

Cabinet
30 JANUARY 2020

Present: Councillors: Ray Dawe (Leader), Peter Burgess, Jonathan Chowen (Deputy Leader), Philip Circus, Claire Vickers and Tricia Youtan

Apologies: Councillor: Paul Clarke

Also Present: Councillors: Karen Burgess, Ruth Fletcher, Billy Greening, Frances Haigh, Lynn Lambert, Gordon Lindsay, Mike Morgan, Godfrey Newman and Belinda Walters

EX/59 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

EX/60 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Cabinet Member for Community Matters and Wellbeing announced that the council's Housing Team had secured a grant for £317,717 as part of a joint bid with Mid Sussex District Council to help rough sleepers. The funds would be used to recruit a Mental Health Practice Lead to enhance the outreach programme and to support hidden homelessness. She went on to say that temporary accommodation units would be completed in early February, providing an additional 9 units.

EX/61 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Public Questions were taken at item 5 on the Agenda.

EX/62 **HORSHAM DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION**

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Development introduced the report and said that the current Local Plan had been adopted in 2015 and the Government required all local authorities to review their Plans at least every 5 years. The purpose of revising a Local Plan was to allow a local planning authority, to refine and expand its existing policies. There would be an increased attention on biodiversity and climate change in the council's policies.

The report document identified a number of different sites right across the District and views were sought on whether there was potential for them to be brought forward for housing development. At this stage, none of the sites had been agreed for development and information was being published purely for consultation purposes. Whilst it was important that a timetable for a new Local Plan be maintained, she expressed concern at the difficulty of achieving the unprecedented housing numbers that the Government had set the Council.

The consultation would run from 17 February to 30 March and the document would be available online at www.horsham.gov.uk/localplan. Hard copies would be available in local libraries and in the Council building.

In reply to a question from a member of the public regarding coastal housing market areas, the Cabinet Member went on to say that all Local Plans must be underpinned by up-to-date evidence that met national planning requirements. The review of housing needs was set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The housing market areas, which were identified in 2016, were signed off by Mid Sussex District Council.

In reply to a further question, she confirmed that the only decision that Cabinet would make at this meeting was whether the draft Local Plan should be published for consultation or not. None of the sites included in the document had been agreed for development.

RESOLVED

That:

- i) The Horsham District Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Document be published for a six-week consultation between 17 February 2020 and 30 March 2020: and;
- ii) Authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Development to agree any necessary minor editorial changes to the Horsham District Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Document.

Reasons for Recommendations

- i) It is both necessary and appropriate to invite public and stakeholder participation in the preparation of a new Local Plan for Horsham District.
- ii) In order to ensure that the consultation documentation is accurately prepared.

EX/63 **HIGHWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL AND DENNE WARD COMMUNITY ASSET REVIEW**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture reported that the Council wished to build a new and enhanced community centre at Highwood as part of the Land West of Horsham 2008 Master Plan on land transferred to the Council from Berkeley Homes. The Council also wished to build affordable homes in Horsham Town Centre on the site of the old Drill Hall with some of its current users transferring to the brand new and specially designed community centre at Highwood.

The purpose of the report before was Cabinet to approve the decommissioning of the Drill Hall in order to release the site for affordable housing on completion

of the Highwood Community Centre and to commit to building an extended facility at Highwood with a 240m² hall and ancillary facilities.

A review has been undertaken to establish how existing Council owned community facilities in Denne were used, whilst being mindful of ease of access and changing population patterns resulting from major new housing developments. The primary objectives were to maximise community benefit from a facility, to reduce existing annual running costs and to help lower the Council's carbon footprint. The review showed that the building was old with high running costs and poor thermal efficiency and major capital expenditure would be required to extend the life of the Drill Hall. The Hall was only used 10% of the hireable time at present and wasn't really a community centre as it was favoured by private operators.

Analysis showed that most of the Drill Hall current users could be accommodated at the Highwood site in an enhanced new purpose-built facility, with a sprung floor. Such a building would also be attractive to the various ad hoc users of the Drill Hall who require a mid-size venue.

The financial consequences of the proposal was set out in the report and in summary the benefit would be an anticipated revenue saving of £110k per year compared to building and retaining two facilities as community buildings.

There were a number of questions from the public that were addressed by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture.

RESOLVED

That

- i) the Council commit to building an extended alternative facility at Highwood with a 240 m² hall and ancillary facilities including a nursery, subject to agreeing a pre-letting arrangement with a nursery operator;
- ii) an independent report in order to assess the current and future needs for community facilities in Horsham Town and the wider district be commissioned;
- iii) any viable option submitted for the future of the Drill Hall which accords with Council policies and was submitted during a period of two years (or until the completion of the new Highwood Community facility), would be considered by cabinet with a final recommendation to Full Council for approval; and;
- iv) Failing an alternative viable option coming forward within a period of two years to approve decommissioning of the Drill Hall to release this site for affordable housing on completion of the Highwood Community Centre.

Reasons for Recommendations

To rationalise the Council's community assets to maximise their usefulness, reduce running costs and to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

EX/64 **TO CONSIDER MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY**

There were no matters of special urgency to be considered.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm having commenced at 6.00 pm

CHAIRMAN