

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COUNCIL

INFORMATION

Agenda Item No 6

meeting date: 24 FEBRUARY 2016
title: STATUTORY BUDGET CONSULTATION WITH BUSINESS RATEPAYER
REPRESENTATIVES
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 2016/17 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. 2016/17 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 This year's meeting was held on 23 February 2016 and present were:

NNDR representatives:

Mr John Atherton - Whalley Chamber of Trade
Mr Daniel Williams – Clitheroe Chamber of Trade

RVBC:

Councillors Hirst and Thompson
Chief Executive, Director of Community Services and Director of Resources

- 3.2 The Leader of the Council 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 2016/17
- Three year Capital Programme 2016/19
- The Local Government Finance Settlement and our reduction in funding
- Council tax freeze grant
- A comparison of the current district band D council tax levels
- Our proposed band D council tax for 2016/17.
- The Borough Council's share of the overall council tax
- Business Rates collected and the Borough Council's share
- Various Business Rate Reliefs including Flood Relief

- 3.4 A question was asked regarding the Council's band D council tax and what this represented. The Director of Resources explained the Council's current charge of £140.69 for 2015/16 was 43rd out of 201 districts and hence in the bottom quartile. She explained that the Government were no longer offering freeze grants for the forthcoming year and had assumed in their Spending Power calculations that this Council would increase the band d charge by £5 next year.
- 3.5 The Clitheroe Chamber of Trade representative asked how businesses would benefit from the Government's announcement of 100% business rate retention by 2020. It was recognised that whilst this was potentially good news for the Council and our businesses much would depend on the extra responsibilities which would be passported to local authorities and also the withdrawal of core funding from the Government which will occur at the same time.
- 3.6 Representatives discussed encouraging businesses to open on Sundays and bank holidays. It was pointed out that no charges were made for parking on the Council's car parks on Sundays.
- 3.7 The Clitheroe Chamber of Trade representative informed the meeting of their intention to organise a Christmas festival the first weekend in December. It was suggested better communication was needed with the Council and possible coordination of other Christmas events eg Clitheroe Market.
- 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 The statutory meeting provides a useful opportunity for representatives to raise 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

C2-16JP/AC
24 February 2016