

COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 7 March 2007 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Swain (Chairman), Bradshaw, Blackmore, D. Cargill, E. Cargill, Cole, Cross, Dennett, Drakeley, Edge, Findon, Fraser, Gerrard, Gilligan, Harris, Hignett, Hodgkinson, Horabin, Howard, C Inch, D Inch, Jones, Leadbetter, Lewis, Lloyd Jones, Loftus, Marlow, Massey, McDermott, McInerney, Morley, Nolan, Norddahl, Osborne, Parker, Pearsall, Philbin, Polhill, E Ratcliffe, M Ratcliffe, Redhead, Rowan, Rowe, Sly, Stockton, Swift, Thompson, Wainwright, Wallace, Wharton, Worrall and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Higginson, Lowe, Nelson and Whittaker

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: D. Parr, B. Dodd, D. Johnson, I. Leivesley, D Tregaea, J. Tully, L. Cairns and C. Foley

Also in attendance: 10 members of public

Action

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Mayor paid respects to Mr Pat Tyrrell who had recently passed away. It was noted that Mr Tyrrell had devoted approximately 40 years of his life to a range of public services and had been Mayor at Halton Borough Council in 2004.

The Council stood in silence for one minute.

(NB Councillor Hignett declared a personal interest in the following item of business due to his daughter being employed by Halton Borough Council.)

COU73 EXECUTIVE BOARD - 22ND FEBRUARY 2007 - BUDGET 2007/08

The Executive Board had considered a report setting out a recommendation to Council in respect of the Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2007/08. Information was provided for Members in respect of:

- the Local Government Finance Settlement;
- the Budget 2007/08;
- the Budget Outlook;
- the Capital Programme;

- Halton's Council Tax;
- Parish Precepts;
- Average Council Tax;
- Police and Fire Precepts;
- Total Council Tax; and
- the Prudential Code.

The Executive Board had recommended that Council adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A of the report, which included setting the Budget at £95.041m and the Band D Council Tax for Halton (before Parish, Police and Fire precepts) of £1,043.45.

In addition, the Board had recommended that the mover and seconder of the Motion submitted by the Liberal Democrat Group to full Council on 21st March 2007, and referred to the Executive Board under Standing Order No. 6(4), be afforded the opportunity by Full Council to resubmit the Motion as an amendment to the substantive Budget Motion.

The following motion was moved and seconded by Councillor Wharton and Councillor McDermott respectively:

"That

1. the policies outlined in this paper be adopted, including the Budget for 2007/08, the growth and savings set out in Appendix B, the Capital Programme set out in Appendix C, and Prudential Indicators set out in Appendix D;
2. it be noted that, at the meeting on 13th December 2006, the Council agreed the following:
 - (a) for 2007/08, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 and with regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, a Council Tax Base of 37,392, being the amount calculated by the Council in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax Base for the year, and
 - (b) for the Parishes, the Council Tax base for each Parish for the year 2007/08 be set as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	722
Daresbury	140
Moore	352
Preston Brook	331

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which special items relate;

3. in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (Sections 32 to 36), the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2007/08 and agreed as follows:
- (a) £271,145,384 – being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (e) of the said Act;
 - (b) £176,077,219 – being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the said Act;
 - (c) £95,068,165 – being the amount calculated by the Council for the year 2007/08 in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as its budget requirement for the year;
 - (d) £56,024,551 – being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates (£47,973,592) and Revenue Support Grant (£8,050,959);
 - (e) £1,044.17 – being the amount at 3(c) above less the amount at 3(d) above all divided by the amount at 2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;

- (f) £26,965 – being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, each individual Parish precept being:

	£
Hale	17,565
Daresbury	3,000
Moore	2,900
Preston Brook	3,500

- (g) £1,043.45 Local Government Finance Act 1992, as the basic amount of Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates;

- (h) Part of the Council's Area

	£
Hale	1,067.78
Daresbury	1,064.88
Moore	1,051.69
Preston Brook	1,054.02

being the amounts given by adding to the amounts at 3(g) 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 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings of its area to which one or more special items relate;

- (i) Part of the Council's Area

Band	Hale	Daresbury	Moore	Preston Brook	All other Parts of the Council's Area
	£	£	£	£	£
A	711.85	709.92	701.12	702.68	695.63
B	830.49	828.24	817.98	819.79	811.57
C	949.14	946.56	934.83	936.91	927.51
D	1,067.78	1,064.88	1,051.69	1,054.02	1,043.45

E	1,305.07	1,301.52	1,285.40	1,288.25	1,275.33
F	1,542.35	1,538.16	1,519.11	1,522.48	1,507.21
G	1,779.63	1,774.80	1,752.81	1,756.70	1,739.08
H	2,135.56	2,129.76	2,103.38	2,108.04	2,086.90

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3(g) and 3(h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular 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 Local Government Finance Act 1992, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;

4. it is further noted that for the year 2007/08 the Police Authority has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Authority, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	£
A	77.35
B	90.25
C	103.14
D	116.03
E	141.81
F	167.60
G	193.38
H	232.06

5. it is further noted that for the year 2007/08 the Fire Authority has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Authority, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	£
A	40.67
B	47.44
C	54.22
D	61.00
E	74.56
F	88.11

G	101.67
H	122.00

6. having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3(i), 4 and 5 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2007/08 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band	Hale	Daresbury	Moore	Preston Brook	All other Parts of the Council's Area
	£	£	£	£	£
A	829.87	827.94	819.14	820.70	813.65
B	968.18	965.93	955.67	957.48	949.26
C	1,106.50	1,103.92	1,092.19	1,094.27	1,084.87
D	1,244.81	1,241.91	1,228.72	1,231.05	1,220.48
E	1,521.44	1,517.89	1,501.77	1,504.62	1,491.70
F	1,798.06	1,793.87	1,774.82	1,778.19	1,762.92
G	2,074.68	2,069.85	2,047.86	2,051.75	2,034.13
H	2,489.62	2,483.82	2,457.44	2,462.10	2,440.96

being satisfied that:

- (a) the total amount yielded by its Council Taxes for the said financial year will be sufficient, so far as is practicable, to provide for items mentioned at 3(a) to (d) above; and, to the extent that they are not, to be provided for by any other means;
- (b) those amounts which relate to a part only of its area will secure, so far as is practicable, that the precept or portion of a precept relating to such part will be provided for only by the amount yielded by such of its Council Taxes as relate to that part; and
7. the Operational Director – Financial Services be authorised at any time during the financial year 2007/08 to borrow on behalf of the Council by way of gross bank overdraft such sums as he shall deem necessary for the purposes of this paragraph, but not such that in any event the said overdraft at any time exceeds £10m (£1.5m net) as the Council may temporarily require.”

The following amendment to the substantive motion was moved and seconded by Councillor Redhead and Councillor C. Inch respectively:

“The Liberal Democrat group of Halton Borough Council proposes that Council Tax increase should be minimised.

The rise should be kept in line with inflation to ensure that people on pensions (30% of Halton households) and hard working families are not disadvantaged. Following the poor and unfair Government settlement every effort must be made to reduce any increase.

With this in mind the following proposals are submitted for approval:

Energy Savings 190

The Council proposed a 10% reduction in energy in reference to the appointment of an Energy Officer. This should be implemented as agreed by the Corporate PPB.

Cost of Energy Officer (50)

Executive Board 56

This should be re-organised to match the directorate structure. Last year the Opposition position was removed but the Board decided to re-allocate responsibilities and maintain 11 posts. A structure with 6 posts is recommended.

Councillor Allowances 12

The council should vote to freeze councillors' allowances to protect front line services.

Joint Area Review 90

We do not believe the addition of two posts to prepare for the audit next March is a justification for an increase in council tax. Hence these posts if necessary must be self-financed.

Advertising, Marketing and Promotion 120

A 15% reduction is proposed, to protect council services and employment. The £931,000 the council spent on this area

last year is not appropriate in the current climate.

Citizens Advice Bureau (60)

Cutting the grant to the CAB will impact those with the most severe hardships and concerns. The CAB provides an essential front line service, which should be protected.

Totalling at least a 1% reduction 358"

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and defeated. The substantive motion was then put to the meeting and carried:

RESOLVED: That

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(NB Councillor Hignett declared a personal interest in the following item of business due to his daughter being employed by Halton Borough Council.)

COU74 EXECUTIVE BOARD - 22ND FEBRUARY 2007 -
DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE PLANS 2007-10

The Executive Board had considered a report requesting the adoption of the Council's Departmental

Service Plans for 2007-2010 as a basis for action and performance monitoring. A copy of the draft Service Plans had been circulated to all Members of the Council on a CD for consideration.

RESOLVED: That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to make any final amendments and adjustments that may be required and to approve the final Service Plans.

COU75 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2007-2008

The Council considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy outlining a proposed calendar of meetings for the 2007-2008 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That the Calendar of Meetings for the 2007-2008 Municipal Year, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

Meeting ended at 7.50 p.m.