



BUDGET MEETING – 19 FEBRUARY 2019

Purpose of the meeting

The meeting has been arranged to deal with five specified items of business. Those are listed on the agenda. They cover setting the level of council tax, setting the budget for 2019/20, agreeing a longer term financial strategy, and setting the level of council house rent.

Public access to meeting papers

The agenda and reports for the meeting have been published on the internet since last Thursday. Meeting papers have also been available for inspection at the Civic Centre. Some spare copies of the agenda and reports will be available at the meeting.

The meeting is open to the public. Anyone who wishes to attend can do so to observe the proceedings. Members of the public do not have the right to take part in the meeting.

The meeting is broadcast live through the council's website (audio only). The recording is available there after the meeting. Recording the meeting (video or audio) is not allowed by members of the public unless that is specifically permitted by the meeting itself.

Control of the meeting

The Provost chairs the meeting. He runs and controls the meeting in accordance with procedural rules called Standing Orders. He makes decisions about procedures and the interpretation of Standing Orders. Those decisions are final. The Provost and other members can ask for advice from council officers if it is needed during the meeting.

The agenda and additional business

The agenda lists the business to be considered, and the order in which it is expected to be taken. The Provost has the power to re-arrange the order of business. Any changes will be announced by him towards the start of the meeting. No new or urgent items of business can be added to the agenda.

Presentation of reports

Senior council officers will present each report. They will not read the report or cover every detail in it. They will provide an overview to introduce the item of business and stress the most important issues. The Provost may allow council officers to give advice or comment at any stage in the meeting.

Questions

Members are then allowed to ask questions, through the Provost, about the report. The Provost may answer, but it is more likely that council officers will provide a response.

It is up to the Provost to decide how long should be allowed for questions to be asked, and how many questions members may ask.

Motions and amendments

The written reports contain recommendations from council officers. Members may have additional proposals to make, or alternative proposals. Members do not have to follow recommendations made by officers.

Their proposals will be circulated as motions and amendments. They have to be in writing. They must have a proposer and a seconder. If no-one seconds a proposal then it is not discussed.

Sometimes the members will all agree what should happen and so motions and amendments and votes will not be needed.

Debate

Members then debate the motions and any amendments.

The proposer and seconder are allowed to speak about their proposals, for 5 minutes and 3 minutes respectively. All members then have the chance to speak in support of their preferred proposal, for up to 3 minutes. They only have the right to speak once.

The mover of the motion then has the chance to sum up, and may speak for up to 5 minutes. No new material should be introduced at this stage.

Voting and decisions

A vote then takes place on the motions and amendments. If there is more than one amendment the voting takes place in stages. The motion and first amendment are voted on. Whichever wins is then put up against the next amendment, and so on.

Voting is by a roll call vote. The names of members are read out and they say which proposal they support. They are allowed to abstain. The winning proposal is decided by a majority vote of the members present. If there is a tie the Provost has a casting vote. He can use that however he wishes.

The outcome of the vote is announced, and the meeting moves on to the next item of business.

Adjourning the meeting

The Provost has the power to adjourn the meeting if he thinks it is necessary, and decide for how long. An adjournment can also be agreed through a vote by the members. If the meeting is lengthy then a lunch break or a comfort break might be taken. If the meeting is very lengthy then it is possible for it to be adjourned to another day.

After the meeting

Decisions taken at the meeting take effect immediately and there are rules which mean that those decisions cannot normally be changed for at least six months.