

Council
26 APRIL 2023

Present: Councillors: Kate Rowbottom (Chairman), Matthew Allen, Tony Bevis, John Blackall, Martin Boffey, Karen Burgess, Peter Burgess, Jonathan Chowen, Philip Circus, Paul Clarke, Michael Croker, Ray Dawe, Ruth Fletcher, Joan Grech, Billy Greening, Tony Hogben (Deputy Leader), Nigel Jupp, Liz Kitchen, Lynn Lambert, Richard Landeryou, Gordon Lindsay, Tim Lloyd, John Milne, Colin Minto, Christian Mitchell, Mike Morgan, Roger Noel, Jon Olson, Bob Platt, Louise Potter, Josh Potts, Sam Raby, Stuart Ritchie, David Skipp, Clive Trott, Diana van der Klugt, Belinda Walters, Tricia Youtan and James Wright

Apologies: Councillors: Ian Stannard, Andrew Baldwin, Toni Bradnum, Chris Brown, Christine Costin, Brian Donnelly and Claire Vickers
Absent: Councillors: Alan Britten and Jack Saheid

CO/74 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 February were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CO/75 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

CO/76 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Kate Rowbottom, Chairman of the Council, thanked all Councillors for their service over the last four years. There were 18 Councillors who were not standing for re-election and the Chairman named them all and thanked them for their invaluable contribution:

Matt Allen, Councillor for four years;
Andrew Baldwin, 24 years' service including Chairman 2006 and a former Cabinet member;
John Blackall, Councillor for eight years, current Chairman of Licensing Committee and Vice Chairman of Audit Committee;
Toni Bradnam, Councillor for eight years, former Cabinet Member for Waste & Recycling;
Jonathan Chowen, Councillor for 18 years, former Leader, Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture;
Christine Costin, Councillor for 28 years, and well known for her work on Horsham in Bloom;
Ray Dawe, Councillor for 16 years and Leader of the Council for nine years;

Brian Donnelly, Councillor for 20 years including chairman in 2010 and Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets;
Billy Greening, Councillor for seven years;
Gordon Lindsay, Councillor for 20 years and former Cabinet member for the Local Economy;
Mike Morgan, Councillor for eight years, the independent voice of Henfield;
Bob Platt, Councillor for four years and one of our first Green councillors;
Louise Potter, Councillor for four years and former Leader of the Opposition;
Stuart Ritchie, Councillor for 11 years and chairman of Audit Committee;
Jack Saheid, Councillor for four years;
Diana van de Klugt, Councillor for eight years; and
James Wright, Councillor for three years and former Cabinet Member for the Environment & Rural Affairs.

She stated that she was the eighteenth Councillor to be retiring, having been a Councillor for 12 years, Chairman of the Council twice and Cabinet Member for three years.

Councillor Philip Circus, Deputy Leader, announced that Councillor Claire Vickers, Leader of the Council, was unable to attend because her husband was unwell and, on her behalf, the Deputy Leader thanked those standing down and sent them best wishes for the future.

Councillor Circus, Cabinet Member for Recycling & Waste, announced that since the beginning of February 13 fixed penalty notices had been issued for littering offences, which indicated that camera-based enforcement was successful.

Councillor Tony Hogben, Cabinet Member for Horsham Town, gave an update on the number and variety of events being arranged for the Coronation celebrations in Horsham Town. The street furniture in the Carfax was being freshly painted before the weekend.

Councillor Roger Noel, Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture, also spoke of the bank holiday weekend celebrations, in particular the live screening of the Coronation ceremony at The Capitol and family activities at Horsham Museum.

Councillor Josh Potts, Cabinet Member for Environment & Rural Affairs, announced that the Rural Prosperity Fund opened to expressions of interest at the beginning of April; this £871,733 government grant for spending over the next two years recognised the challenges and investment priorities of the rural economy.

Councillor Tricia Youtan, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities, announced that the new Health & Wellbeing hub was opening in early July. It was in an excellent location in Swan Walk. She also stated that a new Mental Health facility was opening in the next fortnight; it was based at the former

Horsham Youth Centre and would cater for 14 – 25 year olds, offering discreet expert support and advice.

CO/77 **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No questions relevant to the business of the meeting had been received.

CO/78 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET**

LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND 2022-23 AND 2023-24

Councillor Paul Clarke, Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets, reminded Members that Council had approved a Cabinet recommendation to apply for a grant allocation from the government's scheme for local authorities to provide accommodation for those fleeing conflict in Ukraine and Afghanistan.

Council had approved a capital spend of up to £5.866m to provide 16 homes by the deadline of 30 November 2023, and Cabinet approved the acquisition of the properties at the meeting on 23 March. The Cabinet Member advised that offers had already been made on five homes and the scheme was currently on track to be delivered in time and within budget.

To facilitate speedy acquisition and efficient management of the properties, a variation of the Shareholders Agreement for the Council's affordable housing company, Horsham District Homes (Holdings) Limited, was required. The Cabinet Member gave details of these changes, as set out in the recommendation from Cabinet. Councillor Tricia Youtan seconded the motion.

RESOLVED

- (ii) The variation of the Shareholders Agreement for Horsham District Homes (Holdings) Limited as follows:

Clause 3. Insert the words "*and/or to lease residential property from the Council or other third parties both*" following the words *..and other developers*" and before the words "for onward rental through" so that the business of the company reads as follows,

"The business of the Company (Business) shall be to purchase developed properties from Holdco and other developers *and/or to lease residential property from the Council or other third parties both* for onward rental through ASTs in accordance with any business plan then in force or as otherwise determined by the Council from time to time".

Reserved Matters clause 17. Insert the words *..."For the avoidance of doubt (i) material assets shall be assets of a value in excess of £250,000, and, (ii) lease arrangements between the Company and the Council/other third parties to facilitate the provision of housing shall*

not constitute a reserved matter.” so that the reserved matter reads as follows,

“Agreeing to enter into or entering into any acquisition or disposal of any material assets by the company. For the avoidance of doubt, (i) material assets shall be assets of a value in excess of £250,000, and, (ii) lease arrangements between the Company and the Council/other third parties to facilitate the provision of housing shall not constitute a reserved matter.”

REASON

- (i) To ensure that suitable homes are acquired by Horsham District Council in an efficient and timely manner to give effect to this initiative.
- (ii) To avoid the requirement to seek Cabinet’s approval for the purchase by Horsham District Council of each individual property that would otherwise be required to give effect to this initiative.
- (iii) To ensure that Horsham District Homes (Holdings) Limited has the power to take a lease from Horsham District Council to be able to facilitate the provision of housing through Assured Shorthold Tenancies/Licences.

CO/79 **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Councillor Diana van der Klugt, the Council’s representative for the South Downs National Park Authority, advised that she would be stepping down from the role as soon as a new representative was appointed for the new Municipal Year. She had found the role enriching and enjoyable and had visited the length and breadth of the national park, attending approximately 40 meetings each year. She hoped her successor would find it equally rewarding. The Chairman of the Council thanked her for all her hard work.

Councillor Tony Bevis, the Council’s representative on the WSCC Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, stated that he had circulated a report to Councillors updating them on the work of the Committee since January 2023.

CO/80 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Councillor Peter Burgess asked the following question:

“Since I moved to Horsham over thirty years ago, there has been a major increase in Horsham District Council’s recycling process. Now we put virtually everything into one bin, with the exception of green waste, which is collected every other week. The recycling is then transferred to a facility at Ford, where it is mechanically separated into paper, glass, plastic, tins etc. This dramatically reduces landfill and protects the environment.

“However, the government is proposing that, in future, householders should separate the recycling themselves. This would involve time, money, capital investment and many more bins both inside and outside the houses. The inevitable result would be a considerable reduction in recyclable waste and a massive increase in costs and Council tax.

“There is a let out though. If councils can prove that there is an effective separation system and process at the transfer station, they may continue with the combined system. Are Horsham District Council aware of this and what steps have or are they taking to ensure they can continue with the present collection system?”

Councillor Philip Circus, Cabinet Member for Recycling & Waste, stated that he was pleased this important issue had been raised. The Council took the view that the easier it was to recycle the more people would do it, and this was why the Council had a successful record in recycling, being in the top 15% of local authorities. He reminded Members that some years ago the European Union had introduced a regulation that would have required the Council to do away with mixed recyclables in one bin. At that time there had been a caveat, similar to the one referred to in the question, and the Council had been able to demonstrate the high quality of the collection of mixed recyclables and their separation.

“[We have] been able to demonstrate that the approach in Horsham works and works very well. We know that some decisions are going to be made by government on this issue and also on food waste collection... We don't know what decision the government will make and so we must react to those decisions when they are made. What I can say is we are telling the government quite emphatically that the amount of contamination is so low and the successful operation of the Ford plant is so good there is no reason why we should be forced into having separate bin collections for separate materials. No decisions have been made as far as food waste is concerned ... as to if we are required by government to move to food waste, which appears to be the case, and how it will be done and whether we'll get funding support. Certainly the Members will have a major part to play in the decisions surrounding the introduction of food waste.”

Councillor Peter Burgess stated that he was concerned that the Council would need to take action and, given that the administration was about to change, there was a danger this could slip through. He asked the supplementary question:

“Has HDC received any formal or informal correspondence on this issue and what is the future procedure for dealing? Have we taken any steps with this issue so far and if not when are we going to?”

Councillor Philip Circus replied:

“Most definitely we had been involved in the discussion and consultation. It is one of the issues we have raised in our regular meetings with the MPs. We have made it clear, in particular to Jeremy Quin. At the last meeting [with him] we made it quite clear that this could have a bad effect on our very successful recycling rate and our great achievement hitherto and we expect him to press HDC's case to government as hard as possible... We most assuredly do know about the threat this poses, we are on the case... there is no justification in undermining our successful system of recycling

and we've made that clear to government and the MPs have signed up to put pressure on the government."

Councillor Peter Burgess made a closing statement that reiterated the importance of ensuring the issue is dealt with in the new Municipal Year. He was reassured by what the Cabinet Member had said in relation to ensuring that this issue was raised and resolved. He stated that HDC were at the forefront of countrywide recycling and need to maintain this and also improve recycling rates.

CO/81 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

Before the meeting closed, Councillor Peter Burgess led all Councillors in thanking Councillor Kate Rowbottom for everything she had done during the year as Chairman of the Council, and wished her and her daughter Suzie best wishes for the future.

The meeting closed at 6.42 pm having commenced at 6.00 pm

CHAIRMAN