GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA

for the

ANNUAL CONSULTATION MEETING WITH BUSINESS RATEPAYERS

9 January 2008

at 5.30pm

LARGER PRINT COPY AVAILABLE
PLEASE TELEPHONE: 01493 846325

ANNUAL CONSULTATION MEETING WITH BUSINESS RATEPAYERS

To be held in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Great Yarmouth on Wednesday, 9 January 2008 at 5.30pm

A G E N D A

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

You have a PERSONAL INTEREST in a matter being discussed at a meeting IF

- It relates to something on your Register of Interests form; or
- A decision on it would affect you, your family or friends more than other people in your Ward.

You have a PREJUDICIAL INTEREST in a matter being discussed at a meeting IF

- It affects your financial position or that of your family or friends more than other people in your Ward; or
- It concerns a planning or licensing application you or they have submitted
- AND IN EITHER CASE a reasonable member of the public would consider it to be so significant that you could not reach an unbiased decision.

If your interest is only PERSONAL, you must declare it but can still speak and vote. If your interest is PREJUDICIAL, you must leave the room. However, you have the same rights as a member of the public to address the meeting before leaving.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes of the last annual Business Ratepayers meeting held on 11 January 2007 (pages 1-3).

3. . **BUDGET 2008/09**

To receive details of the 2008/09 budget.

4. BUSINESS RATEPAYERS PRIORITIES FOR 2008/09

To consider the above.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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AGENDA ITEM 2

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CONSULTATION MEETING WITH BUSINESS RATEPAYERS

11 January 2007 – 4.00 pm

PRESENT:
Councillor Coleman (in the Chair); Councillors.Smith and Stone.

Mr M Gouldby, Mr C Hacon and Mr J Newman (Economic Forum Representatives) and Mrs Farrow, K Reddy and Mr M Westrup (Federation of Small Businesses Representatives).

Mr M Barrow (Corporate Director (Economy and Environment)), Mr W Flatman (Head of Financial Services), Mrs Ratcliffe (Corporate Director (Resources)), Mr D Stannard (Regeneration Manager), Mr Warner (Head of Planning and Development), Mr P Wright (Economic Development Officer) and Miss S Davis (Senior Member Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Barry (Chamber of Commerce), J Best (EEEGR), Councillors B Collins and B Peck (Great Yarmouth Borough Council), Mr S Eldred and Mr N Pyke (Port Authority), Chief Superintendent C Hall (Norfolk Constabulary), Mr R Hetherington (Job Centre Plus), Mr J Holt (Job Centre Plus), Mr J Steward (Norfolk Museums Service), Mr T Wright MP, Mr I McCreadie (Chamber of Commerce).

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2006 were confirmed.

3. BUDGET 2007/08

The Chairman welcomed everyone and reminded them that this meeting was part of the Council's Annual Strategy for Consultation. The Corporate Director (Resources) reported on the Borough Council's finances and it was noted that 70% of the Council's funding would come from Government, 27% would be generated through Council Tax and 2% would be drawn from balances. The Government had also indicated that Council Tax increases could not be above 5%. The point was made that some parts of the Council's Budget were volatile, ie income from Car Parks and the Crematorium and Cemeteries and the funding required for Housing Benefits and Homeless. It was hoped that the Government would allocate £300,000 as part of its Business Incentive Grant and this would be taken into account when totalling the working balances.

The meeting was informed that Officers were currently looking at next year's Budget and growth items in order to produce a medium term Financial Statement which would roll

forward into the following year. A number of pressures had been identified such as the increase in Pension Fund, Job Evaluation, extra costs of Waste Disposal and the end of Government funding streams. It was likely that the Budget would be several hundred thousand pounds in deficit which would have to be met from balances. In order to cover this, all services had been asked to provide details of at least 5% savings which would then be looked at by Councillors in order for them to determine priorities. Reference was made to the Gershon Initiative and it was noted that £477,000 had been saved in 2005/06 and in 2007/08 at least half had to be cashable savings.

The meeting was informed that the final Budget would be put forward to Council on 26 February 2007 and would include a medium term Financial Strategy which would be produced following further work on value for money and the use of existing assets.

Reference was made to the spending pressures such as the new Licensing regime and it was noted the initial costs which had to be borne were around IT and staffing but income would be generated. Similarly the Council would be taking on responsibility under the Gambling Act. A query was raised as to whether there would be any impact on the Borough Council arising from the new Transport Emissions Legislation. The Head of Financial Services responded that the Borough Council only had six small vans with the heavy transport being operated through our Contractors, GYB Services, which meant that the new Legislation should not have a significant impact.

4. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

Jonathan Newman (Town Centre Partnership) reported on the recent ballot for the Business Improvement District within the Town Centre. It was noted that 188 businesses has been balloted and of the 83 returned 68 had voted in favour. The anticipated income from the BID was £92,500 for this year. Although some of the closures of shops in the Town such as the Arcade had affected the projected income, the Market Gates development was expected to increase income. The successful BID had also secured the Street Wardens for the next four years and would enable marketing and advertising to be improved.

5. ECONOMIC AND PLANNING ISSUES

The meeting received information in relation to progress with the *inte*GREAT Scheme, East Port, LEGI, Beacon Park and GYMI. The Head of Planning and Development also gave details of the latest position regarding the Third River Crossing, Gapton Hall Roundabout and Rail Franchises. Reference was made to the 1st East Area Action Plan and it was noted that a summary document would be produced of the options for Great Yarmouth, Gorleston and Lowestoft. He also provided an update in relation to the proposed boundary changes to the conservation areas in Gorleston Town Centre and the Cliffs area. Reference was also made to major planning applications such as the Market Gates redevelopment and out of town Retail Developments. The latest position with regard to processing of searches applications was given and it was noted that the turnaround time had now reduced to eight days through solicitors and personal searches were taking two days. The meeting also received details of the St George's Parkway project which was being funded by Cleaner, Safer, Greener monies. Reference was also made to the Golden Mile Development site and it was noted that a lot of interest had been shown particularly bearing in mind that Great Yarmouth might be identified as an area for a large Casino. The Regeneration Manager reported that the Market Row redevelopment was now completed and work was being carried out on the Courts and Boultons sites. He also referred to a Prospectus for future development in the Town which EEDA had asked the Borough Council to produce.

Reference was made to the facilities at the Marina Centre and the impact of proposed redevelopment. The Corporate Director (Economy and Environment) reported that the Borough Council had developed a needs-based Leisure Strategy and any decisions on the facilities at the Marina Centre would be made in conjunction with this document. In relation to the Marina Centre, the point was made that the building was under-utilised and was expensive to run and maintain. He added that Council Officers were working with a number of large companies and organisations in the area to ascertain if their facilities could be used by the wider community.

6. THE LYONS REVIEW

The Corporate Director (Economy and Environment) reported that the Review into Local Government Finance conducted by Sir Michael Lyons was due to be released in March/April and one issue could be a new role for Business Rates.

7. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 6.25 pm.