



Email: committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk
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Council

Wednesday, 8th December, 2021 at 6.00 pm
Park Suite, Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham

To: All Members of the Council

(Please note that prayers will be taken by the Reverend Canon Lisa Barnett, Team Rector of Horsham, before the meeting commences)

You are summoned to the meeting to transact the following business

Glen Chipp
Chief Executive

Agenda

	Page No.
GUIDANCE ON COUNCIL PROCEDURE	
1. Apologies for absence	
2. Minutes	5 - 14
To approve as correct the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13 October 2021 <i>(Note: If any Member wishes to propose an amendment to the minutes they should submit this in writing to committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk at least 24 hours before the meeting. Where applicable, the audio recording of the meeting will be checked to ensure the accuracy of the proposed amendment.)</i>	
3. Declarations of Members' Interests	
To receive any declarations of interest from Members	
4. Announcements	
To receive any announcements from the Chairman of the Council, the Leader, Members of the Cabinet or the Chief Executive	
5. Questions from the Public	
To receive questions from the public under Rules 4a.2(f) and 4a.8-18	

6. **Recommendations from Cabinet** 15 - 18
To receive the recommendations from the meeting of Cabinet held on 25 November:
- a) **Update on the Council's financial position and Medium-Term Financial Strategy update** – report of the Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets is online at: [Agenda item 6](#)
 - b) **Community Advice Partnership Agreement** – report of the Cabinet Member for Community & Wellbeing is online at: [Agenda item 9](#)
7. **Recommendations from Committees** 19 - 22
To receive the recommendations of the following committees and, if approved, to adopt the recommendations contained therein:
- Audit Committee held on 1 December:
- (a) **Provision of the External Audit of the Annual Accounts** – report of the Director of Corporate Resources is online at: [Agenda item 11](#)
- Standards Committees held on 1 December:
- (b) **Councillor Code of Conduct – Amendments** – report of the Monitoring Officer is online at: [Agenda item 5](#)
 - (c) **Code of Conduct Complaints – New Procedures** – report of the Monitoring Officer is online at: [Agenda item 6](#)
8. **Reports of representatives**
To receive reports from representatives on outside bodies
9. **Members' Questions on Notice**
To receive questions from Members under Rules 4a.20(b)-25
10. **Urgent Business**
To consider matters certified by the Chairman as urgent

GUIDANCE ON COUNCIL PROCEDURE

(Full details in Part 4a of the Council's Constitution)

<p>Addressing the Council</p>	<p>Members must address the meeting through the Chairman. When the Chairman wishes to speak during a debate, any Member speaking at the time must stop. The Chairman will decide whether he or she prefers Members to stand or sit when addressing the Council.</p>
<p>Minutes</p>	<p>Any comments or questions should be limited to the accuracy of the minutes only</p>
<p>Quorum</p>	<p>Quorum is one quarter of the whole number of Members. If there is not a quorum present, the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chairman. If a date is not fixed, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.</p>
<p>Declarations of Interest</p>	<p>Members should state clearly in which item they have an interest and the nature of the interest (i.e. personal; personal & prejudicial; or pecuniary). If in doubt, seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.</p>
<p>Announcements</p>	<p>These should be brief and to the point and are for information only – no debate/decisions</p>
<p>Questions from the public (Notice must have been given in writing to the Chief Executive by 12.00 three working days before the meeting)</p>	<p>Directed to Leader, Cabinet Member or Chairman of an ordinary committee and relevant to the business of the meeting. 2 minutes in total to put the question. Appropriate Member to reply. Questioner may ask one supplementary question. Member to reply (max 2 minutes unless Chairman consents to a longer period). Overall time limit for questions of 15 minutes or six questions, whichever is greater. The questioner must be present. If a question cannot be dealt with at the meeting (lack of time or absence of relevant Member), a written reply to be given. No discussion <u>but</u> any Member may move that a matter raised by a question is referred to Cabinet or committee. If seconded, no discussion – vote taken.</p>
<p>Cabinet recommendations (see also rules of debate)</p>	<p>Leader/Cabinet Member presents and moves recommendation(s) – seconder required. Members may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ask a question on the item under consideration – max 2 minutes; and/or - make a statement – max 5 minutes.
<p>Questions from Members on Notice (Notice must have been given in writing to the Chief Executive by 12.00 two working days before the meeting)</p>	<p>These are directed to the Chairman, Leader, Cabinet Member or chairman of any committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 minutes maximum for initial question - 2 minutes maximum for the response - 2 minutes maximum for a supplementary question - 2 minutes maximum for a response to the supplementary question - 5 minutes maximum for the questioner to make a final statement in response, if they wish - If an oral reply is not convenient (e.g. too lengthy) a written answer may be circulated later. <p>No discussion. Maximum of 30 minutes overall for questions and answers.</p>

<p>Rules of debate</p>	<p>The Chairman controls debate and normally follows these rules but Chairman's interpretation, application or waiver is final.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No speeches until a proposal has been moved (mover may explain purpose) and seconded - Chairman may require motion to be written down and handed to him/her before it is discussed - Secunder may speak immediately after mover or later in the debate - Speeches must relate to the question under discussion or a personal explanation or a point of order (max 5 minutes) - A Member may not speak again except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o On an amendment o To move a further amendment if the motion has been amended since he/she last spoke o If first speech was on an amendment, to speak on the main issue (whether or not the amendment was carried) o In exercise of a right of reply. Mover of motion at end of debate on original motion and any amendments (may not otherwise speak on amendment). Mover of amendment has no right of reply. o On a point of order – must relate to an alleged breach of Council Procedure Rules or law. Chairman must hear the point of order immediately. The ruling of the Chairman on the matter will be final. o Personal explanation – relating to part of an earlier speech by the Member which may appear to have been misunderstood. The Chairman's ruling on the admissibility of the personal explanation will be final. - Amendments to motions must be to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Refer the matter to an appropriate body/individual for (re)consideration o Leave out and/or insert or add others (as long as this does not negate the motion) - One amendment at a time to be moved, discussed and decided upon. - Any amended motion becomes the substantive motion to which further amendments may be moved. - A Member may alter a motion that he/she has moved with the consent of the meeting and seconder (such consent to be signified without discussion). - A Member may withdraw a motion that he/she has moved with the consent of the meeting and seconder (such consent to be signified without discussion). - The mover of a motion has the right of reply at the end of the debate on the motion (unamended or amended).
<p>Voting</p>	<p>Any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those voting, by show of hands or if no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two Members request a recorded vote - A recorded vote is required by law. <p>Any Member may request their vote for, against or abstaining to be recorded in the minutes.</p> <p>In the case of equality of votes, the Chairman will have a second or casting vote (whether or not he or she has already voted on the issue).</p>

Council
13 OCTOBER 2021

Present: Councillors: David Skipp (Chairman), Kate Rowbottom (Vice-Chairman), Matthew Allen, Andrew Baldwin, Tony Bevis, John Blackall, Martin Boffey, Toni Bradnum, Chris Brown, Karen Burgess, Peter Burgess, Jonathan Chowen, Philip Circus, Paul Clarke (Leader), Michael Croker, Ray Dawe, Ruth Fletcher, Billy Greening, Tony Hogben (Deputy Leader), Nigel Jupp, Liz Kitchen, Lynn Lambert, Gordon Lindsay, Tim Lloyd, John Milne, Colin Minto, Christian Mitchell, Roger Noel, Bob Platt, Louise Potter, Stuart Ritchie, Jack Saheid, Ian Stannard, Diana van der Klugt, Claire Vickers, Belinda Walters, Tricia Youtan and James Wright

Apologies: Councillors: Christine Costin, Brian Donnelly, Frances Haigh, Richard Landeryou, Mike Morgan, Josh Potts and Jim Sanson

Absent: Councillors: Alan Britten

CO/38 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 1 September were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CO/39 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Item 6(c) The Drill Hall: Councillor Martin Boffey declared a personal interest because he is a member of the Royal British Legion, as well as a Local Member for Trafalgar Neighbourhood Council.

CO/40 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor David Skipp, Chairman of the Council, invited Members to join him at the Civic Service on Sunday 17 October. It was an opportunity to acknowledge the Council and to meet socially after a period when this has not been possible.

Councillor Paul Clarke, Leader of the Council, paid tribute to Roy Cornell who had passed away on 23 September. As a Councillor, he had been patient, helpful and honest, and always did his best for his constituents. Other Councillors joined the Leader in honouring his memory.

Councillor Claire Vickers, Cabinet Member for Community & Wellbeing, announced that she had written to GP practices regarding the difficulty some residents had in making appointments, and confirmed that GPs were doing their utmost to help patients. The ongoing Covid booster jab programme meant that they continued to be exceptionally busy. In order to ensure residents understood the pressure the surgeries were under and the measures put in place to manage the demand on their services, she will be working with GPs on an awareness campaign in the local media.

Councillor Chris Brown, Cabinet Member for the Local Economy, gave an update on the recovery of businesses following the unprecedented challenges of recent times. He outlined some of the initiatives the Economic Development Team were working on, which were largely made possible by funding from government, including the ARGs (Additional Restrictions Grants) and the Welcome Back Fund, which supported the safe return to high streets. He thanked the Economic Development Team and those involved in partnerships across the district for their work in supporting local businesses.

Councillor Philip Circus, Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste, Recycling & Cleansing, announced that the Director of Waste Services at WSCC had attended a WSCC Climate Change Board meeting where he gave assurance that DEFRA had confirmed there would be financial support for local authorities for introducing food waste collections.

The Chairman of the Council advised that the Council was taking legal advice on the water neutrality issue raised by Natural England and further information would be given to Members once available.

CO/41 **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

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

CO/42 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET (1)**

(a) Horsham District Council Housing and Homeless Strategy 2021-2036

Councillor Tricia Youtan, Cabinet Member for Housing & Public Protection, stated that the proposed Housing and Homeless 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.

The strategy would be delivered in a phased way, setting out a clear pathway to achieving its objectives. The first phase would be a review of the key service areas, followed by detailed action plans with measurable outcomes, and then the implementation of these proposed actions.

The Cabinet Member was asked what percentage of affordable rented homes provided in recent years had been for social rent, and she agreed to provide this information after the meeting.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kate Rowbottom, who congratulated the Cabinet Member and officers on the proposal.

RESOLVED

- i) 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.

(b) 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 motion to adopt the polices was seconded by Councillor Tim Lloyd.

The proposed Local Enforcement Plan took into account current legislation and the recent review of the Council's Planning Compliance Service. It set out how the Council monitors the implementation of planning permissions, investigates alleged cases of unauthorised development and takes action where appropriate. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Plan had been updated to reflect comments made at the Cabinet meeting on 23 September.

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. The Chief Executive confirmed that there wasn't a large outstanding debt as the policy was being introduced when collections are about to start.

RESOLVED

- 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.

(c) The Drill Hall

A representative of the Royal British Legion (RBL) addressed the Council on the proposal to lease the Drill Hall from the Council. He clarified which other military organisations would also have use of the hall, in addition to the continued use by community groups.

Councillor Roger Noel, Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture, gave a brief summary of the background to the proposal. Cabinet had considered the future of the Drill Hall in January 2020 because of concerns regarding the building's condition, its poor thermal performance and running costs.

He acknowledged the strong community response that had shown a preference for a community based solution and Cabinet had agreed to ask for bids from organisations or community groups to run the building. The Horsham Branch of RBL put forward the only viable proposal to create a home for Horsham's various military and service organisations. The proposal also included making the hall available for hire to the broader community, and upgrading and improving the building, including its thermal performance. It was confirmed that the cost of renovating and improving the building would be borne but the RBL, who would leave the hall for up to 30 years at a peppercorn rent

The Cabinet Member confirmed that there had been overwhelming support for the proposal from members of his Policy Development Advisory Group. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Tony Hogben.

Members spoke warmly in support of the proposal, which secured the long-term future of the fabric of the building and its continued use as a valued resource for the local community. It also reflected the military history of the building in this centenary year of the RBL.

Members were supportive of the proposal. Council Peter Burgess, the Council's Armed Forces Champion acknowledged the hard work that the RBL had put into preparing their proposal and those who had taken it through to completion.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Drill Hall is leased to the Horsham Branch, Royal British Legion from 1 April 2022 for a period of up to 30 years.
- ii) To delegate authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Head of Legal & Democratic to finalise the legal documentation and enter into a lease, subject to applicable consents, with the Horsham Branch, Royal British Legion for the Drill Hall.

- iii) To delegate authority to the Director of Place to agree and finalise a schedule of works with the Horsham Branch, Royal British Legion to improve the Drill Hall.

REASON

The Horsham Branch, Royal British Legion (RBL) have expressed an interest in running the Drill Hall. This will have the following benefits:

- i) The Drill Hall will continue to be available for community activities and events. The RBL have also expressed an ambition to grow and develop the role of the Drill Hall for the community.
- ii) The fabric of the Drill Hall will be improved and become more energy efficient.
- iii) The Council will make an annual revenue saving.
- iv) It will provide a focal point for the Armed Forces in the District.

CO/43 **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Councillor Diana van der Klugt, the Council's representative on the South Down National Park, reported on three items:

- The SDNP had produced an Area Action Plan regarding the future of the Shoreham Cement works. They were producing an Area Action Plan that proposed the site as an exemplar of sustainable mixed-use development. There would be public consultation at a later stage.
- A nature recovery campaign had been launched in July called ReNature. The SDNP were working with partners with a view to increasing the amount of the National Park that was managed for nature from 25% to 33%.
- Councillor van der Klugt outlined the implications of the position statement by Natural England on water neutrality for Pulborough Brooks and the Arun valley.

CO/44 **TO NOTE IN-YEAR CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIPS OF COMMITTEES / POLICY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUPS**

The changes were noted.

CO/45 **NOTICE OF MOTION**

The Chairman of the Council stated that three notices of motion had been received in accordance with Rule 4a.26 of the Council's Constitution. In order to dispose of each motion, Council agreed that the time allocated to this item be extended beyond the 30 minutes allowed in the Constitution.

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Liz Kitchen, Cabinet Member for Planning & Development, and seconded by Councillor Mike Croker:

'I move that this Council repeats its previous decision to object to the use of the emergency runway at Gatwick as a second runway, on the grounds of more noise and pollution not only from the extra flights but added congestion on the already struggling infrastructure.'

'Until most aeroplanes are zero carbon, which is many years away, any extra flights from Gatwick would set back our efforts to reduce carbon emissions, which are already at exceptionally high levels in some areas of our District. HDC is already committed to tackling climate change.'

'Whilst acknowledging the undoubted economic benefits the existing airport brings to the area and the extra 20,000 jobs it promises, it will cause yet more strain on our already overstretched housing numbers.'

'To support the expansion of Gatwick Airport would be a contradiction to the climate change objectives of this Council.'

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Development echoed the proposer's comment that any economic benefits had to be weighed against the resulting strain on infrastructure and the need to improve the district's environment.

Members debated the motion with comments of support and, on being put the motion was declared CARRIED.

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Mike Croker, and seconded by Councillor Philip Circus, Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste, Recycling & Cleansing:

'In 2018, at COP24, the UK Government signed up to having 'domestic institutional arrangements, public participation and engagement with local communities' so localities can play their part in delivering the UKs 'Nationally Determined Contributions' in the Paris Climate Agreement.'

'In May 2021 Alok Sharma MP, President of COP26 said Collaboration would be a key objective of the climate summit: "Governments, business and civil society (sometimes called 'non-state actors' and including local government)

need to work together to transform the ways we power our homes and businesses, grow our food, develop infrastructure and move ourselves and goods around"

'Despite these agreements and statements there is still no formal relationship allowing a joint partnership working between Local and National Government on climate action.

'This Council therefore resolves to:

- add our voice in this year of COP26 to calls by the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport & others for a joint local & national government Task Force to plan action to reach 'net zero' emissions. Such a partnership could propose appropriate regulations, establish benchmarks and targets and propose the much needed long-term funding mechanisms to enable local communities and economies to decarbonise whilst remaining resilient and sustainable.

- write to Alok Sharma MP, President for COP26 , the Prime Minister and the Leadership Board of the LGA informing them of our support for a joint Local/National Government Climate Change Partnership Taskforce and asking for one to be established as soon as possible..'

Members debated the motion with comments of support and, on being put the motion was declared CARRIED.

The following Motion was moved by Councillor John Milne and seconded by Councillor Ruth Fletcher:

'We move that this Council wishes to reconsider the latest proposals for the provision of housing for social rent under Strategic Policy 16 of the new Local Plan.

'In its current form, the Policy does not specify any minimum requirement for social housing. This may result in low or even zero delivery on some sites.

'Homes for social rent are the most necessary type of housing for Horsham District. They will have by far the biggest impact on affordability, which is the only way to ultimately reduce our excessive housing targets.

'We therefore propose that of the affordable housing provided in each new development, at least 35% should be reserved for social rent.'

Councillor Tricia Youtan, Cabinet Member for Housing & Public Protection, proposed an amendment to the motion, in order to ensure that an evidence base would be provided. She proposed that the final paragraph be replaced with:

'That the Director of Place, in conjunction with the Director of Community Services and the Cabinet Members for Planning & Development and Housing & Public Protection, prepare a report to be presented to a joint PDAG, which identifies how best to deliver Affordable Housing that ensures each new development maximises Social Rented homes on new sites to achieve at least 35%.'

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Tim Lloyd.

Councillor Milne agreed to this amendment and, on being put the motion, as amended, was declared CARRIED.

CO/46 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

No questions had been received.

CO/47 **RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET (2)**

The Chairman advised that this item had been considered as an urgent by Cabinet because of the tight timescales involved.

Councillor Paul Clarke, Leader of the Council, introduced this item on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets. The consultation by Gatwick Airport Ltd on the Development Consent Order (DCO) to bring the standby runway into routine use would end on 1 December. In order to work within the legislative timescales there was a need to prepare a comprehensive consultation response quickly. Given the complexity and scale of the consultation, a budget to pay for consultants with specialist skills and knowledge was required. Councillor Clarke advised that other local authorities were taking similar action.

The proposal for a reserve budget was seconded by Councillor Stuart Ritchie.

RESOLVED

- i) To set up an earmarked reserve of £100,000 for use on consultants for the Council's response to the Development Consent Order;
- ii) To delegate to the Director of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Development the uses of this budget/reserve.

REASON

- i) A budget is needed to ensure the Council gains the advice it needs to ensure optimal outcomes for the Development Consent Order.
- ii) The delegation is needed because we do not yet know the full detail of the work involved and the Consultation process has a tight set legislative timeframe to work within.

The meeting closed at 8.26 pm having commenced at 6.00 pm

CHAIRMAN

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COUNCIL
8 December 2021
CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation to Council made at the Cabinet meeting held on 25 November 2021

a) Update on the Council's financial position and Medium-Term Financial Strategy update

The Cabinet report gave an update on the Council's financial position under the ongoing impact from COVID-19 in 2021/22 and how the Medium-Term Financial Planning scenarios and assumptions have changed since the budget was set in February 2021 and since the update in September 2021.

There is still a high level of uncertainty as the economy recovers from the pandemic. Factors of particular concern include the increase in unemployment as furlough ends in the hospitality and leisure sectors, the risk of further variants and another local or national lockdown, implications from the Brexit agreement, Government's plans for the reform of business rates and the potential introduction of price limits on garden waste. The Council has kept high levels of reserves and therefore is able in the short term to make considered decisions.

Cabinet considered details, as set out in the report, including: the revised interim Medium-Term Financial Strategy; expenditure pressures; income pressures; and updates on budgets and funding.

RESOLVED

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

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- ii) That the charges from 1 April 2022 for the garden waste subscription service are increased from £42 for the first bin to £44 and for any subsequent bin increased from £33 to £35.
- iii) To approve the creation of a £2,500 revenue budget for a short breaks funding grant from West Sussex County Council and matching expenditure in the 2021/22 leisure services budgets.
- iv) To approve the creation of a £99,271 revenue budget for Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) grant funding from West Sussex County Council and matching expenditure in the 2021/22 environmental health service budgets.
- v) To approve the creation of a £139,000 revenue budget for Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) grant funding from West Sussex County Council and matching expenditure in the 2021/22 housing services budgets.
- vi) To approve the creation of a £78,946 revenue budget for Winter 2021 COVID-19 rent arrears financial support grant funding from Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and matching expenditure in the 2021/22 housing services budgets.

- vii) Subject to the safety net being put in place, to approve the Council joining the West Sussex Business Rates pool in 2022/23.

REASON

- i) 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.
- ii) The costs of running the garden waste service increase by inflation, and this price increase is passing this cost onto users of the service.
- iii) The short breaks grant will be spent on a Family Fun Day at Chanctonbury Leisure Centre for disabled children and young people before the end of March 2022. This will form an additional part of the Reaching Higher project.
- iv) The COMF grant will be spent preventing health inequalities and on COVID-19 risk management.
- v) The housing COMF grant will be spent on a range of interventions and housing solutions to support those affected by homelessness and risk of homelessness associated with COVID-19.
- vi) The Winter 2021 COVID-19 rent arrears financial support grant will support low-income private renters with COVID-19 related arrears to avoid eviction or find a new home.
- vii) Joining the West Sussex business Rates pool should benefit the County and therefore the district by retaining locally generated business rates, using it to further support the economic regeneration of the wider West Sussex area.

COUNCIL
8 December 2021
CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation to Council made at the Cabinet meeting held on 25 November 2021

b) Community Advice Partnership Agreement

The Community Advice Services Contract expires on 31 March 2022. The current contract was procured by West Sussex County Council with the support of each District and Borough Council. It is proposed that all district and boroughs within West Sussex again enter into a partnership contract (also referred to as Inter-Agency Agreement) to collectively procure and fund the service into the future.

The existing service is funded through the Council's annual strategic grant budget and set within annual budget setting. The annual funding committed to the joint service will be £93,000 per annum uplifted annually in line with the consumer price index calculated on the anniversary of the agreement.

These services and the work of Citizens Advice as the existing provider of the service has demonstrated year on year the positive impact advice services provide.

RESOLVED

- i) To approve the procurement of a partnership contract/inter-agency agreement with West Sussex County Council and the other West Sussex District and Borough Councils for Community Advice Services for the provision of an independent and comprehensive information and advice service for up to seven years from 1 April 2022.
- ii) Delegate to the Cabinet Member for Community & Wellbeing the authority to enter into the partnership contract/inter-agency agreement subject to contract approval by the Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To approve a budget contribution of £93,000 for up to 7 years, uplifted annually in line with the consumer price index calculated on the anniversary of the agreement, subject to satisfactory service reviews in line with Horsham District Council's corporate priorities and the availability of Horsham District Council funding.

REASON

To enable community advice services to continue to be delivered for residents of the Horsham District, therefore protecting the quality of life of those who live in, work in and visit our district.

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COUNCIL
8 December 2021
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Details of recommendation to Council made by Audit Committee on 1 December

(a) Provision of the External Audit of the Annual Accounts

The Council opted into national auditor appointment arrangements established by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA). These arrangements cover the period from 2018/19 up to and including the audit of the 2022/23 accounts.

All local government bodies need to make important decisions about their external audit arrangements from 2023/24. Audit Committee considered the report of the Director of Corporate Resources, which gave details of the current arrangements and the reasons why they were not satisfactory. The report outlines the three options available to the Council for the procurement of external audit for the next appointing period (2023/24 to 2027/28): to join the PSAA tender process; to tender alone; or to tender with other local authorities.

The committee has been asked to weigh the benefits and risks of these options and were recommended to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- i) To decline Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023.
- ii) To instruct the officers to seek to establish an independent audit panel and refer the appointment of this Panel back to its February meeting.

REASON

- i) There is a possibility the position with regards to the timeliness of the audit could improve with a local appointment and there appears to be little chance of this in joining the PSAA arrangements.
- ii) If the Council goes alone it must appoint an independent panel and then complete the procurement by 31 December 2022.

COUNCIL
8 December 2021
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Details of recommendations to Council made by Standards Committee on 1 December

(b) Councillor Code of Conduct – Amendments

In April 2021 Council resolved to adopt the Local Government Association’s Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020, with minor amendments to the standard text. The LGA has subsequently identified an error and made revisions in relation to Interests. It also considered other feedback and made other amendments to correct and clarify the Code.

A report to the Standards Committee explained these amendments and included a copy of the Council’s current Code with tracked changes. By adopting this revised version, the Council will align itself with the latest version of the LGA Code, without interfering with previous specific amendments already made by this Council.

The Standards Committee were asked to consider these further minor amendments, and were recommended to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

To adopt the Councillor Code of Conduct for Horsham District Council as amended.

REASON

- i) The Local Government Association Code of Conduct is a national model and now contains additional guidance, working examples and explanatory text. The Horsham District Council Code of Conduct should align as closely as possible with the current version and the up-to-date published model code.
- ii) The Local Government Association have identified an error in relation to the part of the code dealing with interests and have provided some clarity in other areas following feedback. The amendments improve the code and do not interfere with other amendments previously made.

(c) Code of Conduct Complaints – New Procedures

The Standards Committee set up a working group to review the procedures and arrangements in dealing with Standards Code of Conduct complaints.

The working group considered the current procedures and sought ways to improve the process. The proposed changes set out to achieve a more streamlined process for complainants. The revised proposed procedure includes: a 28 day deadline in which to make a complaint unless exceptional circumstances apply; a more prescriptive complaints form to ensure complaints are clearly set out and therefore easier to assess; the requirement to consult with an Independent Person at the assessment stage; and several other measures to ensure an efficient and transparent process.

There has been an increased volume in formal complaints, mainly involving Parish Councillors, and they are often detailed and complex. It is anticipated that the proposed procedure will allow complaint cases to be dealt with more effectively and with less resource implications for the Legal Department.

The Standards Committee have been consulted on the proposed new procedures and were recommended to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

To approve the adoption of the revised procedure in dealing with Code of Conduct complaints.

REASON

- (i) The current published procedure is detailed within a number of different documents and is repetitive and can be difficult to follow. The revised procedure brings everything together into one simplified clear document.
- (ii) The revised procedure will ensure that the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer are able to deal with Code of Conduct complaint cases in an efficient, timely, proportionate, just, and transparent way.
- (iii) Best practice recommendations are incorporated within the revised procedure.

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