

**Council**  
**25 MARCH 2021**

Present: Councillors: Karen Burgess (Chairman), David Skipp (Vice-Chairman), Matthew Allen, Andrew Baldwin, Tony Bevis, John Blackall, Toni Bradnum, Alan Britten, Chris Brown, Peter Burgess, Jonathan Chowen (Deputy Leader), Philip Circus, Paul Clarke, Michael Croker, Ray Dawe (Leader), Brian Donnelly, Ruth Fletcher, Billy Greening, Frances Haigh, Tony Hogben, Nigel Jupp, Liz Kitchen, Lynn Lambert, Richard Landeryou, Gordon Lindsay, John Milne, Colin Minto, Christian Mitchell, Mike Morgan, Godfrey Newman, Roger Noel, Bob Platt, Louise Potter, Josh Potts, Stuart Ritchie, Kate Rowbottom, Jim Sanson, Ian Stannard, Diana van der Klugt, Claire Vickers, Belinda Walters, Tricia Youtan and James Wright

Apologies: Councillors: Roy Cornell, Christine Costin and Tim Lloyd  
Absent: Councillors: Jack Saheid

CO/57 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

CO/58 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling & Waste announced that the West Sussex Climate Change Board met on 24 March for the first time. The board was chaired by WSCC and comprised the relevant directors and portfolio holders from across the county. It will facilitate the exchange of information and good practice and ensure cohesion between local authorities.

CO/59 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET**

**Improvement of community facilities in Denne Ward**

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets reported on proposals to renovate St Peter's Hall and the RAFA club. The Council had successfully applied for a government Energy Efficiency Grant of £238,000 to reduce the carbon emissions of the buildings. Alongside these works, it was proposed to create a fit-for-purpose and efficient space for use by the local community. Council was recommended to approve the budget to carry out these works. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Tony Hogben.

The Cabinet Member advised that the anticipated budget had been increased because the timescales required to secure the grant funding gave inadequate time for a competitive tender process. The proposed budget recommended to Council was therefore £130,000 higher than that originally proposed.

The Cabinet Member advised that the return on the investment would be reduced from approximately 4% to 2.5% of the revised cost. He also stated that, should officers succeed in negotiating a variation to the grant conditions to allow time to secure a more competitive price, the additional £130,000 may not be required.

Cabinet had approved the project to refurbish these buildings, and Members were supportive of the proposed budget, as revised, and welcomed the improvements to this community facility in Denne.

#### RESOLVED

That a budget of £630,000 for 2021/22 be approved for the project, of which £238,000 will be grant funded.

#### REASON

To upgrade poor quality community facilities in Denne Ward and to improve the energy efficiency of the buildings. The proposals meet the Council policies to move towards net zero emissions by 2030 and to provide facilities to support health and wellbeing in the community. The reasons for rejecting alternative courses of action are dealt with in the body of the report.

#### Use of Additional Restrictions Grant for projects to assist economic recovery

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets and Local Economy & Parking reported that a budget was sought from Council to enable Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) money, which was not needed for the Discretionary Business Grants scheme, to be spent on projects to support the business economy in Horsham District.

The Council had set up the Discretionary Business Grants scheme to enable the ARG to be distributed amongst relevant businesses. The Cabinet Member advised that in order to receive a further tranche of ARG, the Council was required to spend its existing allocation and this proposal would allow the surplus to be allocated to new and existing projects. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Brian Donnelly.

Councillor Matt Allen welcomed the proposal and thanked officers for their work in supporting businesses throughout the pandemic. However he considered that proposed projects should include those put forward by Neighbourhood Councils and the business community as well as Parish, District and County officers. He therefore moved an amendment to the second recommendation so that projects put forward by Neighbourhood Councils and the business community could be included. The motion was seconded by Councillor Frances Haigh.

The Cabinet Member agreed that the inclusion of these additional groups was acceptable, on the condition that the words '(indicative list)' were added to the recommendation. Council then voted on the amended recommendation.

#### RESOLVED

- i) To set up a budget for projects to encourage the restart and success of businesses in Horsham District for a value that, combined with spend on Discretionary Grants, is equivalent to the total of the Additional Restrictions Grant and any subsequent additions the Government makes to it.
- ii) To delegate to the Director of Corporate Resources, in consultation the Cabinet Lead for Finance & Assets and Local Economy and Parking, the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny and the Leader of the Council the allocation of this projects budget to projects proposed by officers of the County, District, Parish, Neighbourhood Councils and the business community (indicative list) when supported by an adequate business case and delivery plan that can be met before 31 March 2022.
- iii) To approve the allocation of funds for the four projects outlined in paragraph 3.3 of the Cabinet report.

#### REASON

- i) A budget to spend this money on anything other than grants direct to businesses is needed for the Council to operate within its Constitution.
- ii) A delegation is needed to ensure we can identify and approve projects at speed to maximise the benefit our economy obtains from this Government grant.
- iii) Council approving these projects is the quickest way to get funding into these projects because using the delegation would need further discussion.

#### Council Tax Support Scheme - additional discretionary discounts

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets introduced the report on the Council Tax Support Grant. Local authorities had received this as part of a settlement to compensate for council tax that had been lost due to an increase in Council Tax Reduction Scheme claimants caused by the pandemic.

Last year WSCC had used their grant to set up a joint scheme with districts and boroughs in the county that gave claimants extra discounts of up to £150. WSCC had proposed that this scheme continues for 2021/22.

The Cabinet Member asked Council to support the recommendation to set up a budget made of WSCC's contribution, HDC's Council Tax Support Grant and any residual hardship grant from 2020/21 so that the scheme could continue for another year. The proposal was seconded by Councillor John Blackall.

RESOLVED

- i) To set up a budget for 2021/22 comprising the County Council's share of payments and the remainder coming from a share of Horsham District Council's Council Tax support grant and any residual hardship grant from 2020/21.
- ii) To delegate to the Director of Corporate Resources the finalisation of the exact sums involved during 2021/22 provided they do not exceed the £145,981 Horsham District Council grant and any carry forward from 2020/21.

REASON

- i) County's offer to part fund this support will help our most vulnerable working age families in a year when their income is likely to be adversely affected.
- ii) A budget is needed to allow these transactions to take place.
- iii) The full cost of this scheme is not yet known because vulnerable customers in this group are likely to move in and out of work during the year. This delegation will allow the Director to ensure customers get the help agreed against a varying budget level.

CO/60 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

*The meeting closed at 7.30 pm having commenced at 7.00 pm*

**CHAIRMAN**