

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held on 27 February 2019

Present

Councillor Wade (Mayor)

Councillors Bains, Bowerman, Briggs, Branson, Buckley, Carpenter, Cresswell, Davis, Francis, Guest, Hart, Howard, Hughes, Keast, Kennett, Lloyd, Patrick (Deputy Mayor), Pike, Rees, Satchwell, Sceal, Smith K, Thomas, Turner, Wilson, Crellin, Lowe, Milne, Raines, P Bains and Scott

56 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Rennie, Robinson, Mrs Shimbart and Weeks.

57 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

58 Minutes

Proposed by Councillor Crellin and seconded by Councillor Davis, Council unanimously RESOLVED that the minutes of the 7 November 2018 meeting be agreed, subject to the list of attendees being updated to include the Councillors in attendance who had been newly elected in May 2018.

Proposed by Councillor Buckley and seconded by Councillor Satchwell, Council unanimously RESOLVED that the minutes of the 19 December 2018 extraordinary meeting of the Council be approved, subject to an amendment to include a sentence in minute 48 to clarify that the appointment of the interim Chief Executive be for a six-month period.

Proposed by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Branson, it was unanimously RESOLVED that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 30 January 2019 be approved as a correct record.

59 Mayor's Report

In addition to his published report, the Mayor paid tribute to former Councillor Gerald Shimbart, who had sadly recently passed away. A book of condolence was available for signing and he advised that a celebration of life service would be held in St George's Church, Waterlooville at 1pm on Sunday 24 March 2019.

There were no questions in relation to the Mayor's published report.

60 Provisional Appointment of the Mayor for 2019/20

Proposed by Councillor Satchwell and seconded by Councillor Bowerman, it was RESOLVED that Councillor Diana Patrick be provisionally appointed as Mayor for 2019/20.

61 Provisional Appointment of the Deputy Mayor for 2019/20

Proposed by Councillor Thomas and seconded by Councillor Turner, it was RESOLVED that Councillor Prad Bains be provisionally appointed as Mayor for 2019/20.

62 Public Questions under Standing Order 13.4(f)

There were no public questions under Standing Order 13.4(f).

63 Budget Speeches

The Leader, Councillor Wilson, presented his budget speech to Council.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Pike, presented his budget speech to Council.

Copies of these speeches are attached to these minutes as Appendices 1 and 2.

Cllr Hart spoke on behalf of the Labour Group. He highlighted the funding difficulties faced by local government and the pressures put on the council by central government. This had included the new Local Plan, which he believed had been undertaken against an unreasonable time target. The Labour Group wanted to ensure that affordable housing was built and delivered to meet the need of those currently on the waiting list. He commended the Leader in promoting engagement across the Council via the Scrutiny Boards and giving the Governance, Audit and Finance Board the opportunity to question and examine the draft budget proposals. He believed that the Budget was forward thinking and would help residents. On balance he supported the 2.99% increase in Council Tax and the proposed Budget.

Cllr Carpenter spoke on behalf of the UKIP Group. He thanked the Chief Finance Officer and her team for their hard work in producing a robust budget, but felt that the proposed 2.99% increase in Council Tax would cause hardship for some residents. He was pleased to see that some fees and charges had been frozen, but believed that the reduction in the number of issues of the Council's 'Serving You' magazine for a saving of £25k was short sighted. He supported the proposed budget.

In reply, the Leader recognised the issues raised and the difficult choices that had to be made and thanked the opposition groups for supporting the proposed budget which he believed linked prudence, income generation and social responsibility.

In reply, the Deputy Leader confirmed that the future of 'Serving You' would be reviewed by the relevant Scrutiny Board to inform the final decision. With regard to affordable housing, significant progress had been made with 712 delivered in the past year, 436 of which had been social rent.

64 Revenue, Capital Budget and Business Plans 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2023/24

Proposed by Councillor Wilson and seconded by Councillor Pike, it was

RESOLVED that the Council

- (a) Approves the proposed Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2019/20 including a Council Tax rate of £204.48 at Band D, representing a 2.99% increase on the current charge.
 - (b) Agrees the Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators
 - (c) Agrees the Corporate Strategy and Business Plans.
 - (d) Notes the Cabinet decision of 6th February 2019 to freeze fees and charges for 2019/20, other than any statutory increases and a number of services within Environmental Services.
- (1) That it be noted that (on 31st January, 2019) the Chief Finance Officer calculated the Council Tax Base 2019/20 for the whole Council area as 40,708.30 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, (the “Act”)] and that this Council Tax base be split between the regions of the Environment Agency as follows:

Southern – 40,708.30

- (2) That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2019/20 in accordance with Sections 31 and 34 to 36 of the Act.
- (i) £ 57,152,321 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act;
 - (ii) £ 48,828,224 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act;
 - (iii) £8,324,097 being the amount by which the aggregate at d(i) above exceeds the aggregate at d(ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in section 31A(4) of the Act);
 - (iv) £204.48 being the amount at c(iii) above (Item R), divided by Item T (b 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;

(3) Valuation Bands

Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
£136.32	£159.04	£181.76	£204.48	£249.92	£295.36	£340.80	£408.96

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 2(iv) 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.

- (4)** That it be noted that for the year 2019/20 the Hampshire County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:

Council Tax Schedule 2019/20	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
Havant Borough Council	136.32	159.04	181.76	204.48	249.92	295.36	340.80	408.96
Hampshire County Council								
Basic Charge	766.51	894.27	1,022.02	1,149.77	1,405.27	1,660.78	1,916.28	2,299.54
Adult Social Care	58.07	67.74	77.42	87.10	106.46	125.81	145.17	174.20
Police & Crime Commissioner for Hampshire	134.31	156.69	179.08	201.46	246.23	291.00	335.77	402.92
Hampshire Fire & Rescue	45.14	52.66	60.19	67.71	82.76	97.80	112.85	135.42

- (5)** That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (3) and (4) 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 2019/20 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Council Tax Schedule 2019/20	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
Total Charge	1,140.35	1,330.40	1,520.47	1,710.52	2,090.64	2,470.75	2,850.87	3,421.04

For the Motion:

Councillor N Bains
Councillor P Bains
Councillor L Bowerman
Councillor J Branson
Councillor A Briggs
Councillor P Buckley
Councillor M Carpenter
Councillor P Crellin
Councillor R Cresswell
Councillor J Davis
Councillor B Francis
Councillor D Guest
Councillor T Hart
Councillor C Howard
Councillor G Hughes
Councillor D Keast
Councillor R Kennett
Councillor D Lloyd
Councillor J Lowe
Councillor S Milne
Councillor D Patrick
Councillor T Pike
Councillor R Raines
Councillor E Rees
Councillor C Satchwell
Councillor M Sceal
Councillor I Scott
Councillor K Smith
Councillor J Thomas
Councillor L Turner
Councillor P Wade
Councillor M Wilson

Against the Motion:

None

Abstentions:

None

Absent:

Councillor A Rennie
Councillor G Robinson
Councillor E Shimbart
Cllr Y Weeks

65 Cabinet/Board/Committee Recommendations

Community Infrastructure Levy: Proposed Spending & Revision of CIL Spending Protocol

Councillor Turner presented a recommendation arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 13 February 2019 regarding the spending of CIL funds.

The Council received a deputation from Canon Kennar, a copy of which is appended as Appendix 3 to these minutes.

The Cabinet recommendation included within the agenda for the meeting was proposed by Councillor Turner and seconded by Councillor Wilson.

Councillor Branson proposed an amendment that Recommendation 3 (Neighbourhood Portion Funds) include the sum of £21,500 for a church access project to make St Faith's Church, Havant accessible to all.

This amendment was duly seconded by Councillor Guest.

In response to a question, Councillor Turner confirmed that sufficient Neighbourhood Portion Funds were available to fund the £21,500 requested for the St Faith's Church access project.

Councillors had mixed opinions on the amendment, with members of the Cabinet explaining the reasons as to why the request by St Faiths Church had not been recommended to Council. It had been a balanced decision and whilst the Cabinet had every sympathy for improvements to the church, on balance had voted against the application because it did not accord with the agreed protocol for CIL spending.

Following a vote, Council AGREED the amendment, 21 Councillors voting for the amendment, 9 Councillors Voting against the amendment and 2 Councillors abstaining from voting.

In response to comments made by Councillors, Councillor Turner confirmed that she was happy for the CIL Protocol to be subject to scrutiny as part of the updates required referred to in recommendation 4.

Following the discussion it was RESOLVED that:

- (1) The Council invest the available 123 List CIL funds as at 31 March 2018 in the capital infrastructure projects outlined in Table A:**

Title and bid reference number	Amount	Cumulative amount
Langstone FCERM Scheme (1)	£575,000	£575,000
Hayling FCERM Strategy (2)	£0*	£575,000

Hooks Row - Shared Pedestrian and Cycle Link (16)	£115,000	£690,000
Park Road Corridor Feasibility (3)	£10,000	£700,000
Elmleigh Road - Pedestrian and Cycle Improvement (4)	£269,000	£969,000
Waterlooville Town Centre London Road Shared Cycleway (5)	£16,000	£985,000
Milton Road Roundabout - Accessibility and Safety (6)	£100,000	£1,085,000
Hambleton Road - Provision of Cycle Route (7)	£60,000	£1,145,000
Warblington Interchange - Feasibility (13)	£12,000	£1,157,000

Table A: Current recommended spends and cumulative effect on 123 CIL Pot if all spending options are supported

* Funds are not required for this round of CIL Spending but a future commitment is needed to support the spending of CIL Funds in accordance with Table C outlined below. See also Paragraph 6.3

(2) To commit future 123 Pot funds to the following capital infrastructure projects outlined in Tables B and C and that the balance of the CIL 123 Pot be retained to contribute to this expenditure:

Langstone FCERM Scheme – CIL Pot Building Request 2018-2022					
Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
CIL funding ‘Pot Building’ – <i>Inc. 60% Risk</i>	575,000	575,000	700,000	700,000	2,550,000
CIL funding – No Risk	359,375	359,375	437,500	437,500	1,593,750

Table B: Spending commitment requirement for Langstone FCERM Strategy

Hayling Island FCERM Strategy – CIL Pot Building Request 2018-2022					
Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
CIL funding Pot Building request 30% Risk	0	170,700	262,218	100,082	533,000
CIL funding – No Risk	0	131,308	201,706	76,986	410,000

Table C: Spending Commitment for Hayling FCERM Scheme

(3) The Council invest the available Neighbourhood Portion funds as at 31 March 2018 outlined in Table D in the capital infrastructure projects:

Title and bid reference number	Amount Requested	Proposed Spend	Cumulative Amount
HIADS Ltd (Replacement Lobby) (D)	£45K	£22,500	£22,500
Age Concern Kitchen Renovation (F)	£27K	£22,962	£45,462
Bidbury Infants School Lighting Project (H)	£19K	£9,500	£54,962
Hayling Sports Centre Extension Feasibility (I)	£18K	£18,000	£72,962
Acorn Centre Extension (J)	£51K	£19,000	£91,962
Church Access Project: Making St Faith’s Accessible to All (C)	£21.5K	£21,500	£113,462

Table D: Current recommended spends and cumulative effect on Neighbourhood Portion if all spending options are supported

- (4) The CIL Protocol be updated to reflect current practice in view of lessons learned; and
- (5) The Council enter a formal agreement with Network Rail to spend £150K on feasibility only in respect of the Warblington Footbridge CIL Spend as agreed by Council on the 21 February 2018.

66 Leader's Report

There were no matters the Leader wished to add to his published report.

67 Cabinet Lead Reports

Councillor Bains reported that an Empty Homes Strategy had been drafted and would be considered by the relevant Scrutiny Board in March 2019.

68 Cabinet Leads and Chairmen's Question Time

At the invitation of the Mayor, the Cabinet Leads took questions from Councillors in connection with their published reports.

There were no questions of the Committee Chairmen.

69 Questions Under Standing Order 23

The following questions were received in accordance with Standing Order 23:

1. Councillor Carpenter to Councillor Wilson:

I was very concerned to read in your report that we as a Licensing Authority seem to have no control over drivers / operators in our Borough as at present no national standards exist? In view of these grave concerns can you tell me the steps we can take to stop operators / drivers, licensed outside the Borough but being able to ply for trade within, also would he agree with me this is a Safeguarding issue that needs to be addressed urgently?

Response:

Although national standards for hackney carriage and private hire licensing do not exist, Havant does have a policy statement that imposes rigorous standards that must be met by all drivers, operators and vehicles before they are licensed by this authority. These include medical checks and DBS checks for drivers and mechanical checks for vehicles. I understand that other local authorities have similar policies.

Drivers and vehicles licensed by other licensing authorities do operate within Havant's administrative area within certain legal limits. However, the Council's Licensing Team will investigate and take necessary action to address any complaints or breaches of legislation that are received, as a matter of priority.

2. Councillor Carpenter to Councillor Bains

I note that during January this year 117 fixed penalty notices were issued through the Borough. Can you please tell me how this compares to the same period last year and do you have, in your opinion sufficient staff to adequately patrol the Borough and be effective? On my weekly ward walks I am still amazed at amounts of litter I witness, even allowing for the first rate work of Norse employees, throughout the Borough. It must be soul destroying for them to be presented day in day out with the mountain of litter?

Response:

The number of FPNs issued in January 2018 was 118 as with 2019 these are virtually all for cigarette ends.

Looking ahead we are currently in discussions with EHCS over the future delivery of the litter enforcement contract which will be potentially more focused and visible. This new approach may see a reduction in the total number of FPNs issued but they may be for a greater range of rubbish.

I certainly hope that by increasing visibility on areas where there is a history of littering will reassure the community.

As for the right numbers of staff to undertake the role I think that we have got the balance about right and with a more focused approach hope to see some increased impact.

The subject of litter is being looked at through scrutiny on 5th March this year.

3. Councillor Carpenter to Councillor Bowerman:

I was pleased to read in your report some Senior Management have recently attended IOSH training. During my time during the 80s I attended Highbury College for two years to become a Health and Safety Officer also taking the IOSH qualification. Can I ask if in the future if members could also share and gain an insight into this very complex field with a view to increasing knowledge and understanding?

Response:

The Joint H&S minutes are available for members to view through mod.gov. These meetings are held quarterly and the minutes provide an overview of the work of H&S and highlight any key areas for future focus.

The Head of Service for this area welcomes any feedback and input that can be provided from staff, managers and members. H&S remains the responsibility of everyone.

4. Councillor Carpenter to Councillor Hughes:

I note from your under Waste and Recycling, over the Christmas and New Year period a 'no quibble' scheme operated? Could you inform me if this had a cost implication for the Borough and why or how this was found to be necessary at this time

Response:

We have operated this 'no quibble' collection scheme for a number of years, I cannot recall when or who made the decision.

As a result of collection day changes during this period we are aware that many residents get confused as to the day that their waste/recycling will be collected. In the past we have tried many different ways to convey information to residents in advance to advise of the collection day changes, but this still results in a great deal of enquiries from residents as they appear not to be aware.

In previous years the collection crews have attempted to record all addresses when no waste/recycling has been presented for collection, this resulted in reams of papers coming in at the end of each collection day. This information then had to be conveyed to the customer services team so that they could provide a response should the householder call to enquire as to why their bin(s) had not been collected. There would often be a conversation whereby customer services would advise that the collection crew had reported that the bin(s) was not presented for collection and the householder stating that they were unaware of the revised collection day.

Also households generate more waste and recycling during the Christmas period and it has been permitted for them to present an additional bag of waste for collection from alongside the bin. If, for whatever the reason, a bin is not collected then this could result in a build-up of waste and a lot of angry or frustrated residents.

I can further advise that we provide this service by utilising our existing resources. We suspend the collections of garden waste and bulky waste for a two week period, we reassign the team members and vehicles to support the waste/recycling teams.

5. Councillor Davis to Councillor Wilson:

Following the Hayling Island Transport Review, will you / have you applied to the Solent LEP for necessary funds to build another road and bridge required for Hayling Island?

This is a much needed infrastructure required to relieve the stress of bottlenecks on the A3023 and would greatly help the attractiveness of Havant's Boroughs Regeneration projects along Hayling Islands seafront and give it more chance of success.

Response:

The Council is working with all potential partners to lever in funding to address the pressures on the Borough's infrastructure networks. This includes both Homes England and the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Council set out through the Regeneration Strategy and its vision that the future of the Borough would mean that "Development interest in the island prompted by the enhanced visitor offer has made the construction of a second public transport/autonomous vehicle bridge linking the island with Havant Rail Station economically viable.

The Hayling Island Transport Assessment has also looked in detail at the mitigation measures needed to accommodate new development. A second vehicular bridge would not be a practical solution to the pressure on the island's transport network given that the A3023 continues to the south of the bridge whilst to the north it almost immediately connects to the Strategic Road Network. However the Transport Assessment has put forward a number of measures to improve the island's transport network and further work will be undertaken by the Council moving forwards on this project.

70 Urgent Questions Under Standing Order 23

There were no urgent questions under Standing Order 23.

71 Acceptance of Minutes

Proposed by Councillor Buckley and seconded by Councillor Keast it was RESOLVED that the minutes of committees held since the last meeting of the Council be received.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 6.58 pm

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Mayor

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Minute Item 63

Appendix 1

Mr Mayor, Members

I am pleased to be proposing this balanced budget to you for the forthcoming year.

The presentation of the Budget is one of the most important if not the most important event of the year and I am proud of the work which has gone into this year's Budget which is before you in the papers. I am grateful to Councillor Pike, who you will hear from shortly, for his work as the Finance Portfolio holder. I am also grateful to Lydia Morrison and Andrew Clarke and the finance team for their hard work. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Directors and Heads of Service who have gone through budget challenge sessions to identify savings and opportunities. Whilst there are always time pressures, since the time I was the Cabinet Lead for Governance, I have sought to provide sufficient time for scrutiny and member understanding of this vital aspect of Council business. I am pleased that this year the GAF Board has had greater opportunity than before to make recommendations and members have had a comprehensive series of training sessions to aid their understanding.

When I was first elected Leader of the Council I set out my priorities which included a new revised Corporate Strategy refocusing our work on what we believe is in the best interests of, was needed by and wanted by our residents. The main focus is upon regeneration and the renewal and reshaping of our towns and district centres to reflect the changes in the way we work and live and to ensure prosperity and economic growth within a pleasant and attractive place to live. You have a revised Strategy, you have a Local Plan which includes the infrastructure provision which we believe is required for both the necessary and seemingly inevitable changes which will be brought upon our Borough whether we like it or not. The budget to finance that programme is a vital aspect.

When elected Leader, I made clear to you that I wished to ensure that we had the financial stability and security of a balanced budget. It is a difficult balance between our statutory obligations, our aspirations and ambitions for the Borough and our social responsibility towards those residents who are less fortunate than many in this room. This is despite the end to the rate support grant and the diminishing or disappearing 'new homes bonus'.

When I was first elected in 2010, we had to respond to the first austerity budget and we responded with a programme of efficiency savings and joint working which ensured our survival as an authority. Government policy is changing and it would appear that we are in step with national policy in terms of our regeneration ambitions and the grants available for those projects which are in tune with the national mood. We are beginning to unlock that funding and we believe that measures within the Budget will help us identify and unlock further funding opportunities.

Regeneration will be at the centre of the Council's work for the foreseeable future and all other aspects will feed into this central hub. You will have noted measures to free up resource both human and financial to enable that work to proceed. But other concerns have been highlighted by residents and members, such as enforcement, improving recreational facilities and taking a lead with environmental improvements. The budget has regard to these concerns and enables HBC to take either a funding or an enabling role.

Whilst I am delighted to be proposing this balanced budget to you, we cannot be complacent for the future. We will need to maintain a tight rein on our finances and to be agile to take advantage of opportunities to increase our income and cost effectiveness, by a mixture of joint ventures, joint working, investment and prudent asset management. At a time when the National economy is facing

an uncertain future, we must remain flexible and manage risk and opportunity to maintain our position as will be clear from our medium term financial strategy.

I will now handover to Councillor Pike, who will be outlining the scope of next year's budget in more detail.

Michael Wilson

27th February 2019

Mr Mayor, fellow Councillors, it gives me great pleasure to second the motion regarding next year's budget, and to spend a short time outlining the key measures and changes we are putting before you.

Before I begin, can I firstly thank our finance team led by Lydia Morrison and Andrew Clarke for their sterling work to get us to this point. Secondly, my fellow Cabinet members and senior officers who have spent time with us developing and refining their proposals so that I can present a balanced budget, and thirdly, the members of the Governance, Audit and Finance Board for their contributions and recommendations.

It should not come as any surprise to you that there remain difficult choices to be made in order to present you with a balanced budget. Grants from central government continue to reduce, and indeed our revenue support grant has now stopped completely. You will see in the Medium Term Finance Strategy that we are planning for the worst case – no more New Homes Bonus – but this clearly has the potential to change with future Government decisions.

We now rely on council tax and retained business rates for the majority of our income. We have seen continued growth in business rates in our Borough, and forecast this to continue. I pay tribute to all those businesses operating in our Borough who whilst providing great products and services, provide good employment opportunities and are also contributing to the Borough through the payment of business rates.

I also wanted to comment on our support for our staff team. Our staff are receiving the nationally agreed pay award for the forthcoming year, which, together with other staffing costs, such as pension changes, means an increase to our staffing budget of over £200,000. As Councillors, we recognise the many staff who go beyond their job descriptions to ensure our residents and businesses receive great service, and I would like to record our thanks to all of our staff and partners who contribute to our achievements.

We have presented to you a revised corporate strategy, and I have sought through this budget to take a first step towards achieving those aims. You will see new measures within this budget, particularly regarding regeneration, that we believe are essential to making the progress we all want to see with the built environment in our Borough.

Our first corporate priority is financial sustainability. We have tried hard to balance our budget through efficiency savings, but as you would expect, the low hanging fruit has already been eaten. We therefore propose to grow our income through better returns from our joint venture company, Norse South East, appropriate fees and charges for our services and ensuring our resources are tightly focussed on those areas you and our residents consider the most important.

In order to fund our regeneration ambitions we are setting aside an initial £400,000 in the coming financial year to ensure we have the right level of officer resource and external

expertise available to deliver our ambitious plans. Whilst we are expecting individual projects to come before us with their own business cases in order to move forward, there is initial work, including bidding for grants and creating partnerships that need early funding.

As is to be expected, there have been changes in statutory rules and guidance this year which has an impact on our resources. For example, we have increased our budgets for supporting the homeless in line with new regulations.

There are also changes that are outside of our control, for example, the income we receive from recycling. This varies considerably according to the market, and we are currently seeing a dip in this income stream.

We are reaching the conclusion of our 2036 Local Plan work, and this entails further funding during the coming financial year as we reach the inspection in public stage. I am recommending this additional funding so that this project is concluded successfully, delivering an innovative and sustainable local plan that will stand us in good stead for years to come.

I have listened carefully to members concerns during the year, and we have been able to respond. For example, Councillors and residents are very keen for us to staff an enforcement function that can respond quickly and proactively to concerns, often about planning issues, that are taking place in their area. I'm pleased that I have been able to fund over £150,000 extra investment in this area, and I hope members will agree we are already seeing quicker and better results.

We have also been able to respond to the wish to bring in more central government and other grants to our area by funding a grants officer. We have seen the recent investment of £1.5M at Front Lawn by the Football Foundation and the fabulous new artificial pitch at Havant Rugby Club. We want to see more projects, both Council led and community led, accessing funding from national and regional sources, and believe that this investment by our Council will be a significant step in that direction.

Many residents, including myself, have a desire for our Borough to be providing good quality outdoor play opportunities for children. The first step towards that ambition is ensuring our existing play equipment is robust and serviceable. Therefore, I'm delighted to have reinstated the budget for maintenance, and we should see a considerable improvement in our parks during the coming year. We have opportunities through CIL to further invest in our parks, and I welcome proposals from Councillors and community groups who wish to help deliver these improvements.

Finally, in terms of our new budget lines, we are confirming our plans to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax. This money is available to 18 to 25 year olds who have been in care, where they need the extra support that would often come from parents. I'm pleased we have been able to step up to fund this change, which whilst affecting a small number of young people in our Borough will make a considerable difference.

Members, you will also see our corporate strategy being implemented through our capital strategy and plans. We will continue to operate our successful disabled facilities grants

scheme, enabling people to access their properties, make their homes safer or improve their heating. We will continue to upgrade our fleet of vehicles, including further electric vehicles – in addition to the charging points we are establishing around the Borough you will shortly see them just outside of the window of this building. And we will be investing in our bus shelters – we own over 500, and a number are in need of some TLC.

I come now to our Medium Term Financial Strategy, and how we fund the gap between our income and expenditure. We have decided that we should not be imposing further arbitrary cuts or large increases in fees and charges. We have instead proposed a 2.99% rise in our Council Tax. We remain a low tax authority – we are proud of that fact – and our residents will be paying less than in our neighbouring authorities – less than residents in Denmead in Winchester City Council, Horndean and Rowlands Castle in East Hampshire District Council, and Westbourne in Chichester District Council.

A number of decisions we are taking now have the potential to improve our financial position, but they will take time to impact our bottom line. We expect our regeneration plans to generate new revenue streams and capital receipts. The expansion of Norse South East to deliver services to East Hampshire District Council will achieve further cost savings and potential for new income, and we will continue to work with our other partners to refine their services to focus on our needs. The Cabinet will be focussed on ensuring our biggest partner, Capita, is delivering for our Borough during the coming year.

I will also present to you a new Asset Management Strategy during the coming year to ensure we manage our buildings and other assets as best we can. As you can see from our Medium Term Financial Strategy, we need to work on our position for future years so that we can continue to present a balanced budget, and I can assure members we will be to starting this early in the new financial year, and you will all have the opportunity to contribute to that work.

In summary, members I am seconding a set of budget proposals that will deliver financial sustainability, whilst responding to our biggest concerns. My expectation is that we will continue to be business-like in our approach, whilst recognising that many things we do are for the good of everyone and will be provided free of charge. We will be continuing to shout for Havant at a regional and national level, and we are already seeing changes at our Local Enterprise Partnership in response to our approach. We will work with our businesses and our MPs to raise our profile, and grow inward investment

Alongside our regeneration strategy and our draft Local Plan, I believe we have are presenting a compelling picture for the future of our Borough and I commend them to you.

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Deputation of Canon Tom Kennar, Rector of St Faith's Church, Havant.

Wednesday 27th February 2019

Mr Mayor and Council-members,

Thank you for this opportunity to make a short deputation to you. I'm here because of a decision made by the Cabinet, which I would like to persuade you to over-turn.

St Faith's applied for funding to the Neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy fund. We are seeking funding to upgrade the facilities of St Faith's Church, to make it more accessible to the whole community, including by the provision of a wheelchair-accessible toilet, and automatic entry doors.

St Faith's has a long history of being the Civic Church of the Borough. We are the home of war memorials of the last 300 years. We are the final resting place of the Lords of Havant and Staunton over many centuries. Every year, we make ourselves available to the Borough Council for its Civic Remembrance Services.

I was therefore very surprised to hear that our bid for 25% of the anticipated costs was rejected by the Cabinet on the grounds that we are a 'religious organisation'. My surprise was all the greater because none of the supporting papers for the Bid process included any such exclusions.

But whilst I might seek to persuade you to over-turn the Cabinet's decision on such a technicality, I want to argue that there is a much more fundamental issue at stake here. Specifically, I want to challenge any policy to blanket-exclude religious organisations from applying for Council funds.

First, in our specific case, I would argue that St Faith's, is both the home of a religious congregation, but it is also a parish church – which has a particular statutory and legal role. A parish church is bound by Law to be available to every citizen of its parish. Any citizen of the parish has the right to be married at St Faith's – regardless of their faith - or to have their funeral held there. Furthermore, *any* citizen of the parish – whatever their faith - has the legal right to vote for the annual election of Churchwardens. It might also interest you to know that we are bound – by law – to hold services of public worship in the building, whether we want to or not!

We are, therefore, much more than a 'religious organisation' – we are the provider of a statutory service, bound by the laws of the land, just like the Council. That is a responsibility which we have taken on even more seriously in recent years, with substantial physical improvements to the building, none of which have very much at all to do with us being a place to worship, and everything to do with being the custodians of a very beautiful and locally-important pile of bricks.

Secondly, on a more general note, I want to encourage you not to cut off your collective nose to spite your face. Religious organisations often remind us of our civic duty to one another, and they do much for the common good. Churches, for example, were the first providers of health-care and education in this country – long before the State took up those roles.

These days, religious organisations provide a wide range of public services which Councils are increasingly under-funded to do. Something like two-thirds of all foodbanks are provided by churches. It is not the Council chamber which rough sleepers use to keep warm in on cold winter days. It is the Nave of St Faith's church – open to all, in daylight hours – even during the three hours per week (on average) when a religious service is taking place.

Statutory funds should never be used for proselytization – of course. But St Faith's is not seeking your support to employ an evangelist, or to set up a prayer-group. All we seek is your help in making *the most iconic building in Havant* fully available to every citizen of Havant. Including any user of a wheelchair, or any attendee at future Civic Services, or theatrical and musical performances – be they Mayor or service-personnel – who seek the dignity of easy entry and a simple toilet.

Thank you for giving me the chance to make my case. I shall await your decision with interest and hope.