

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COUNCIL

INFORMATION

Agenda Item No 6

meeting date: 3 MARCH 2015
title: STATUTORY BUDGET CONSULTATION WITH BUSINESS RATEPAYER
REPRESENTATIVES AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
principal author: JANE PEARSON

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform the Council of the meeting with national non-domestic rate representatives about our 2015/16 budget proposals.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires the Council to consult, regarding our budget proposals, with representatives of non-domestic ratepayers. This consultation must be carried out prior to Full Council agreeing our budget for the forthcoming year.

3. 2015/16 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 This year's meeting was held on 25 February 2015 and present were:

NNDR representatives:

Mr John Atherton - Whalley Chamber of Trade
Mr Tony Gould – Clitheroe Chamber of Trade
Mr Ian Sowerbutts – Clitheroe Chamber of Trade
Cllr Jim Rogerson - Longridge

RVBC:

Councillors Hirst, Brown and Rogerson
Chief Executive and Director of Resources

- 3.2 The Chief Executive welcomed everyone and explained the background and purpose to the meeting.

- 3.3 A presentation was then made regarding the Council's budget proposals for next year and business rates. The main issues covered were:

- The Council's Revenue Budget proposals for 2015/16
- Three year Capital Programme 2015/18
- The Local Government Finance Settlement and our reduction in funding
- Council tax freeze grant
- Our proposed band D council tax for 2015/16, frozen for 6 years.
- The Borough Council's share of the overall council tax
- Business Rates collected and the Borough Council's share
- Various Business Rate Reliefs

- 3.4 A number of questions were asked regarding the revenue budget including how the council had managed to produce a balanced budget resulting in a council tax freeze.
- 3.5 A discussion took place regarding business rates specifically:
- Internet based businesses paying little or no business rates
 - Business rates avoidance
 - Town Centre rents
- 3.6 Representatives commented that it was generally felt that there were signs of recovery however there was still a long way to go.
- 3.7 The Chief Executive informed the representatives of forthcoming events in the Borough including the Food Festival and the Tour of Britain. He also commented regarding businesses moving into the area.
- 3.8 The representatives thanked the Council for the presentation of budget proposals and welcomed this opportunity to discuss the budget and other issues.
4. CONCLUSION
- 4.1 There was pleasing attendance from representatives of Business Ratepayers with Clitheroe, Whalley and Longridge all represented. The statutory meeting provides a useful opportunity for representatives to raise other issues and promote closer working relationships.
- 4.2 A number of interesting questions were asked by representatives of issues affecting the Council.

DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

C2-15/JP/AC
26 February 2015