydon gave a comprehensive budget speech placing particular focus on the following matters:

- He observed that the past 11 months had forced everyone to adapt to new ways of doing things:
 - the vast majority of staff worked effectively from home since last March, continuing to deliver services, with minimal disruption
 - working closely with voluntary sector partners the Council provided extra front-line support to some of the most vulnerable people in society
 - working with colleagues in Health the Council had commissioned block contracts with care homes to ensure that hospitals were not overwhelmed by patients
 - the Council facilitated the distribution of Government grants to businesses
- He stated that the Council's response to Covid closely followed Government guidance throughout whether closing services or setting up new ones when required such as local testing and vaccination programmes. This response was immediate and focussed on doing the right thing for Bracknell Forest residents and businesses without knowing the potential financial implications. These significant levels of additional costs this year would be covered through support from Government, both directly and indirectly through Health.
- He reported that the extension to grant support to local authorities for Covid-related costs was announced after the publication of draft budget proposals for consultation.
- He described the budget proposals for 2021/22 as "Covid-sensitive" as it was recognised that the human, economic and financial impacts of Covid would not end on 31 March 2021.
- He explained that external funding would be utilised for Highways schemes and school maintenance projects. Investment in a number of projects at Birch Hill, Holly Spring and the Pines would expand local provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- He explained that rebuilding the Council's commercial depot was the largest project in the capital programme as it was no longer fit for purpose despite renovation work. A third of the existing site would be used for redevelopment to help cover redevelopment costs.
- He reassured residents that none of the £3m savings proposed to help mitigate against cost pressures would result in service reductions.

- He explained that the additional one-off grants provided by the Government would be used to create a one-off funding package to:
 - invest in the town centre economies and protect local jobs;
 - work with voluntary and statutory partners to respond to the growing issue of mental health;
 - reduce council tax bills for lowest income households by £150; and
 - continue to fund important welfare support initiatives for families in crisis.
- He reported that funding was being set aside to support carbon reduction initiatives.
- He reflected that on average, Bracknell Forest schools would receive a 3.8% increase in per pupil funding and funding for the High Needs Block was set to increase by 8%. However the costs continued to increase at a much higher rate, meaning that the deficit on the High Needs Block was increasing. This was a national problem faced by many councils.
- He concluded that although there was the option of increasing Council Tax by 4.99% in 21/22 it was considered an appropriate balance between the short-term and longer-term considerations to propose an increase of 3.49%. This comprised of 1.99% as a general increase and 1.5% for the social care precept, to help fund the additional social care costs incurred supporting the most vulnerable residents. This would represent an additional 91 pence per week for an average Band D property. Lower income households receiving council tax support would also see a £150 reduction in their bills.

Councillor Temperton, Leader of the Opposition responded to the proposed budget.

On the proposition of Councillor Heydon, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance, seconded by Councillor Bettison OBE the recommendation as set out in the agenda was moved.

As required by legislation a recorded vote was taken on the motion and the voting was as follows:

FOR (36): Councillors Allen, Atkinson, Dr Barnard, Bettison OBE, Bhandari, D Birch, Mrs Birch, Brossard, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Finch, Ms Gaw, Gbadebo, Mrs Gibson, M J Gibson, Mrs Hamilton, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE, Ms Hayes, Heydon, Mrs Ingham, Mrs Kennedy, Kirke, Leake, Mrs Mattick, Mrs McKenzie, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Ms Merry, Mossom, Porter, Skinner, Tullett, Turrell and Wade

ABSTAIN (3): Brown, Neil and Temperton

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

2.1 Capital Programme 2021/22 - 2023/24

- General Fund capital funding of £12.221m for 2021/22 in respect of those schemes listed on pages 174 to 176 to be agreed;
- The inclusion of £5.363 of expenditure to be externally funded (including £1.524m of S106 funding) as outlined in the summary report for Council (page 169) and included on pages 174 to 176;
- That those schemes that attract external grant funding be agreed for inclusion within the 2021/22 capital programme at the level of funding received.
- Capital schemes that require external funding can only proceed once the Council is certain of receiving the grant; and

- v) The inclusion of an additional budget of £1m for 'Invest to Save' schemes be agreed.

2.2 Revenue Budget 2021/22

- i) The budget proposals set out in Table 1 (page 4) of the summary report for Council, subject to the changes identified in sections 3.2 (pages 4 to 5), 3.3 (pages 5 to 7), 3.5 (page 8), 3.8 (page 9), 4.3 (pages 11 to 13), 5.3 (pages 17 to 18), 8.2 (page 20) and 8.3 (page 20) of the report, be agreed;
- ii) Fees and charges as set out in Annexe G (pages 95 to 160) be approved;
- iii) A provision for inflation of £1.200m be approved;
- iv) The commitment budget as set out in Annexe A be approved (pages 23 to 24);
- v) That the Council should make additional funding available for distribution to schools through the local funding formula at the level set out in section 4.1 (page 9) of the summary report for Council subject to any minor amendments made by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning following the receipt of definitive funding allocations for Early Years and High Needs pupils;
- vi) A general contingency totalling £2.250m and a Covid-19 specific contingency of £3.417m be included, uses of which are authorised by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Director: Resources in accordance with the delegations included in the Council's constitution;
 - (a) Subject to the above, the revised draft budget proposals be agreed;
 - (b) A contribution of £0.001m (after allowing for additional interest from the use of balances) be made from revenue balances to support revenue expenditure;
- vii) Total net expenditure (after use of balances) of £74.085m (page 21), be approved;
- viii) The Council's Council Tax requirement, excluding Parish Council precepts, be set at £66.826m;
- ix) The Council Tax for the Council's services for each Valuation Band be set as follows:

Band	Tax Level Relative to Band D	£
A	6/9	935.46
B	7/9	1091.37
C	8/9	1247.28
D	9/9	1403.19
E	11/9	1715.01
F	13/9	2026.83
G	15/9	2338.65
H	18/9	2806.38

At the meeting on 09 February 2021 the Executive recommended the 2021/22 Treasury Management Strategy Statement and noted that strategy together with the Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement were matters which the Council needed to approve.

- xii) The Council approves the following indicators, limits, strategies and policies included in Annexe E (pages 59 to 84):

- The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2021/22 to 2023/24 contained within Annexe E(i);
- The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy contained within Annexe E(ii);
- The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, and the Treasury Prudential Indicators contained in Annexe E(iii);
- The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator in Annexe E(iii);
- The Investment Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24 and Treasury Management Limits on Activity contained in Annexe E(iv);

xiii) The formal Council Tax Resolution contained in section 3 be approved.

3 Council Tax Resolution

3.1 That the recommendations of the Executive outlined in sections 2.1 and 2.2 be agreed.

3.2 That it be noted that the amounts calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 are:

(a) **47,624 TAX BASE FOR THE WHOLE COUNCIL AREA**
being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended, as its council tax base for the year

(b) **TAX BASE FOR PART OF THE COUNCIL'S AREA
 EACH PARISH AREA**

Binfield	4,393
Bracknell	20,182
Crowthorne	3,022
Sandhurst	7,992
Warfield	5,153
Winkfield	6,882

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as amended, 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

3.3 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act), noting that Bracknell Town Council's (BTC) precept is subject to confirmation by BTC on 16 February:

(a) £318,988,697 **TOTAL EXPENDITURE INCLUDING GENERAL FUND, PARISH PRECEPTS AND THE COUNCIL'S SHARE OF ANY DEFICIT ON THE COLLECTION FUND**

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act

(b) £248,441,320 **TOTAL INCOME INCLUDING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND THE COUNCIL'S SHARE OF ANY SURPLUS ON THE COLLECTION FUND**

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act

(c) £70,547,377 **BOROUGH AND PARISH PRECEPTS NET EXPENDITURE TO BE FINANCED FROM COUNCIL TAX**

being the amount by which the aggregate at 3.3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3.3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year

(d) £1,481.34 **AVERAGE BAND "D" COUNCIL TAX FOR WHOLE BOROUGH**

being the amount at 3.3(c) above, divided by the amount at 3.2(a) 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 (including Parish precepts)

(e) £3,721,856 **PARISH PRECEPTS**

being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act

(f) £1,403.19 **BOROUGH COUNCIL TAX FOR BAND "D" PROPERTIES**

being the amount at 3.3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3.3(e) above by the amount at 3.2(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 if there were an area of the Borough to which no special item relates

(g) Part of the Council's area	BOROUGH AND PARISH COUNCIL TAX FOR EACH PARISH FOR BAND "D"
	£
Binfield	1,456.52
Bracknell	1,495.85
Crowthorne	1,485.65
Sandhurst	1,477.95
Warfield	1,446.23
Winkfield	1,482.97

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3.3(f) 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 3.2(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

(h) Part of the Council's area **BOROUGH AND PARISH COUNCIL TAX IN EACH PARISH FOR EACH VALUATION BAND**

Parish	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Binfield	971.01	1,132.85	1,294.68	1,456.52	1,780.19	2,103.86	2,427.53	2,913.04
Bracknell	997.23	1,163.44	1,329.64	1,495.85	1,828.26	2,160.67	2,493.08	2,991.70
Crowthorne	990.43	1,155.51	1,320.58	1,485.65	1,815.79	2,145.94	2,476.08	2,971.30
Sandhurst	985.30	1,149.52	1,313.73	1,477.95	1,806.38	2,134.82	2,463.25	2,955.90
Warfield	964.15	1,124.85	1,285.54	1,446.23	1,767.61	2,089.00	2,410.38	2,892.46
Winkfield	988.65	1,153.42	1,318.20	1,482.97	1,812.52	2,142.07	2,471.62	2,965.94

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3.3(g) 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

- 3.4 That it be noted that for the year 2021/22 the Police and Crime Panel have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council regarding the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley	154.19	179.88	205.58	231.28	282.68	334.07	385.47	462.56

- 3.5 That it be noted that for the year 2021/22 the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, subject to confirmation by the Fire Authority on 17 February, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	45.97	53.63	61.29	68.95	84.27	99.59	114.92	137.90

- 3.6 That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3.3(h), 3.4 and 3.5 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2021/22 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Parish	(a) Part of the Council's area		TOTAL COUNCIL TAX FOR EACH VALUATION BAND					
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Binfield	1,171.17	1,366.36	1,561.55	1,756.75	2,147.14	2,537.52	2,927.92	3,513.50
Bracknell	1,197.39	1,396.95	1,596.51	1,796.08	2,195.21	2,594.33	2,993.47	3,592.16
Crowthorne	1,190.59	1,389.02	1,587.45	1,785.88	2,182.74	2,579.60	2,976.47	3,571.76
Sandhurst	1,185.46	1,383.03	1,580.60	1,778.18	2,173.33	2,568.48	2,963.64	3,556.36
Warfield	1,164.31	1,358.3	1,552.4	1,746.46	2,134.56	2,522.66	2,910.77	3,492.92
Winkfield	1,188.81	1,386.9 6 3	1,585.0 1 7	1,783.20	2,179.47	2,575.73	2,972.01	3,566.40

50. **Question Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 10**

Councillor Temperton asked Councillor Heydon, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance the following published question:

The COVID winter Grant is now being used for supporting residents' utility bills and the food voucher/ parcels for our vulnerable children whilst home-learning.

The £500 Isolation Grant is available to support those on low incomes having to self-isolate after a positive COVID test.

How long are the current funds able to sustain the support needed?

In response Councillor Heydon stated that there was not a simple response as this was covered by two areas the mandatory Test and Trace Self-Isolation Payments and discretionary payments. Both elements were funded until the end of March and it was not possible to anticipate how much funding would be needed so there were other covid welfare funds that could be provided as necessary. He added there was also the COVID Winter Support Grant which was agreed in early December. The grant aims to support families struggling with the costs of food, utilities and other essentials as a result of the pandemic and the Council was on track to issue the full amount of the grant with additional promotion ongoing.

Councillor Heydon concluded that it had just been announced that funding for the Test and Trace Self-Isolation Payments would be extended until 30 June and funding for discretionary payments would be available until 30 June.

Councillor Temperton sought clarification in her supplementary question of whether support would be provided for food vouchers for the borough's vulnerable children required to self-isolate. Councillor Heydon explained that the government had announced that the holiday activities and food programme would be expanded across the whole of England in 2021 with funding will support local authorities to coordinate free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities.

Councillor Dr Barnard added that if children are self-isolating at home during term time they would be provided with free school meal vouchers and additional support would be available for the family for utility bills and discretionary costs. He concluded that the imminent Chancellors' budget announcement was likely to include further measures to support for children, families and vulnerable people.

CHAIRMAN

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