



**MINUTES of  
COUNCIL  
15 FEBRUARY 2024**

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**PRESENT**

Chairperson	Councillor K M H Lagan
Vice-Chairperson	Councillor R G Pratt
Councillors	M G Bassenger, V J Bell, S J Burwood, J Driver, M F L Durham, CC, A Fittock, A S Fluker, L J Haywood, J C Hughes, K Jennings, A M Lay, N R Miller, S J N Morgan, M G Neall, R H Siddall, U C G Siddall-Norman, N D Spenceley, P L Spenceley, E L Stephens, J C Stilts, N J Swindle and M E Thompson

**1. CHAIRPERSON'S NOTICES**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through some general housekeeping arrangements for the meeting.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D O Bown, W J Laybourn, C P Morley, N G F Shaughnessy, W Stamp, S White and L L Wiffen.

**3. MINUTES - 14 DECEMBER 2023**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14 December 2023 be approved and confirmed.

**4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were none.

**6. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson informed the Council that he was suspending Procedure Rule 4(8)3 standing to address the Chairperson.

The Chairperson advised of the recent passing of Berna Casey, one of the committee clerks. Everyone present then stood in silent memory of Berna.

## **7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 7 DECEMBER 2023**

The Council considered the following recommendation coming forward from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

### **Member Scrutiny Request – Maldon Citizens’ Advice**

Councillor S J Morgan, Chairperson of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee proposed that the recommendation be accepted, this was duly seconded and agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the findings of the Maldon Citizens’ Advice scrutiny, as detailed in the briefing paper at Appendix A to the Council Agenda, be endorsed.

## **8. STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 25 JANUARY 2023**

The Council considered the following recommendations coming forward from the Strategy and Resources Committee for consideration.

### **Council Tax Support Scheme 2024 / 25**

Councillor M F L Durham, Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee proposed that the recommendation be accepted, this was duly seconded and agreed.

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the following changes to the existing schemes are approved:
  - a. a cost of living increase in line with the Department for Work and Pensions schemes be included in the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme for 2024 / 25 for Pensioners only;
  - b. that any legislative changes being introduced to the Housing Benefit Scheme, for 2024 / 25 are mirrored in the Council’s LCTS Scheme to ensure consistency;
  - c. minor technical amendments to ensure that we are able to administer the Scheme reflecting current local and national guidance and that we may disregard anything determined to be a local welfare payment from our calculation;
- (ii) that these decisions have been made following Members careful reading of and regard to the Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix 1 to the report considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee;
- (iii) that Members note the unchanged framework for the Hardship Provision at Appendix 2 to the report considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee;
- (iv) that the Policy document at Appendix 3 to the report considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee be approved;
- (v) that the Policy document at Appendix 4 to the report considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee be approved.

### **Business Rate and Council Tax Discretionary Policies**

Councillor Durham then proposed that the recommendation be accepted, this was duly seconded and agreed.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the proposed Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Scheme at Appendix 1 to the report considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee be approved.
- (ii) That the proposed Empty Homes and Second Homes Premium Policy at Appendix 2 to the report considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee be approved.

Members were reminded that the following recommendations coming forward from this Committee were not for consideration at this point as they formed part of the following Agenda Items:

- **9 – 2024 / 25 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy:**
  - Treasury Management 2024 / 25.
  - Capital and Investment Strategies for 2024 / 25 and Minimum Reserve Statement 2024 / 25;
  - 2023 / 24 Revised and Original 2024 / 25 Budget Estimates;
  - Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024 / 25 – 2026 / 27;
- **15 - Income and Savings Proposals 2024 / 25 to 2026 / 27**

#### **9. STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 1 FEBRUARY**

The Council considered the following recommendations coming forward from the Strategy and Resources Committee for consideration.

##### **Pay Policy Statement**

Councillor M F L Durham, Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee proposed that the recommendation be accepted, this was duly seconded and agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the Pay Policy Statement attached at Appendix 1 to the report considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee be approved.

#### **10. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Council noted the list of Committees that had met before and since the last meeting of the Council, up until Wednesday 7 February 2024 for which Minutes had been published.

#### **11. VARIATION TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chairperson advised that in accordance with Procedure Rule 1(4)a he was varying the order of business and moving Agenda Item 15 – Income and Savings Proposals 2024 / 25 to 2026 / 27 up the agenda, to be considered next as this directly related to the 2024 / 25 Budget at Agenda Item 9.

## **12. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Chairperson advised that as Item 15 was private and confidential the Council would need to exclude the public and press from the discussions and following consideration of this item the meeting would resume in open session. This was duly agreed.

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that this satisfies the public interest test.

## **13. INCOME AND SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2024 / 25 TO 2026 / 27**

The Committee considered the report of the Interim Chief Finance Officer presenting Members with income and savings options to address budget matters in 2024 / 25 and beyond.

The report provided an update in respect of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and budget gap for future years. Following agreement of the Finance Peer Review Action Plan by the Council in July 2023, the Finance Member Group (FMG) had met several times to consider options available to the Council to achieve its stated ambition of setting a balanced budget for 2024 / 25 and a sustainable MTFS.

The report set out a number of options to close the residual budget gap and Appendix 1 to the report detailed these savings, showing their Red, Amber, Green rating in terms of deliverability and impact.

It was noted that the Strategy and Resources Committee had considered this report at its meeting on 25 January 2024 and recommended that the exception of numbers 4 and 5 as detailed in Appendix 1 the remaining savings identified be supported.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and proposed that the recommendation set out within it be agreed. This proposal was duly seconded.

Following some discussion the Chairperson moved the proposal and this was duly agreed by assent.

**RESOLVED** that with the exception of numbers 4 and 5, the individual income and savings options as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved to allow a balanced budget to be set out in 2024 / 25, without the need to draw on General Balances.

## **14. RESUMPTION OF BUSINESS**

**RESOLVED** that the meeting resumes in open session at 7:49pm.

## **15. 2024 / 25 BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

The Council considered the reports of the Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer), on the recommendations of the Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 25 January 2024 relating to the revenue budget and the proposed level of Council for 2024 / 25.

The Leader of the Council made a budget speech (attached at **APPENDIX 1** to these Minutes), during which he thanked the Interim Chief Finance Officer and her team for their hard work and ended commending the budget for 2024 / 25 to the Council. This proposal was duly seconded.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer provided a brief summary of the reports highlighting each of the appendices contained within Agenda Item 9d – 2024 / 25 Revised and 2024 / 25 Original Budget Estimates as well as:

- Member engagement that had taken place;
- Capital and Investment Strategy and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) along with details of Capital Bids;
- Treasury Management Strategy;
- Council Tax for 2024 / 25 and the proposed 2.98% increase equating to £6.52 a year for a band D property.
- Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and forecast budget changes over the next three years;

Members were advised and noted that under agenda item 9d Revised 23-24 and Original 24-25 Budget Estimates recommendation b should refer to the year 2024 / 25.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1(13)a, each of the Opposition Leaders responded to the budget speech.

Councillor S J Morgan, Leader of the Conservative Group, referred to the budget having been put together by the four political groups working together as part of the Finance Working Group. He commended Councillors M F L Durham and A Fittock for their chairing of the Working Group and thanked the Section 151 Officer and other officers for their work on the budget.

Councillor J C Stilts, Leader of the District Support Group, thanked the Section 151 Officer for her presentation and agreed that the budget had been formed by all political groups working together. She highlighted the various elements that had resulted in a reduction to the initial budget gap reported and how cuts in funding by central government along with rising costs of services and inflation would add pressure to the budget in future years. The District Support Group requested that a cost versus income analysis was carried out as a matter of urgency and the Council should look at neighbouring Council initiatives to work with partners and start reducing costs. She advised that her Group supported the principle of the budget but requested that a full review of the financial implications of providing non-statutory and discretionary services along with the cost of delivering and executing the corporate plan be undertaken and reported to the Council as a matter of urgency.

Councillor J Driver, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, also referred to the work of the Finance Working Group and the scrutiny of the budget by all political groups. He thanked Officers for their work they had done to identify budget savings whilst keeping any loss of service to a minimum and referred to the work of the Liberal Democrat Group to deliver the services needed for vibrant communities. Agreeing with the Leader that working in partnership was vital to deliver services, the Council must demand the appropriate infrastructure for the District and he made particular reference to the poor medical provision in the District.

In response to all Opposition Leaders', the Leader referred to the recent feedback the Council had received from the Local Government Association finance peer review. He advised that the LGA were extremely impressed with what the Council had done and

the way it had managed its budget. The Leader highlighted the importance of working with the North Essex Councils to ensure services could be shared and that the Council's corporate plan fitted the budget. He agreed with the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group that the Council needed to ensure NHS services stayed within the District and advised the Council was doing its utmost to ensure this happened and would use Section 106 monies wherever possible to support that aim.

The Chairman of the Council referred to the proposal, duly seconded, in the name of the Leader of the Council, advising that the recommendations as set out in reports 9a to 9c would be taken en-bloc. This was duly seconded and upon a vote being taken these recommendations were duly agreed.

### **Treasury Management Strategy 2024 / 25**

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) that the Treasury Management Strategy 2024 / 25 (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) be approved.

### **Capital and Investment Strategies for 2023 / 24 and Minimum Reserve Statement 2024 / 25**

#### **RESOLVED**

- (ii) that the 2024 / 25 Capital Strategy (attached as Appendix 1 to the report);
- (iii) that the 2024 / 25 Capital Project Bids (Appendix 2 to the report);
- (iv) that the 2024 / 25 Investment Strategy (Appendix 3 to the report);
- (v) that the 2024 / 25 Minimum Revenue Provision Statement (Appendix 4 to the report).

### **Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024 / 25 to 2026 / 27**

#### **RESOLVED**

- (vi) That the updated MTFs for 2024 / 25 to 2026 / 27 at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

### **Revised 2023 / 24 and Original 2024 / 25 Budget Estimates and Council Tax 2024 / 25**

The Chairperson moved the recommendations set out agenda item 9d and in accordance with earlier notification the voting was as follows:

#### For the recommendation:

Councillors M G Bassenger, V J Bell, S J Burwood, J Driver, M F L Durham, A Fittock, L J Haywood, J C Hughes, K Jennings, K M H Lagan, A M Lay, M R Miller, S J N Morgan, M G Neall, R G Pratt, R H Siddall, U G C Siddall-Norman, N D Spenceley, P L Spenceley, E L Stephens, J C Stilts, N J Swindle and M E Thompson.

#### Against the recommendation:

Councillor A S Fluker.

Abstain: None.

The Chairperson declared that these recommendations were therefore agreed.

## RESOLVED

- (vii) that the Revised 2023 / 24 and Original 2024 / 25 General Fund Revenue Budget Estimates (attached as Appendices 1 – 3 to the report) be approved;
- (viii) that an average Band D council tax of £225.27 (excluding parish precepts) (£6.52 increase) for 2024 / 25 (attached at Appendix 1), be agreed;
- (ix) that policies on the designated use of financial reserves (as set out in Appendix 4),
- (x) that the Council maintains the current policy of a minimum general fund balance of £2,600,000.
- (xi) that the Council gives due regard to the Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) statement on the robustness of budgets and adequacy of reserves in set out in Appendix 5.

## Council Tax 2024 / 25

The Chairperson moved the recommendations set out agenda item 9e and in accordance with earlier notification the voting was as follows:

### For the recommendation:

Councillors M G Bassenger, V J Bell, S J Burwood, J Driver, M F L Durham, A Fittock, A S Fluker, T Fittock, L J Haywood, J C Hughes, K Jennings, K M H Lagan, A M Lay, M R Miller, S J N Morgan, M G Neall, R G Pratt, R H Siddall, U G C Siddall-Norman, N D Spenceley, P L Spenceley, E L Stephens, J C Stilts, N J Swindle and M E Thompson.

Against the recommendation: None.

Abstain: None.

The Chairperson declared that these recommendations were therefore agreed.

## RESOLVED

- (xii) that Maldon District Council's Council Tax Requirement for 2024 / 25 is set at £5,947,173;
- (xiii) that the Maldon District Council's Band D Council Tax (excluding Parish precepts) is set at £225.27, reflecting an increase of £6.52 (2.98%), all other bands being determined in accordance with the relevant Sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended;
- (xiv) that the precept demands and level of Band D Council Tax of the Essex County Council, the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority for both Police and Fire, and the various Parish Councils within the District be determined as set out in the report, all other bands being determined in accordance with the relevant Sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended;
- (xv) that the Council calculates its Council Tax Base for the year 2024 / 25 as follows:
  - (a) for the whole district as 26,400.2 Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the Act), as amended by the Localism Act 2011; and

- (b) for dwellings in those parts of its district to which a Parish precept relates as listed below:

Althorne	509.1
Asheldham	70.3
Bradwell-on-Sea	341.1
Burnham-on-Crouch	3,712.0
Cold Norton	508.3
Dengie	47.6
Goldhanger	318.1
Great Braxted	181.5
Great Totham	1,338.1
Hazeleigh	57.5
Heybridge	2,820.9
Heybridge Basin	273.8
Langford	90.1
Latchingdon	484.1
Little Braxted	80.0
Little Totham	194.6
Maldon	5,907.3
Mayland	1,484.9
Mundon	146.4
North Fambridge	537.3
Purleigh	585.8
Southminster	1,633.3
St. Lawrence	593.7
Steeple	187.7
Stow Maries	83.4
Tillingham	405.9
Tollesbury	1,031.0
Tolleshunt D'arcy	446.5
Tolleshunt Knights	426.4
Tolleshunt Major	271.3
Ulting	78.9
Wickham Bishops	1,018.9
Woodham Mortimer	258.9
Woodham Walter	275.3
	<b>26,400.2</b>

1. Calculate that the Council Tax Requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish precepts) is £5,947,173.
2. That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2023 / 24 in accordance with new Sections 31 to 36 of the Act as amended:
  - (a) £31,527,937 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act, taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils (**i.e. gross expenditure including Parish precepts**)
  - (b) £23,788,461 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act (**i.e. gross income including government grants**)
  - (c) £7,739,477 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as



its Council Tax Requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act) **(i.e. Council Tax Requirement including Parish precepts)**.

- (d) £293.16 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R) divided by the amount at 1(a) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year **(i.e. average Band D Council Tax including Parish precepts)**
- (e) £1,792,273 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act **(i.e. Parish Council precepts)**
- (f) £225.27 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates **(i.e. District Council Band D Council Tax excluding Parish precepts)**.
- (g) Basic Amount of Council Tax by Parish 2024 / 25

Town/Parish	Local Precept	Town/Parish Band D	District + Town/Parish Band D
Althorne	27,000.00	53.03	278.30
Asheldham	4,365.00	62.09	287.36
Bradwell-on-Sea	28,840.00	84.55	309.82
Burnham-on-Crouch	198,390.00	53.45	278.72
Cold Norton	44,694.00	87.93	313.20
Dengie	2,955.00	62.08	287.35
Goldhanger	12,000.00	37.72	262.99
Great Braxted	13,977.00	77.01	302.28
Great Totham	35,754.00	26.72	251.99
Hazeleigh	1,363.00	23.70	248.97
Heybridge	210,000.00	74.44	299.71
Heybridge Basin	31,500.00	115.05	340.32
Langford	7,195.00	79.86	305.13
Latchingdon	40,000.00	82.63	307.90
Little Braxted	4,886.00	61.08	286.35
Little Totham	9,055.00	46.53	271.80
Maldon	457,122.00	77.38	302.65
Mayland	105,322.00	70.93	296.20
Mundon	7,500.00	51.23	276.50
North Fambridge	22,960.00	42.73	268.00
Purleigh	48,000.00	81.94	307.21
Southminster	155,089.00	94.95	320.22
St. Lawrence	34,233.00	57.66	282.93
Steeple	11,613.00	61.87	287.14
Stow Maries	7,020.00	84.17	309.44
Tillingham	37,200.00	91.65	316.92
Tollesbury	118,257.00	114.70	339.97
Tolleshunt D'arcy	24,766.00	55.47	280.74
Tolleshunt Knights	15,000.00	35.18	260.45
Tolleshunt Major	10,000.00	36.86	262.13
Ulting	6,305.00	79.91	305.18
Wickham Bishops	22,530.00	22.11	247.38

Woodham Mortimer	6,137.00	23.70	248.97
Woodham Walter	31,245.00	113.49	338.76

These amounts are calculated by adding to the amount at 3(f) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Councils area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(h) Calculation of Basic Amounts of Council Tax by Parish for Different Valuation Bands

PARISH	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
Althorne	185.53	216.46	247.38	278.30	340.14	401.99	463.83	556.60
Asheldham	191.57	223.50	255.43	287.36	351.22	415.08	478.93	574.72
Bradwell-on-Sea	206.55	240.97	275.40	309.82	378.67	447.52	516.37	619.64
Burnham-on-Crouch	185.81	216.78	247.75	278.72	340.66	402.60	464.53	557.44
Cold Norton	208.80	243.60	278.40	313.20	382.80	452.40	522.00	626.40
Dengie	191.57	223.49	255.42	287.35	351.21	415.06	478.92	574.70
Goldhanger	175.33	204.55	233.77	262.99	321.43	379.87	438.32	525.98
Great Braxted	201.52	235.11	268.69	302.28	369.45	436.63	503.80	604.56
Great Totham	167.99	195.99	223.99	251.99	307.99	363.99	419.98	503.98
Hazeleigh	165.98	193.64	221.31	248.97	304.30	359.62	414.95	497.94
Heybridge	199.81	233.11	266.41	299.71	366.31	432.91	499.52	599.42
Heybridge Basin	226.88	264.69	302.51	340.32	415.95	491.57	567.20	680.64
Langford	203.42	237.32	271.23	305.13	372.94	440.74	508.55	610.26
Latchingdon	205.27	239.48	273.69	307.90	376.32	444.74	513.17	615.80
Little Braxted	190.90	222.72	254.53	286.35	349.98	413.62	477.25	572.70
Little Totham	181.20	211.40	241.60	271.80	332.20	392.60	453.00	543.60
Maldon	201.77	235.39	269.02	302.65	369.91	437.16	504.42	605.31
Mayland	197.47	230.38	263.29	296.20	362.02	427.84	493.67	592.40
Mundon	184.33	215.06	245.78	276.50	337.94	399.39	460.83	553.00
North Fambridge	178.67	208.44	238.22	268.00	327.56	387.11	446.67	536.00
Purleigh	204.81	238.94	273.08	307.21	375.48	443.75	512.02	614.42
Southminster	213.48	249.06	284.64	320.22	391.38	462.54	533.70	640.44
St. Lawrence	188.62	220.06	251.49	282.93	345.80	408.68	471.55	565.86
Steeple	191.43	223.33	255.24	287.14	350.95	414.76	478.57	574.28
Stow Maries	206.29	240.68	275.06	309.44	378.20	446.97	515.73	618.88
Tillingham	211.28	246.49	281.71	316.92	387.35	457.77	528.20	633.84
Tollesbury	226.65	264.42	302.20	339.97	415.52	491.07	566.62	679.94
Tolleshunt D'arcy	187.16	218.35	249.55	280.74	343.13	405.51	467.90	561.48
Tolleshunt Knights	173.63	202.57	231.51	260.45	318.33	376.21	434.08	520.90
Tolleshunt Major	174.75	203.88	233.00	262.13	320.38	378.63	436.88	524.26
Ulting	203.45	237.36	271.27	305.18	373.00	440.82	508.63	610.36
Wickham Bishops	164.92	192.41	219.89	247.38	302.35	357.33	412.30	494.76
Woodham Mortimer	165.98	193.64	221.31	248.97	304.30	359.62	414.95	497.94
Woodham Walter	225.84	263.48	301.12	338.76	414.04	489.32	564.60	677.52

These amounts are calculated by multiplying the amounts at 3(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band, divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year, in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

That it be noted for the year 2024 / 25 the major precepting authorities have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below:

Precepting Authority	Valuation Bands			
Essex County Council	A	£1,015.02	E	£1,860.87
	B	£1,184.19	F	£2,199.21
	C	£1,353.36	G	£2,537.55
	D	£1,522.53	H	£3,045.06
Essex PFCC F&RA Essex Police and Crime Commissioner	A	£164.28	E	£301.18
	B	£191.66	F	£355.94
	C	£219.04	G	£410.70
	D	£246.42	H	£492.84
Essex PFCC F&RA Essex Fire and Rescue Authority	A	£55.08	E	£100.98
	B	£64.26	F	£119.34
	C	£73.44	G	£137.70
	D	£82.62	H	£165.24

5. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3(h) and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2024 / 25 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwelling shown in Table A attached.
6. Determines that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2024 / 25 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

As the billing authority, the Council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2024 / 25 is excessive and that the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

## **TABLE A**

### **Total Council Tax Amounts (£) by Band and Area 2024/25**

Parish/Area	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
Althorne	1,419.91	1,656.57	1,893.22	2,129.87	2,603.17	3,076.48	3,549.78	4,259.74
Asheldham	1,425.95	1,663.61	1,901.27	2,138.93	2,614.25	3,089.57	3,564.88	4,277.86
Bradwell-on-Sea	1,440.93	1,681.08	1,921.24	2,161.39	2,641.70	3,122.01	3,602.32	4,322.78
Burnham-on-Crouch	1,420.19	1,656.89	1,893.59	2,130.29	2,603.69	3,077.09	3,550.48	4,260.58
Cold Norton	1,443.18	1,683.71	1,924.24	2,164.77	2,645.83	3,126.89	3,607.95	4,329.54
Dengie	1,425.95	1,663.60	1,901.26	2,138.92	2,614.24	3,089.55	3,564.87	4,277.84

Goldhanger	1,409.71	1,644.66	1,879.61	2,114.56	2,584.46	3,054.36	3,524.27	4,229.12
Great Braxted	1,435.90	1,675.22	1,914.53	2,153.85	2,632.48	3,111.12	3,589.75	4,307.70
Great Totham	1,402.37	1,636.10	1,869.83	2,103.56	2,571.02	3,038.48	3,505.93	4,207.12
Hazeleigh	1,400.36	1,633.75	1,867.15	2,100.54	2,567.33	3,034.11	3,500.90	4,201.08
Heybridge	1,434.19	1,673.22	1,912.25	2,151.28	2,629.34	3,107.40	3,585.47	4,302.56
Heybridge Basin	1,461.26	1,704.80	1,948.35	2,191.89	2,678.98	3,166.06	3,653.15	4,383.78
Langford	1,437.80	1,677.43	1,917.07	2,156.70	2,635.97	3,115.23	3,594.50	4,313.40
Latchingdon	1,439.65	1,679.59	1,919.53	2,159.47	2,639.35	3,119.23	3,599.12	4,318.94
Little Braxted	1,425.28	1,662.83	1,900.37	2,137.92	2,613.01	3,088.11	3,563.20	4,275.84
Little Totham	1,415.58	1,651.51	1,887.44	2,123.37	2,595.23	3,067.09	3,538.95	4,246.74
Maldon	1,436.15	1,675.50	1,914.86	2,154.22	2,632.94	3,111.65	3,590.37	4,308.45
Mayland	1,431.85	1,670.49	1,909.13	2,147.77	2,625.05	3,102.33	3,579.62	4,295.54
Mundon	1,418.71	1,655.17	1,891.62	2,128.07	2,600.97	3,073.88	3,546.78	4,256.14
North Fambridge	1,413.05	1,648.55	1,884.06	2,119.57	2,590.59	3,061.60	3,532.62	4,239.14
Purleigh	1,439.19	1,679.05	1,918.92	2,158.78	2,638.51	3,118.24	3,597.97	4,317.56
Southminster	1,447.86	1,689.17	1,930.48	2,171.79	2,654.41	3,137.03	3,619.65	4,343.58
St. Lawrence	1,423.00	1,660.17	1,897.33	2,134.50	2,608.83	3,083.17	3,557.50	4,269.00
Steeple	1,425.81	1,663.44	1,901.08	2,138.71	2,613.98	3,089.25	3,564.52	4,277.42
Stow Maries	1,440.67	1,680.79	1,920.90	2,161.01	2,641.23	3,121.46	3,601.68	4,322.02
Tillingham	1,445.66	1,686.60	1,927.55	2,168.49	2,650.38	3,132.26	3,614.15	4,336.98
Tollesbury	1,461.03	1,704.53	1,948.04	2,191.54	2,678.55	3,165.56	3,652.57	4,383.08
Tolleshunt D'arcy	1,421.54	1,658.46	1,895.39	2,132.31	2,606.16	3,080.00	3,553.85	4,264.62
Tolleshunt Knights	1,408.01	1,642.68	1,877.35	2,112.02	2,581.36	3,050.70	3,520.03	4,224.04
Tolleshunt Major	1,409.13	1,643.99	1,878.84	2,113.70	2,583.41	3,053.12	3,522.83	4,227.40
Ulting	1,437.83	1,677.47	1,917.11	2,156.75	2,636.03	3,115.31	3,594.58	4,313.50
Wickham Bishops	1,399.30	1,632.52	1,865.73	2,098.95	2,565.38	3,031.82	3,498.25	4,197.90
Woodham Mortimer	1,400.36	1,633.75	1,867.15	2,100.54	2,567.33	3,034.11	3,500.90	4,201.08
Woodham Walter	1,460.22	1,703.59	1,946.96	2,190.33	2,677.07	3,163.81	3,650.55	4,380.66

**16. QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 6(3) OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN**

There were none.

**17. POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER ELECTION - 2 MAY 2024 - POLLING STATIONS**

The Council considered the report of the Director of Strategy and Resources seeking approval to grant delegated authority to the Council's Returning Officer to decide on an alternative polling station at the forthcoming elections in May 2024, in the event of any designated venues not being available for use. The report also sought approval to change the location for a polling station in Burnham-on-Crouch (North) Ward.

It was noted that Ormiston Rivers Academy had been previously used as the Polling Station for the Burnham-on-Crouch (North) Ward. However, it was requested that for future elections this be moved to Burnham-on-Crouch Village Hall as it was felt this venue better suited for both staff working at the polling station and electors.

The Chairperson moved the recommendations as set out in the report and upon a vote being taken these were agreed.

## **RESOLVED**

- (i) That for the elections to be held on 2 May 2024, the Council delegates authority to the Returning Officer to decide on suitable alternative venues, should any designated polling stations become unavailable.
- (ii) That the Burnham-on-Crouch Village Hall be used as the Polling Station for the Burnham-on-Crouch (North) Ward.

## **18. ESSEX WIDE DEVOLUTION UPDATE**

The Director of Strategy and Resources provided a verbal update on the Essex Wide Devolution. He referred to a letter circulated by the Leader of the Council on 1 February 2024 from the three upper tier authorities in relation to the latest position regarding devolution. The letter stated that due to reservations amongst some Members of Parliament (MPs) regarding establishing a combined County Authority for Greater Essex no agreement on a tier 2 level deal had been reached. The Government had since written to upper tier authorities confirming that effectively the bid had timed out in terms of reaching an agreement and there was not enough time left within this parliament for an agreement (if reached) to be approved. The Director advised that for this reason devolution work had been paused until after the election and this would be his final update until such time as anything changed.

Some discussion followed, and questions raised about why the MPs had not supported devolution. In response the Director advised that he was unable to comment because the detail of the MP meetings had not been released. At this point, Councillor M F L Durham also provided additional information in relation to devolution bids.

The Chairperson thanked the Director of Strategy and Resources for his update.

## **19. BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED BY THE CHAIRPERSON TO BE URGENT**

There was none.

## **20. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that this satisfies the public interest test.

## **21. CORPORATE LEADERSHIP REVIEW**

The Council considered the report of the Monitoring Officer seeking Members' consideration of a recommendation coming forward from the Working Group (Appendix 1 to the report) established by the Council to consider the four recommendations set out in the Review report provided by the East of England Local Government Association, commissioned by the Leader of the Council, regarding the Tier 1 Leadership of the Council (Appendix 2).

The report provided background information in relation to the Review (Appendix 2) that had been undertaken and the recommendations set out within it. Following consideration of this report by the Council at its meeting on 14 December 2023 a Working Group was established

Following a presentation of the report by the Leader of the Council, a lengthy debate ensued during which Members discussed the options set out in the Appendix and the risks to the Council.

In response to questions regarding the potential savings from the options the Interim Chief Finance Officer, Lead Specialist: Legal and Lead Specialist: HR provided Members with additional information and clarification.

In accordance with Procedure Rule No. 13 (3) Councillor S J N Morgan requested a recorded vote.

The Leader of the Council clarified that recommendation (i) sought the Council's in principle agreement to start the consultation process and the matter would be brought back to the Council at a later date. He proposed that in respect of recommendation (i) model 3 (as recommended by the Working Group and set out in Appendix 1) be agreed along with recommendations (ii) to (iv). This was duly seconded.

The Chairperson then moved the proposal in the name of the Leader that an 'in principle' decision was made on model 3 set out in Appendix 1 to the report. A vote was taken and the results were as follows:

For the recommendation:

Councillors M G Bassenger, V J Bell, S J Burwood, J Driver, A Fittock, A S Fluker, L J Haywood, J C Hughes, K Jennings, K M H Lagan, A M Lay, M G Neall, R H Siddall, U G C Siddall-Norman, N D Spenceley, P L Spenceley, E L Stephens, J C Stilts and N J Swindle.

Against the recommendation:

Councillors M F L Durham, N R Miller, S J N Morgan, R G Pratt and M E Thompson.

Abstain: None.

The Chairperson declared that this proposal had therefore been agreed. He then moved recommendations (ii) to (iv) as set out in the report and these were duly agreed by assent.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That an "in principle" decision is made that the Council starts the process for Model 3 as recommended by the Working Group and set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (ii) That following a formal consultation process with affected employees, the consultation responses will be considered by the Working Group to make recommendations to the Council on whether the "in principle" decision should be confirmed;
- (iii) That authorisation is given to engage external HR support advising the Working Group and working alongside the Leader of the Council and Monitoring Officer including changes associated with the Organisational Change Policy and Procedure, providing advice that the Monitoring Officer considers is necessary prior to any re-consideration of any "in principle" decision;

- (iv) That the costs associated with external HR support to be funded from the Council's transformational fund.

There being no other items of business the Chairperson closed the meeting at 9.34 pm.

K M H LAGAN  
CHAIRPERSON

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### Leaders Budget Speech

I am pleased to present to you the proposed budget for the next financial year. This represents a significant improvement to the position reported at this time last year.

Following the Finance Peer Review in early 2023 and at the Council meeting in July, members agreed an ambitious target of setting a fully balanced budget for 2024-2025. This was to be achieved without relying on the use of reserves and balances which have been needed in recent years.

With the Council's agreement to the income and savings proposals recommended by its Strategy and Resources Committee, we can tonight realise that ambition and set ourselves in good stead to achieve financial sustainability for the Council and our residents in the years ahead.

We have got to this position, through the hard work of officers and Members over the last twelve months, and in particular the work that has taken at the Finance Member Group. I would like to thank all officers in coming forward with the proposals and for the finance team for their work. The finance member group demonstrated how we can work together constructively. I would also like to thank Cllrs Durham and Fittock for the chairing of the group. The group have carefully considered the options available to the Council, to enable it to achieve its Corporate Plan and to do so within the councils available resources.

All political groups, have worked closely together and have recognised the need for cross party co-operation for us to work effectively as a Council. We have held a series of workshops over the last few months, facilitated by the LGA, and bringing together the Group Leaders and Deputies of all groups and Chairs of the main committees, along with the Corporate Leadership Team to ensure a shared vision for the Council. At the same time we have maintained appropriate challenge and scrutiny. Last month the LGA conducted a review of the finance peer review action plan and their feedback in a nutshell was 'very good'.

During the last twelve months we have achieved a significant amount through working together for the benefit of our residents and the district.

Our commitment to delivering good quality services continues, we have extended our waste contract with Suez for a further eight years and we are half-way through the Flex Collect plastics trial. Our response to residents enquiries, exceeds those of other councils in Essex.

Whilst we remain focused on delivering excellent cost-effective services as a council, we also recognise that we can't achieve everything on our own, and have therefore sought to strengthen our partnerships across the district.

One Maldon District continues to flourish, delivering its action plan and regular community hub events, that due to an increase in partners, now runs out of the Maldon town hall.

We are continuing to maximise the opportunity to utilise the Council offices as a hub for partnership working, to enhance community safety, working with the Police, Citizens Advice Bureau, the Maldon District CVS, and Barclays bank continue to offer a much-needed service. We have also met our refugee emergency response duties, delivering support to those displaced from their home countries.

We have also strengthened our relationship with the NHS and Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board, including jointly funding a management role to deliver Health Integration, prevention services and outcomes from our community partnerships.

We are working with the NHS currently to ensure that health services remain the district. As a council we need to do all that we can to keep outpatient services within the district.

We have had great success in bidding for and securing over £200k of funding specifically for community and wellbeing projects. We continue to deliver against our £1 million allocation of UK Shared Prosperity funding. Today, we launched our Rural England Prosperity Fund, distributing an allocation of over 400k to businesses and community organisations across the district. We should be immensely proud of our ability to attract funding of what is in excess of £1m over the course of the last year and in addition to our core revenue budgets.

In addition to this, tourism continues to play a vital role in our local economy, this is reflected in the latest Volume and Value report, showing that since the pandemic, the Maldon district is attracting a higher number of day trippers in comparison to the rest of the county.

We have also increased our profile within the North Essex Councils group and I am proud to now chair the North Essex Economic Board. We should look forward to working more collaboratively with our neighbouring councils over the coming months and years. We are ensuring that the actions planned by NEEB, reflect the range of businesses across the district and that it includes the small to medium businesses that flourish within Maldon District. North Essex Councils provides, the opportunity to work collaboratively with other authorities and to look at how and the way we share services.

Like all councils we will continue to face significant challenges, not least the ongoing financial pressures which will need to be addressed through continued efforts to transform and deliver our services in the most efficient way. We have to make tough choices about what and how we deliver as a Council and our corporate priorities. Members will have the opportunity later in the year to review our corporate plan and establish what our priorities are from 2024 through to 2027.

I am under no illusion as to the scale of these challenges; however I remain optimistic that by continuing our trajectory of improved collaborative working, and I am sure all members welcome the opportunity to continue this within the council and I would like to thank all those in groups and the non-aligned for that collaboration.

With the demands that we face, working with our external partners is crucial to the lives of residents and the success of organisations with the district. I am sure we can deliver the best possible outcomes for our district over the next three years and beyond.