



Rushcliffe  
Borough Council

**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
WEST BRIDGFORD SPECIAL EXPENSES AND COMMUNITY  
INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY ADVISORY GROUP  
WEDNESDAY, 13 JANUARY 2021**

Held virtually at 5.30 pm

**PRESENT:**

Councillors G Moore (Chairman), P Gowland, R Jones, R Mallender,  
S J Robinson, G Wheeler and J Wheeler

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

P Linfield

Executive Manager - Finance and  
Corporate Services

H Tambini

Democratic Services Manager

S Whittaker

Financial Services Manager

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillor D Viridi

**11 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**12 Minutes of the meeting 29 September 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 25 September 2020 were declared as a true record.

**13 Special Expenses 2021/22 Budget Update**

The Financial Services Manager delivered a presentation to the Group, detailing the proposed Special Expenses budget for 2021/22 for West Bridgford, a copy of which was circulated to members of the Group following the meeting.

In answer to a question regarding the proposed increase for West Bridgford town centre, the Financial Services Manager confirmed that the increase would be 2.35%, which equated to an annual overall increase of £1.14. The increase in the town centre was due to the inclusion of certain activities held in West Bridgford, including the Christmas lights, the 'Lark in the Park' and the 'Taste of Rushcliffe' events. It was confirmed that those events had previously been included in the general fund; however, as the events were held in West Bridgford, they should be included in the Special Expenses budget.

In answer to a question regarding the tax base and the inclusion of new homes, the Financial Services Manager advised that the tax base calculation did include expected growth in housing; however, as the tax base was

estimated in the previous year, factors such as the Covid pandemic could reduce the number of houses being built.

A member of the Group questioned why activities held in West Bridgford town centre would now be included in the Special Expenses budget, when residents not just in West Bridgford but also throughout the Borough enjoyed those activities. The Financial Services Manager advised that those activities were always held in West Bridgford, rather than being rotated around the Borough, which ensured that West Bridgford enjoyed the greater benefit from those activities.

The Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services reminded members of the Group that the Special Expenses budget had not increased over the past few years and the proposed increase was very small.

The Chairman reminded members of the Group that if a parish council increased its precept, that did not affect the overall precept; however, any increase in the West Bridgford precept affected the overall precept.

In answer to a question regarding the threshold calculations, officers advised that the referendum limit, which was set each year by Central Government, had been set at £5 last year, and therefore the impact would have been the same as that proposed for this year.

A member of the Group questioned how residents in West Bridgford could see and make comments on the proposed budget. The Chairman reminded members of the Group that the Special Expenses budget had always been calculated in this way and advised that it was usual practice for the elected representatives to be consulted on such matters and then make representations to officers. To ensure transparency and openness, this was the first year that this consultation had taken place and it would continue to occur going forward.

In response to a suggestion that it would be helpful to receive this information earlier in the planning process, to allow members of the Group to identify how and where monies could be spent, the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services advised that it would be a challenge to produce the information any earlier in the year, given the various processes that had to be followed and the outside factors that affected the budget setting itself. He advised members of the Group that in their elected role as community leaders, they were now being given the opportunity to see the proposed budget earlier than ever before. Members of the Group were reminded that the budget would be considered by Cabinet in February, before being submitted to Council for approval on 4 March 2021, and that process would allow all Councillors the opportunity to make representations and specific comments.

A member of the Group expressed concern that residents were being asked to pay more money, despite some wards having no facilities, and it would be difficult to explain and justify any increase, however small, to those residents.

The Group was reminded that the remit of the Group was for consultation to make recommendations to Cabinet, as required.

In response to a request from a member of the Group for a more detailed breakdown of the figures referred to in the presentation, the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services advised that it was important that members of the Group focused specifically on the high level strategic picture, rather than looking at the very technical, specific details.

Following those points, a member of the Group acknowledged the timeframe involved in the budget setting process; however, it was suggested that it would be helpful to know what and where increases might occur, to allow members of the Group to question proposals and make any recommendations at the earliest possible stage. This would ensure transparency and allow Councillors to provide feedback to local residents.

The Chairman noted the comments and suggested that it would be helpful when the next Budget Workshops were held that one could be specifically for the West Bridgford Special Expenses precept.

It was **RESOLVED** that

- a) the presentation be noted;
- b) a Budget Workshop to consider the West Bridgford Special Expenses precept be set up during the next phase of Budget Workshops; and
- c) the next meeting of the Group be arranged for April/May 2021, to receive an update on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The meeting closed at 6.05 pm.

CHAIRMAN