

Borough Council Budget 2003/2004

Notes of Business and Voluntary Sector Consultation Meeting

Town Hall, Eastbourne – Thursday 23 January 2003 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:

Business and Voluntary Sector Representatives:

Mr. Dave Cooper, Vice-President, Eastbourne and District Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Geoffrey Cooper, Representing Canon Seamus Hester, Our Lady of Ransom

Ms. Lesley Goble, Director, Eastbourne Association of Voluntary Services

Mr. Tony James, Chairman, Town Centre Management Initiative

Revd. Canon Charles Lansdale, St. Mary's Parish Church

Mr. Julian Martyr, Eastbourne Hotels' Association

Mr. Andrew Stuart, Federation of Small Businesses, Eastbourne and Wealden Branch

Mr. Geoffrey Williams, Chairman, Eastbourne Association of Voluntary Services

(N.B. A total of 28 representatives of business, voluntary groups and public agencies had been invited).

Eastbourne Borough Council:

Councillor Mike Thompson, Member of the Cabinet

Councillor Graham Marsden, Leader of the Opposition Group

Councillor Colin Belsey, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Group

Mrs. Sue McHugh, Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Mr. Norman Kinnish, Director of Planning, Regeneration and Amenities

The Mayor, Councillor Miss Olive Woodall, was also present.

Councillor Mrs. Healy, Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet, had given her apologies as she was unwell and unable to attend.

1.0	Presentation by Mrs. McHugh, Director of Finance and Corporate Services
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1.1	A copy of the budget report to the Cabinet meeting on 9 January 2003 had been circulated in advance of this meeting. The report had set out the latest position with regard to prospects for the Council's 2003/2004 budget and summarised financial options including savings and growth proposals which had been identified to date together with their implications.
1.2	Mrs. McHugh reported on the work being undertaken to plan next year's Council budget including the making of risk assessments for all service areas, analysis of staff time and costs for all activities, review of historic budgets, identification of pressures, growth and savings. The information gathered was being reviewed by members of both political groups with the objective of aligning service priorities and targets with funding. A breakdown of net expenditure in the current financial year was given under three headings: By department; by service; and by type of expenditure.
1.3	Unavoidable pressures for 2003/2004 totalling £3.151 million were detailed including £1.617 million for the new cleansing/recycling contract, £444,000 for housing and council tax benefit subsidy and £383,000 for nationally agreed pay awards. Expenditure in the current year was £14.275 million and this was met by Government funding of £9.877 million, council tax payments of £4.335 million and a further £63,000 from council tax collection surpluses. Government grant was set to increase by 3% for 2003/2004 and if no increase were made to council tax rates this would provide total revenue of £14.712 million. If the cost of unavoidable pressures was added (without the making of savings or other possible growth) the council tax rise required to close the funding gap would be 62% (resulting in a cost to Band D council taxpayers of an additional £81 per year).
1.4	<p>Mrs. McHugh then identified a selection of initiatives that would require further growth if they were to be undertaken:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Adequate repairs and maintenance budgets £210,000 · Business improvements districts project £30,000 · Homelessness initiatives £20,000 · Recycling promotion £40,000 · Abandoned vehicles improved performance £21,000 · Decriminalisation of parking £30,000 · CCTV refurbishment £30,000 · Decorative lighting improvements £8,500 · Town Centre redevelopment £150,000