

## Business ratepayers' consultation

8 February 2017

- Dave Robertson – Culver Square
- Tim Waddington – Colchester United
- Cllr Paul Smith,
- Cllr Annie Feltham
- Sean Plummer, Finance
- Karen Turnball, Economic Growth

Sean Plummer presented information on the Council's 2017/18 budget. The following points were discussed on the budget presentation:

- Settlement Funding Allocation (SFA) – the total of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and business rates baseline has been **cut by £980k (17%)**
- New Homes Bonus has been reformed and as a result **cut by £931k (16%)**
- General cost pressures from inflation (pay and prices), business rates revaluation, apprenticeship levy, interest earnings, pension contributions etc
- Budget includes almost £3m of savings and income.
- £0.9m of this is a reduction in how much we can spend from NHB due to the grant cut.
- Of the other saving nearly all is extra income or efficiency savings
- Proposal of an increase of £4.95 (2.8%) in Council Tax, the first increase in 7 years and in line with assumptions made by Government.
- Over the next three years we are now showing a gap of £2.5m, with the next two years being about £1m a year. This includes a number of savings already planned for the next 2 years.
- The changes to NHB means that the grant will be fall by about a **further £2.5m** in the next three years. The MTFF assumes this reduction will be balanced by spending less on one-off investment.

Sean also presented details of business rate changes including the revaluation, SBRR (small business rate relief) etc.

There was a general discussion on the Councils changing budget position, opportunities for engagement with the business community and the Council's inward investment strategy.