

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

BUDGET CONSULTATION

Meeting held: 26th January 2017

Present:	Councillor Lloyd Bunday (Chair) Councillors Adams, Burton, Derbyshire, Don, Hakewill, Hollobone, Howes, Jelley, Lee, Mitchell, Roberts, Rowley, Scrimshaw, Tebbutt, Thurland, Watts and Zanger.
Councillor Bob Roberts	Weston-by-Welland Parish Council
Councillor Nick Richards	Wilbarston Parish Council
Councillor David Watson	Geddington, Newton and Little Oakley Parish Council
Councillor Richard Barnwell	Mawsley and Great Cransley Parish Councils
Councillor Brenda Hargreaves	Pytchley Parish Council
Councillor Sam Watts	Burton Latimer Town Council
Councillor Bill Jones	Dingley Parish Council
Councillor Eileen Hales	Northamptonshire County Council
Councillor Robin Shrive	Broughton Parish Council
Councillor Fred West	Harrington Parish Council
Councillor Dianne Miles-Zanger	Barton Seagrave Parish Council
Mike Sawford	Independent Member – KBC
Jane Calcott	Churches Together (Kettering & District)
Martyn Lund	Tenants' Forum
K N Thurland	
Oliver Wyeth	

16.BC.01 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Wharin (Warkton Parish Council), Victor Green (Stoke Albany Parish Council), Robin Brown (Northamptonshire County Council), Nigel Padget (Burton Latimer Town Council), Margaret Talbot and Ruth Groome (Kettering Borough Council), Mr Reg Carvell (Tenants' Forum) and Mr Mick Berry (Fire Service).

16.BC.02 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members of local organisations, members of the public and councillors to the meeting and introduced Members and officers.

16.BC.03 BUDGET CONSULTATION

A presentation was given which provided a comprehensive briefing on the Council's draft budget and the key issues under consideration. The presentation was facilitated by the Head of Resources, the Principal Accountant and the Managing Director.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised attendees that the meeting marked the beginning of the process of consultation on the Council's budget, and there would be further opportunities to make comments prior to the budget being set at the meeting of the Full Council to be held on 1st March 2017.

In setting its budget, the Council would continue to rely on the guiding principles, parameters and frameworks that had been set for some time. However, there were elements of the budget that remained fragile and would be kept under regular scrutiny. As an authority, Kettering Borough Council was not immune to the vagaries of government policy and maintaining a balanced budget would be important at a time when the County as a whole was coming under pressure.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance outlined a number of good news stories as follows:-

- Kettering had been placed at 41st out of all towns where people preferred to invest
- The Museum and Art Gallery had won two awards, one of which was the People's Choice Award
- A new restaurant on the Market Place would be opening shortly
- Cross-party working to deliver the budget for residents and communities in all the Borough's Towns was welcomed
- Kettering had a good name within the Local Government Association and had been involved in a number of projects, eg the Business Rates Review
- Officers and Members had met with government ministers on several occasions

An opportunity for individual questions was given and attendees advised that written comments may also be sent to the Council for consideration. Questions asked, answers given and comments made are summarised overleaf:-

Item / Issue	Summary of Response Given
<p>The balanced budget is good and sets out how the Council will deal with the financial pressures next year. There is little ambition for services and residents and it will be important that the Council engages with people in the future.</p> <p>Thank you for putting on this Budget Consultation opportunity.</p> <p>(Cllr Mick Scrimshaw, Leader of the Opposition, Kettering Borough Council)</p>	<p>No Comment</p>
<p>If the Council has now reached the point in its budgeting where it needs to capture unplanned job vacancies, where will £4.4 m of further savings come from?</p> <p>(Cllr Nick Richards, Wilbarston)</p>	<p>In terms of vacancies we have tried to be realistic. We always encourage managers to look at the best way of replacing people when they leave. We are confident this is a realistic figure.</p> <p>In terms of future savings, the medium term is going to be tough and various frameworks need to fulfil our commitment to looking at schemes whereby we can generate income.</p> <p>If we are to do that, then every £1m borrowed is subject to both interest and a minimum revenue provision, so in essence the net return would have to produce a positive return after these costs.</p> <p>Officer Comment</p> <p>As an Executive and Officers we do scrutinise assumptions to ensure we can cover as much as possible.</p> <p>(Cllr Lesley Thurland, Portfolio Holder for Finance)</p>

Item / Issue	Summary of Response Given
<p>Fees and charges is something I find difficult. Where fees and charges are increased, will there be an in-depth scrutiny across the board? For members of the public using a service it is difficult to understand when looking at the budget and can be seen as an extra tax on members of the public.</p> <p>(Cllr Eileen Hales, Northamptonshire County Council)</p>	<p>The additional income from fees and charges is mainly where there has been an increase in usage. There are fees which have increased, but these are usually where there is a provision of service to a third party, eg Land Charges.</p> <p>Officer Comment</p> <p>We will take on board your comments regarding transparency regarding Fees and Charges.</p> <p>We did carry out a scrutiny process some years ago and have guiding principles and a concessions policy. There is a proper framework, but we will note your comment.</p> <p>Officer Comment</p>

Following the question and answer session, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and for the comments received.

(The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 7.50 pm)

Signed.....
Chair

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