

Cabinet
23 SEPTEMBER 2021

Present: Councillors: Paul Clarke (Leader), Tony Hogben (Deputy Leader), Philip Circus, Lynn Lambert, Roger Noel and Claire Vickers

Apologies: Councillors: Chris Brown, Richard Landeryou and Tricia Youtan

Also Present: Councillors: Ruth Fletcher, Frances Haigh, Liz Kitchen, David Skipp

EX/27 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 15 July and 22 July were approved as correct records and signed by the Leader.

EX/28 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

EX/29 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Philip Circus, Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste, Recycling & Cleansing, made the following announcements:

- The long-awaited food waste collection trial was about to begin and he looked forward to seeing the results of this.
- The official opening of the Sussex Green Hub would be on Saturday 25 September, with Jeremy Quin MP and the High Sheriff in attendance. This will coincide with the start of the Great Big Green Week, a national event for action on climate change.

EX/30 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received.

EX/31 **HOUSING STRATEGY 2021 - 2026**

Councillor Paul Clarke, Leader of the Council, introduced the proposed strategy on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Housing & Public Protection. He stated that the strategy would build on the Council's excellent record on delivering affordable homes, and support local residents in housing need in a number of ways.

Following consultation with members of the Policy Development Advisory Group, five key points had been identified to help structure the policy: i) to ensure that no-one needs to sleep rough through having no other choice; ii) to

empower residents to live independently in their homes; iii) to deliver the number and size of affordable homes that our communities and residents need, in line with planning policies; iv) to provide and maintain an accessible and fair housing register; and v) to prevent all forms of homelessness for our district's residents.

The strategy would be delivered in a phased way, to include a review of the key service areas, followed by detailed action plans with measurable outcomes, and then the implementation of these proposed actions.

RESOLVED

- i) To approve the Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2021-2026.
- ii) To delegate authority to the Relevant Cabinet Member to monitor performance against the Delivery Plan with periodic updates being presented to Cabinet following the Strategy's adoption.
- iii) To note that this Strategy is the first step in a multi-stage approach, as set out in section 3 of this report.

TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- iv) That the Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2021-2026 be adopted.

REASON

- i) To ensure the Council fulfils its statutory responsibility of having a current Housing and Homelessness Strategy.
- ii) To give the Housing and Homelessness Service clear direction and objectives that will guide decision-making, projects and priorities over the next five years.

EX/32 **BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE**

Councillor Clarke presented the report that gave an update on the Council's financial position, on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets.

He stated that the forecast for this financial year was favourable with £1m surplus predicted at Month 4, the main reason being that less expenditure was needed to support the Council's leisure services than had been budgeted for. Compared to the budget set in February, the current outlook for 2022-23 looked relatively balanced.

However, there was still a degree of uncertainty surrounding the economy as it emerged from the pandemic, with further uncertainty relating to central

government funding levels and the ongoing impact of Brexit. Areas of uncertainty included the outcome of business rates reform, a potential cap on what local authorities can charge for garden waste collection, and the introduction of food waste collections from 2023.

The Council retained a high level of reserves, which will enable it to ride out the impact of these uncertainties, with the option of making changes if necessary. All assumptions in the MTFS would continue to be reviewed and updated, with a further update to Cabinet in December, ahead of the budget being set for 2022-23 next February.

RESOLVED

To note the changes in the Council's financial position in 2021/22 and the medium-term.

REASON

The Council needs to acknowledge the effects of the local situation occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued impact this is having on its financial position both in the short and medium-term. This has moved the Council from what has been a long-term healthy financial position to one with predicted deficits. However, given the level of uncertainty in the projections, the economy and proposed Government action the report does not recommend direct action to reduce expenditure at this stage.

EX/33 **LOCAL ENFORCEMENT PLAN AND CIL ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

Councillor Lynn Lambert, Cabinet Member for Planning & Development, outlined the reasons why the Council needed to update its Local Enforcement Plan and introduce a new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Enforcement Policy.

The proposed Local Enforcement Plan took into account current legislation and the recent review of the Council's Planning Compliance Service. The Plan set out how the Council monitors the implementation of planning permissions, investigates alleged cases of unauthorised development and takes action where appropriate.

The following two amendments to the Local Enforcement Plan relating to Paragraph 4: 'What is not a Breach of Planning Control', were proposed:

- 'Operating a business from home where the residential use remains the primary use' should include mention of possible restrictive covenants; and

- 'Boundary disputes' should include advice on the Council's enforcement powers under the Hedge Regulations, given the number of disputes that involve hedges.

The Cabinet Member agreed to look into making these amendments with a view to incorporating them into the Plan.

The Cabinet Member advised that the CIL Enforcement Policy would publicise the penalties for non-payment of the CIL charges and help to ensure the collection of funds runs smoothly by making it clear to those liable to pay the levy the likely consequences for non-payment or late payment.

TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- i) That the Local Enforcement Plan be adopted.
- ii) That the CIL Enforcement Policy be adopted.

REASON

- i) Local Enforcement Plan

It is necessary to update the adopted March 2016 Local Enforcement Plan to take account of current legislation and the review of the Planning Compliance service which was undertaken by the Planning Advisory Service in 2019.

- ii) CIL Enforcement Policy

In order to publicise the penalties for non-payment of the CIL charges and to ensure that the Council does not lose out financially by non-payment and having to carry out additional tasks as a result of non-payment.

EX/34 CONSULTATION ON DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS AND MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR LONDON ROAD AND RICHMOND ROAD, HORSHAM AND HORSHAM TOWN CENTRE

Councillor Lynn Lambert, Cabinet Member for Planning & Development reminded Members that the Council was undertaking a rolling programme of producing Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for the 37 Conservation Areas in the district. At present only 11 of these areas had an adopted Conservation Area Appraisal. An up to date appraisal that sets out the significance of an area enables the Council to manage change positively.

Three further draft Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans had been produced for London Road, Richmond Road and Horsham Town Centre Conservation Areas. The Cabinet Member proposed that there would be a five-

week public consultation period from 7 October to 11 November 2021 on these drafts.

Following this consultation, a further report would be brought to Cabinet summarising the outcome of the consultations and a proposal to adopt the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. These would serve as guidance for planning officers to assist in the determination of planning applications in the relevant areas.

The Director of Place confirmed that if the consultation showed support for a change to an existing Conservation Area boundary, this would be reassessed in the light of comments received; there would then be further consultation before any changes to the boundaries could be made.

In response to a request to consider the possible designation of an additional Conservation Area for New Street, including North Street and Norfolk Road, the Director of Place advised that resources were focussed on undertaking the appraisals of existing Conservation Areas, which was a legal requirement. However, she was in discussion with the local community to establish the level of support and this would be assessed in a timely manner.

RESOLVED

- i) To approve the draft Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, which include proposed boundary changes, for public consultation.
- ii) To approve that the Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Development, be given delegated authority to agree minor editorial changes prior to publication.

REASON

- i) To enable Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans to be produced to help guide development in the London Road, Richmond Road and Horsham Town Centre Conservation Areas in Horsham.
- ii) To give the Cabinet Member delegated authority to approve minor changes to the document, without the need for it to be referred back to Cabinet.

EX/35 **GROUND'S MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AWARD**

Councillor Roger Noel, Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture advised that the current Grounds Maintenance contract ended on 31 January 2022 and a procurement process had been followed to ensure that a new contract would be in place before February 2022. The key aim of the new contract will be to: support the Wilder Horsham District initiative; contribute to the Council's

sustainability and carbon reduction ambitions; and delivery effective grounds maintenance and ensure value for money.

The new contract would cover additional areas to the previous one including bin emptying and litter picking at Southwater Country Park and Horsham Park, and reactive work such as minor repairs to seating etc, and ditch clearance.

Work in cemeteries would include hedge trimming and grass cutting, but not upkeep of the graves which were in private ownership. The Cabinet Member reassured Members that all sensitive aspects of cemetery work would continue to be carried out by Council staff.

In response to concerns that the cemeteries were overgrown and looked unkempt, the Cabinet Member advised that the unusual weather had led to unexpected growth, and this situation was now under control. He also assured Members that cemetery work undertaken by the contractors would be in agreement with Council staff.

The Cabinet Member acknowledged the benefit of coordinating grass cutting and litter collection schedules and would ensure that the contractor and Council officers worked together to coordinate these.

RESOLVED

- i) To approve the award of the grounds maintenance contract to the highest scoring bidder, on the terms recommended, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report (exempt).
- ii) To delegate authority to the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Head of Legal & Democratic Services, to finalise terms and conditions and to enter into the contract with the highest scoring bidder.

REASON

To enable the Council to continue to carry out grounds maintenance services across the parks and countryside portfolio.

EX/36 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no matters currently outstanding for consideration.

EX/37 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan was noted.

EX/38 **TO CONSIDER MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY**

There were no matters of special urgency to be considered.

The meeting closed at 6.24 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN