

Ashford Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on 14th February 2019

Minute No	Topic	Decision
320	Revenue Budget 2019/20	<p>The report presented the final Draft 2019/20 Budget which would be recommended to the Full Council for approval. The Budget supported the fourth year of the Council's Corporate Plan, including the Big 8 projects and a number of other approved commercial and regeneration projects. The report also covered the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which included a 1% reduction in rents, the fourth and final year of the four year reduction programme, the Capital programme and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT introduced the report and directed Members' attention to the tabled paper which included a minor amendment to the table on page 125 of the report, and the detailed comments of those who had responded to the budget consultation. He thanked those residents who had taken the time to engage with the budget setting process and for asking meaningful questions. He advised that the budget proposed a £5.00 (3.17%) rise in the Borough's annual Council Tax requirement which would still leave Ashford as the lowest of any Kent District and amongst the lowest quartile in the country. He thanked all involved in putting the budget together through Officer hard work, formal scrutiny and consultation, and for all those Officers and Members who continued to promote and deliver the Council's entrepreneurial approach. This was continuing to generate a significant income stream which had allowed the Council to become self-sufficient, more than negating the loss of Government Grant without placing the burden on Council Tax payers.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Housing commented on the HRA which, despite setting an ambitious programme for the coming year, had been viewed as sound.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>That (i) the Budget context and MTFP position be noted.</p>

- (ii) the Chief Financial Officer be delegated powers to establish local discounts in Business Rates in accordance with Government policy.**
- (iii) the summary of reserves as set out at Table 6 of the report (Appendix C refers) be noted.**
- (iv) the Equality Impact Assessment as set out in Appendix E to the report be noted.**
- (v) the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2019/20 be approved.**
- (vi) the estimated average rent decrease of 1% be approved in accordance with Government guidelines and that the rent setting for the future continues to follow movements in the “limit rent” set by the Government.**
- (vii) the advice from the Chief Financial Officer concerning the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of reserves be noted.**

Recommended:

- That**
- (i) the Revenue Budget 2019/20 including the net Budget requirement of £15,725,930 (excluding Parish Precepts) be approved.**
 - (ii) the level of Discretionary Fees to be levied from 1st April 2019 (as set out in Appendix D to the report) be approved.**
 - (iii) Band D Council Tax be set at £162.50.**
 - (iv) the Capital Plan for 2018/19 to 2021/22 (as set out in Appendix G to the report) be approved.**

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">(v) the MRP policy as set out in Appendix I to the report, the Treasury Management Strategy Statement at Appendix J to the report, and the Investment Strategy at Appendix K to the report, be approved.(vii) the Risk Based Verification Policy as outlined in Appendix L to the report be approved.(viii) the new Council empty homes premium for 2019/20 be adopted (appendix M to the report refers). |
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