

THE CABINET
21ST MARCH 2013

Present:	Councillors:	
	Roger Arthur	Deputy Leader and Efficiency & Resources
	Andrew Baldwin	The Environment
	Helena Croft	Communication, Horsham Town & Special Projects
	Ian Howard	Living & Working Communities
	Roger Paterson	The Local Economy
	Sue Rogers	A Safer & Healthier District
Apologies:	Ray Dawe	Leader
	Jonathan Chowen	Arts, Heritage & Leisure

Also present: Councillors: John Bailey, George Cockman, Malcolm Curnock, Duncan England, Frances Haigh, David Holmes, Christian Mitchell, Claire Vickers

EX106 **RECORD OF THE MEETING OF 31ST JANUARY 2013**

The record of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 31st January 2013 was approved as correct and signed by the Leader.

EX107 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

EX108 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Cabinet Member for the Environment advised that more than 7,500 households had already signed up for the Green Waste Opt-In Scheme, mainly as a result of the article in the most recent edition of the Council's magazine, Horsham District News. A leaflet promoting the scheme was also currently being distributed to households within the District and it was anticipated that this would result in many more residents opting-in to the scheme. Members who had themselves opted-in to the scheme were impressed by the ease with which they had been able to sign up online. The Cabinet Member for Communication, Horsham Town & Special Projects also referred to the success of Horsham District News as a means of communicating with residents and congratulated the Communications Team on its production.

EX109 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

REPORT BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EFFICIENCY & RESOURCES

EX110 **Compulsory Purchase of land at Southwater Street, Southwater – Proposal not to proceed**

A member of the public addressed the Cabinet, expressing his disappointment regarding the proposal not to proceed with the compulsory purchase order (CPO). He made particular reference to the amount of time that had been allowed to elapse rather than proceeding with the CPO, indicating that he considered that Cabinet at its meeting in November 2012 had been given incorrect information as to the reasons for the delay, and stated that he did not consider that the land was sufficiently protected under current planning policy.

The Cabinet Member for Efficiency & Resources reported that, on 29th November 2012, Cabinet had deferred consideration of a report concerning the possible compulsory purchase of land at Southwater Street, Southwater to enable further investigation, in particular the possibility of third party funding to cover the cost of the compulsory purchase process. The previous report was submitted in full for Members' information.

Southwater Parish Council had confirmed that its position on the matter remained one of support for compulsory purchase action. The Parish Council had also reaffirmed its commitment to acquire the land following compulsory purchase for £25,000 and to assume responsibility for its maintenance. However, the Parish Council had indicated that it was not prepared to underwrite the cost of the compulsory purchase process either in whole or part.

In any event, even if alternative funding sources could be found to cover the cost of the process, that in itself would not justify proceeding with a CPO. As previously reported, it was considered there was no longer a case for proceeding with a CPO as:

- the land was now capable of being protected from inappropriate development under current planning policy;
- any costs associated with taking formal action would be disproportionate to the public benefit gained;
- other proposed benefits, in terms of public access through a footpath and cycleway, were more marginal in terms of public benefit and the actual pattern of development in the area/established usage of existing roads and footpath/cycle network reduced significantly any real benefit in the provision of a route through the site; and
- the current condition of the site was not so detrimental to the role of the site or the semi-rural character of the area, that it merited direct action.

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, one of the local Members for Southwater, agreed that on current evidence the land was now capable of being protected from inappropriate development without the need for a CPO and that

EX110 Compulsory Purchase of land at Southwater Street, Southwater – Proposal not to proceed (cont.)

the costs of proceeding with formal action would outweigh any possible public benefit.

Councillor Claire Vickers, a local Member, expressed her disappointment that the CPO had not been progressed some time ago but accepted the advice given. However, she requested that efforts be maintained to persuade the landowner to provide a footpath.

It was noted that the local Members had been involved in discussions regarding this subject.

In response to a query from the Cabinet Member for a Safer & Healthier District, the Chief Executive indicated that he would advise the Parish Council on the possibility of applying for the land to be added to the Community Assets Register.

RESOLVED

That the compulsory purchase of land at Southwater Street be not pursued.

REASON

The potential risks and costs of this action can no longer be justified by any public benefit that would be secured.

EX111 Report on and Performance Indicators for Quarter 3 2012/13; District Plan Priorities; and Tracked Project List Progress

The Cabinet Member for Efficiency & Resources reported on the outcome of the quarterly review of the set of performance indicators for the third quarter of 2012/13 and the review of the Tracked Project List by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee's Finance & Performance Working Group.

It was noted that the priorities identified in the District Plan were reviewed on a monthly basis by the Corporate Management Team and quarterly by the Finance & Performance Working Group.

A review of the District Plan Priorities had been undertaken and a more focused approach to monitoring the priorities developed, with the aim of highlighting the priorities that were most important for the Council for each year of the District Plan 2011/15.

The main areas of concern highlighted by the Finance & Performance Working Group in respect of the quarterly review of performance indicators related to:

EX111 Report on and Performance Indicators for Quarter 3 2012/13; District Plan Priorities; and Tracked Project List Progress (cont.)

- the processing of minor planning applications;
- the speed of processing Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit claims; and
- green garden waste rejects (tonnage), where the Working Group had suggested that the target should be reviewed for 2013/14.

The responses of the Heads of Service were noted and the relevant Cabinet Members gave an update on the current position and action being taken. A copy of the briefing note presented by the Cabinet Member for Efficiency & Resources regarding the introduction of Universal Credit would be circulated to all Members. The Cabinet Member for Efficiency & Resources also advised that issues and concerns were dealt with on a day to day basis by all Cabinet Members, not just on a quarterly basis, and that it was the role of officers to manage and monitor the delivery of services.

It was noted that the Project Assurance Core Team (PACT), which had been set up to improve the way projects were managed and to act as a support mechanism for major projects, reported progress on fifteen key projects to Corporate Management Team each month and a summary was provided for the Finance & Performance Working Group each quarter. Cabinet Members responded to queries raised by other Members regarding a number of these projects including Terms & Conditions, Business Transformation and Green Waste Charging.

With regard to District Plan priorities, the Cabinet Member for Efficiency & Resources agreed to look at the possibility of all Members being involved in a discussion regarding District Plan priorities. It was also noted that there was to be an Economic Development Seminar for Members at the end of April 2013.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

REASON

Performance Management is part of the duty of Best Value to drive up service improvement.

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

EX112 **Budget 2012/13 - Progress Report to End of January 2013 and Outturn Forecast**

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report reviewing progress on the Revenue Budget for 2012/13.

EX112 Budget 2012/13 - Progress Report to End of January 2013 and Outturn Forecast (cont.)

The report compared actual expenditure and income to date with the profiled budget for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st January 2013 and provided a forecast for the full year outturn. In particular, it highlighted additions of £712,470 to the original budget and a full year forecast underspend of £543,527, which included the impact of the award of the leisure management contracts.

The report also gave a summary of income and expenditure, capital expenditure and expenditure on repairs and renewals to the end of January 2013.

The Head of Financial & Legal Services answered a number of Members' queries regarding variances in the revenue budget and, where detailed information was not to hand, indicated she would email a response.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

EX113 SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE – MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET

There were no matters currently outstanding for consideration.

The meeting closed at 6.52pm having commenced at 5.30 pm.

LEADER