

# BOROUGH OF RUSHMOOR

**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Farnborough on Tuesday, 30th January, 2018 at 7.00 pm.

The Worshipful The Mayor (Cllr Sophia Choudhary (Chairman))  
The Deputy Mayor (Cllr S.J. Masterson (Vice-Chairman))

Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford  
Cllr T.D. Bridgeman  
Cllr Sue Carter  
Cllr D.E. Clifford  
Cllr Liz Corps  
Cllr P.I.C. Crerar  
Cllr R.L.G. Dibbs  
Cllr D.S. Gladstone  
Cllr Barbara Hurst  
Cllr B. Jones  
Cllr J.H. Marsh  
Cllr K.H. Muschamp  
Cllr J.J. Preece  
Cllr P.F. Rust  
Cllr M.D. Smith  
Cllr P.G. Taylor  
Cllr B.A. Thomas

Cllr D.M.T. Bell  
Cllr J.B. Canty  
Cllr M.S. Choudhary  
Cllr R.M. Cooper  
Cllr A.H. Crawford  
Cllr K. Dibble  
Cllr Jennifer Evans  
Cllr C.P. Grattan  
Cllr A. Jackman  
Cllr G.B. Lyon  
Cllr Marina Munro  
Cllr A.R. Newell  
Cllr M.J. Roberts  
Cllr M.L. Sheehan  
Cllr L.A. Taylor  
Cllr M.J. Tennant  
Cllr J.E. Woolley

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Sue Dibble and Cllr Jacqui Vosper.

## 42. **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2018/19 AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS -**

The Cabinet Member for Concessions and Community Support (Cllr. G.B. Lyon) introduced the Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 9th January, 2018 which recommended approval of changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme and Council Tax Discounts for adoption with effect from 1st April, 2018. It was MOVED by Cllr. G.B. Lyon; SECONDED by Cllr. M.J. Tennant - That

- (i) the following changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme for working age claimants be agreed for adoption with effect from 1st April, 2018:
  - (a) to increase the current 10% minimum contribution (90% discount) for those of working age to 12% minimum contribution (88% discount) for 2018/19
  - (b) to exclude bereavement support payments from the calculation of Council Tax Support from 2018/19

- (c) to limit the number of dependent children to two when calculating Council Tax Support from 2018/19; and
- (i) the following changes to Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions be agreed for adoption with effect from 1st April 2018:
  - (a) to change the level of discount given for homes that are empty due to undergoing major repairs or structural alterations from 50% discount for 12 months to 50% discount for six months;
  - (b) to change the level of discount given for homes that are unoccupied and unfurnished from 100% discount for three months to 100% discount for two months.

During discussion, it was MOVED by Cllr. A.H. Crawford and SECONDED by Cllr. Jennifer Evans - That recommendation 8.1 (a) (I) be deleted.

Speaking in support of his proposed amendment, Cllr. Crawford was of the opinion that there were deficiencies in the consultation exercise and cited examples. He was of the opinion that, of the 142 comments that the 425 respondents made on the Council Tax part of the consultation, 89 (63%) were opposed to the options given, which included increases to 12% and 15%. With 89 comments being the majority, he was of the opinion that this meant that the Council should seriously consider his amendment – meaning no increase from 10%. Cllr. Crawford pointed out that the Hardship Fund had paid out over £10,000 during the previous financial year and that, in the first nine months of the current financial year, the Hardship Fund had paid out £8,500, which was a higher amount than had been reported to the Welfare Reform Group. He drew attention to the £6,467 saving that the Cabinet was requesting, but stated that this was at a cost to the poorest working age residents of £52,184. Cllr. Crawford further reported that many other local authorities in Hampshire did not have a minimum percentage payment, which he felt was unfair to the poorest residents in Rushmoor.

In seconding the amendment, Cllr. Evans questioned how those affected would be able to afford the increase in contribution and what sacrifices would have to be made in order to be able to make the increased payments. Cllr. Evans referred to other effects of the increased contribution, for example affecting people's health with stress about debt.

In debating the proposed amendment, some Members reflected on the effect on residents of the increased contribution. However, others commented on the minimum contributions paid by residents of neighbouring authorities and how favourably Rushmoor compared with those. The proposed amendment was put to the meeting. There voted FOR: 11; AGAINST: 23 and the amendment was **DECLARED LOST**.

During debate on the original Motion, Members commented on the need to be aware of the Borough's most vulnerable residents and the existence of the Hardship Fund for those most in need of assistance. It was pointed out that the implementation of the proposed increased contribution would be monitored.

Following further debate, the Recommendations were put to the meeting. On a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs. Diane Bedford, J.B. Canty, Sue Carter, M.S. Choudhary, D.E. Clifford, R.M. Cooper, Liz Corps, P.I.C. Crerar, R.L.G. Dibbs, D.S. Gladstone, Barbara Hurst, A. Jackman, G.B. Lyon, J.H. Marsh, Marina Munro, K.H. Muschamp, A.R. Newell, M.L. Sheehan, M.D. Smith, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, B.A. Thomas and J.E. Woolley (23); AGAINST: Cllrs. D.M.T. Bell, T.D. Bridgeman, A.H. Crawford, Keith Dibble, Jennifer Evans, C.P. Grattan, B. Jones, J.J. Preece, M.J. Roberts, P.F. Rust and L.A. Taylor (11); ABSTAINED: The Mayor (Cllr. Sophia Choudhary) and Deputy Mayor (Cllr. S.J. Masterson (2) and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED**.

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm.

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