

THE CABINET
18TH SEPTEMBER 2014

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

Apologies: None received

Also present: Councillors: John Bailey, Peter Burgess, George Cockman, Leonard Crosbie, Duncan England, Frances Haigh, David Holmes, Stuart Ritchie

EX/20 **RECORD OF THE MEETING OF 24TH JULY 2014**

The record of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 24th July 2014 was approved as correct and signed by the Leader.

EX/21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

EX/22 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Cabinet Member for Arts, Heritage & Leisure:

Thanked all those involved for helping to make the Tour of Britain's visit to Horsham such a success: it was a pleasure to see so many people turn out for the event.

Advised that a number of meetings were planned following public consultation on proposals affecting Broadbridge Heath. A meeting had taken place with the Amateur Athletics Association relating to the indoor tube and a further meeting was to be held with some of its users. All Members of the Council would be invited to a meeting of the Sports & Leisure Advisory Group on 23rd October 2014 at 6pm. Meetings would also be held with the Parish Council later in the month and with the whole user group.

EX/23 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received.

REPORT BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR A SAFER & HEALTHIER DISTRICT

EX/24 Environment Agency proposal to dissolve the Internal Drainage Districts for
The River Adur and River Arun

The Cabinet Member for a Safer & Healthier District submitted a report on the Environment Agency's proposal to dissolve the Internal Drainage Districts for the River Adur and River Arun

The report outlined the options put forward by the Environment Agency (EA) and recommended that the Cabinet should note its proposals and the preferred option recommended by the West Sussex Drainage Districts Steering Group but not support the dissolution of the River Arun Internal Drainage Board (IDB) without an alternative arrangement in place for the management of the Amberley Wildbrooks & Pulborough Brooks ecological areas. It was clear that these ecologically sensitive sites would require more intensive management and monitoring, as well as works to maintain their environmental designation. Inevitably this would place additional financial responsibilities on the Council.

The Leader, as a local ward Member, stressed that this matter would require very sensitive handling due to the risk of flooding.

The Cabinet Member for Arts, Heritage & Leisure expressed his concern over the EA's proposals and in particular whether they would be likely to strengthen or weaken flood protection in the District. There was no doubt that surface water flooding was the biggest problem locally, in part due to a lack of maintenance, and he welcomed the response recommended in the report.

Councillor Martin England, the Director of Community Services and Martin Brightwell, the Drainage Engineer were thanked for their advice and support on this matter.

RESOLVED That the Cabinet:

- (i) Notes the Environment Agency's proposals in dissolving its responsibilities for managing and administering the Internal Drainage District for the River Adur & River Arun Districts.
- (ii) Notes the preferred option recommended by the West Sussex Internal Drainage Districts Steering Group, to disband the River Adur Internal Drainage Board (IDB).
- (iii) Confirms that the Council does not support the dissolving of the River Arun Internal Drainage Board (IDB) without an alternative arrangement in place for the management of the Amberley Wildbrooks & Pulborough Brooks ecological areas, due to increased financial responsibilities and obligations that will be placed on this Council.

EX/24 Environment Agency proposal to dissolve the Internal Drainage Districts for
The River Adur and River Arun (Cont.)

- (iv) Confirms that the Council does not wish to take on the responsibility for infrastructure along the Rivers Adur/Arun e.g. pumping stations, sluice gates, which should fall to the riparian landowners where the structures are sited.
- (v) Delegates to the Director of Community Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Safer and Healthier District authority to agree satisfactory alternative arrangements with partners for the dissolution of the IDD in the Horsham District.

REASONS

- (i) These Internal Drainage Districts are the only remaining areas in the country where the Environment Agency effectively acts as the Internal Drainage Board fulfilling the primary role of local land drainage management rather than managing flood risk to people and property. The Environment Agency following direction from central government has been tasked with focusing its efforts and resources on those areas where the consequences of flooding for communities, businesses, property and infrastructure are greatest. Accordingly responsibility for managing local watercourses is more appropriately managed by local bodies and individuals such as riparian landowners.
- (ii) It is considered that disbanding IDB will allow resources to be focused on managing areas of concern for local communities. Responsibilities will pass to the riparian owners/landowners of land where ordinary watercourses exist and they will be required to maintain structures e.g. ditches, sluice gates, pumping stations, which drain into the main river. In addition HDC has permissive powers which it is able to apply to ensure appropriate action is followed.
- (iii) Dissolving the River Arun Internal Drainage Board (IDB) is not supported until an alternative arrangement is in place for managing the sensitive ecological areas. This is due to the increased ecological responsibilities and financial obligations that will be placed on the Council. These will default to HDC under the 'Water Level Management Plan' currently in place for the areas within the Arun Valley of

EX/24 Environment Agency proposal to dissolve the Internal Drainage District for
The River Adur and River Arun (Cont.)

Amberley Wildbrooks & Pulborough Brooks. In particular these include additional responsibilities to manage the Special Protection Areas (SPA's) and internationally designated Ramsar site.

- (iv) Landowners should be responsible for infrastructure on their land. They will need to be responsible for the routine inspection, maintenance and monitoring of such equipment. In many cases this infrastructure is used to drain agricultural land.

EX25 **REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE WORKING
GROUP**

**Performance indicators for quarter 1 2014/15 and tracked project list
progress.**

Councillor Leonard Crosbie, the Chairman of the Finance & Performance Working Group was invited to present the report to this and future meetings of the Cabinet on a regular quarterly basis.

Councillor Crosbie reported on the key performance indicators for Quarter 1 and it was noted that 60% were within the target range, 30% were close to the target range, and 10% were outside the target range. Attendances at The Capital, leisure centres, swimming and Horsham Museum exceeded the targets set; and 92.31% of 'major' planning applications had been permitted, together with 84.28% of 'other' planning applications. The number of households in bed and breakfast (15) had decreased over the quarter, the lowest figure since Quarter 4 in 2012/13. There were no significant concerns arising from other performance indicators.

It was also noted that officers were combining financial and performance information and it was intended to present this in a single report in future, together with a commentary. Future reports to the Working Group would break down the combined financial and performance information into 21 budget areas. Officer and Members would also be able to view the Covalent system at the Finance and Performance Working Group meeting to review data.

Finally, the Cabinet's attention was drawn to the agreed key performance indicators which had been sorted by District Plan priorities; there were no significant issues at this stage.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

EX/25 Performance indicators for quarter 1 2014/15 and tracked project list
Progress (Cont'd).

REASON

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

EX/26 **SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE – MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET**

There were no matters currently outstanding for consideration.

EX/27 **MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY**

There were no matters of special urgency to be considered.

The meeting closed at 6.02 pm having commenced at 5.30pm.

LEADER