

Council
22 JUNE 2022

Present: Councillors: Kate Rowbottom (Chairman), Matthew Allen, Andrew Baldwin, Tony Bevis, John Blackall, Martin Boffey, Toni Bradnum, Chris Brown, Karen Burgess, Peter Burgess, Jonathan Chowen (Leader), Philip Circus, Paul Clarke, Michael Croker, Ray Dawe, Ruth Fletcher, Joan Grech, Billy Greening, Tony Hogben (Deputy Leader), Liz Kitchen, Lynn Lambert, Richard Landeryou, Colin Minto, Christian Mitchell, Mike Morgan, Roger Noel, Jon Olson, Bob Platt, Louise Potter, Josh Potts, Sam Raby, Stuart Ritchie, David Skipp, Cilve Trott, Diana van der Klugt, Claire Vickers and James Wright

Apologies: Councillors: Ian Stannard, Alan Britten, Christine Costin, Brian Donnelly, Nigel Jupp, Gordon Lindsay, Tim Lloyd, John Milne, Jack Saheid, Belinda Walters and Tricia Youtan

CO/12 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 27 April, and of the Annual Council meeting held on 25 May, were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

CO/13 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Item 11 Notice of Motion: Councillor Colin Minto declared a personal interest because he was an employee of HSBC. However, he was not part of their commercial operations so this would not be relevant to the debate.

CO/14 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Kate Rowbottom, Chairman of the Council, announced that there would be a short service at 10.50am on Sunday 26 June to lower the flag at the War Memorial in the Carfax to mark the end of Armed Forces Week.

Councillor Jonathan Chowen, Leader of the Council, thanked Adam Chalmers for everything he had done for the Council in his role as Director of Community Services. He wished him all the best in his new role as Chief Executive at Elmbridge Borough Council.

Councillor Roger Noel, Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture, stated that the recent Platinum Jubilee celebrations held in Horsham and across the district had been a resounding success. He thanked the officers who had worked hard to ensure the smooth running of the weekend's various events.

Councillor James Wright, Cabinet Member for Environment & Rural Affairs, announced that he had written to the five major banks asking them to join him for a meeting to see what could be done to keep banks open and to help residents have access to cash in areas where bank branches had closed. He had also met with Barclays a year ago and secured an agreement to set up a mobile bank in Storrington car park.

Councillor Bevis, Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, explained that he had withdrawn his request to call in the 'Development of a District-wide climate change Action Plan' made by Cabinet on 9 June. He stated that he had withdrawn it so that the item could be debated at this Council meeting. He also felt uncomfortable with the call-in procedure, which required him to adjudicate his own decision as the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny. He confirmed that his concerns regarding a lack of consultation prior to Cabinet decision had been largely addressed as Overview & Scrutiny Committee members would now have access to all papers submitted to the Cabinet Members' Policy Development Advisory Groups.

CO/15 **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

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

CO/16 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET**

6 (a) Using the 2021/22 surplus to help support local residents in need, topping up the 2022/23 Transformation Fund, and earmarking an inflation reserve. Plus increases to the Drill Hall and Community Development revenue budgets and Horsham Park skate park capital 2022/23 budgets and utilising the UK Shared Prosperity Funding

Councillor Tony Hogben, Cabinet Member for Finance & Parking, introduced the report, which explained the background to a £2.1m operational surplus in 2021/22 and recommended how this surplus could be used. He outlined the additional payments proposed to support residents, including younger people and those on lower incomes, measures to address the cost of inflation, and further investment in the transformation fund to support a number of projects, as set out in the report.

With regards to the £15,000 allocated to Horsham Matters, it was noted that appendix A to the report had been amended so that this funding could be used flexibly to support cost of living crisis interventions, not just on fuel vouchers.

The report also set out details of other proposed changes to budgets in 2022/23. These included an increase in budget for the Drill Hall to enable it to remain open while the Royal British Legion finalise the new arrangements. Councillor Roger Noel, Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture, stated that he had every confidence that outstanding matters regarding their lease would be resolved by the end of the year.

With regards to the increase in the budget for the Horsham Park skate park, Councillor Noel stated that the additional funding would bring the facility up to Olympic standards.

RESOLVED

- (i) That £0.3m of the 2021/22 surplus is used to further fund existing discretionary schemes in 2022/23 as set out in Appendix A of the Cabinet report.
- (ii) To note Cabinet approval of the transfer of £106,499 from the General Fund reserve to the earmarked transformation reserve.
- (iii) To note Cabinet approval to delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Parking, the authority to use the transformation fund as appropriate
- (iv) To note Cabinet approval of the transfer of £1m of the surplus into an earmarked inflation fund, for use in 2022/23 should current price and salary increases cause an overspend.
- (v) To approve an increase in the revenue budget in Leisure services for the Drill Hall of £17,000 income and £37,000 expenditure, which is a net cost increase of £20,000 in the 2022/23 budget.
- (vi) To approve a £300,000 increase in the revenue income and expenditure budgets in Community Development in 2022/23.
- (vii) To add an additional £20,000 to the £0.25m already in the 2022/23 capital programme to help deliver a better skate park in Horsham Park.
- (viii) That £50,000 of income from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and corresponding expenditure is added to the Economic Development. 2022/23 revenue budget.
- (ix) That £120,000 is added to the 2022/23 capital programme which will be fully funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

REASON

- (i) Additional funding will help those on low incomes and / or are vulnerable as well as supporting Young People.

- (ii) & (iii) To top up of the earmarked transformation reserve for projects that will help transform the Council in the future; effectively funded from the 2021/22 budget surplus.
- (iv) Inflation is over 6% and is causing significant price rises, and this, coupled with high salary pressures, is likely to cause a deficit in the 2022/23 outturn.
- (v) The budget will enable the Council to continue to operate the Drill Hall through to the end of the calendar year whilst discussions with the Royal British Legion are finalised.
- (vi) To help the resettlement and community support of Ukrainian families across the Horsham District.
- (vii) Feedback from the consultation with users at the Horsham Park skate park requested higher ramps and an improved plaza area that would be more accessible to more users.
- (viii) To develop and then help deliver a local investment plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- (ix) To enable capital investment spending under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support local businesses, Communities and Place and people and skills.

6 (b) Forum Fountain upgrade

Councillor Christian Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Horsham Town, introduced the report, which sought approval for a capital budget to upgrade The Forum Fountain with a treatment system to support interactive play. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Peter Burgess.

Cabinet agreed that the fountain should be upgraded to a splash pad, with the installation of a system to minimise bacterial risks so that the fountain can be kept operational, rather than needing to be shut down for cleansing. The Cabinet Member confirmed that disruption to local residents during the remedial works would be controlled through conditions. The Cabinet Member also confirmed that the fountain would use recycled water and, allowing for evaporation, be close to water neutral.

RESOLVED

That a capital budget be created for £120,000 in 2022/23 for the purpose of upgrading the Forum Fountain to a splash pad.

REASON

- (i) The Forum fountain is located within a public open space without controls on its use as an interactive facility. An upgrade of the treatment system will mean that residents can enjoy the feature safely.
- (ii) The constitution states that only full Council can approve changes to the budget.

6 (c) WEEE and Textiles continuation of service and introduction of Podback

Councillor Toni Bradnum, Cabinet Member for Recycling & Waste, stated that funding for the services for the collection of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) and textiles, which the Council has run since May 2021, would end this month. The report to Cabinet recommended that this successful service continue, in line with the Council's Corporate Plan objectives as well as Government requirements. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Diana van der Klugt.

Introducing Podback, a new coffee pod recycling service, would offset approximately one-third of the running costs. There would be a 12-week mobilisation period to introduce the scheme, and changes to the vehicle to accommodate the new service would also be funded by Podback.

Cabinet had agreed to approve the introduction of the Podback scheme and continue the WEEE & Textiles Service in its current format, subject to Council's approval of the required budget. Cabinet had also agreed 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 Podback.

RESOLVED

To approve a revenue income budget of £14,440 from Podback for the recycling and waste service in 2022/23.

REASON

- (i) Podback funding will reduce the costs of the scheme and increase recycling rates.
- (ii) Under the constitution, only full Council can approve budget changes.

6 (d) Development of a District-wide climate change Action Plan

Councillor James Wright, Cabinet Member for Environment & Rural Affairs, reminded Members of the progress the Council had made since the £1m investment in the environment had been agreed in this year's budget, including measures within the Council's Carbon Reduction Action Plan.

The proposal sought to address the issue of indirect emissions within the district and recommended the establishment of a Climate Change Panel consisting of experts on a range of subjects associated with reducing carbon emissions and preparing for a changed climate. The Cabinet Member confirmed that these experts would include those with local knowledge and expertise. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Philip Circus.

At the meeting on 9 June, Cabinet had resolved to approve the establishment of a Climate Change Panel, which would support the development of a district-wide climate change action plan.

There was a comprehensive debate regarding the potential make-up of the Panel and the extent to which residents could and should be involved during the process. Councillor Martin Boffey, Leader of the Minority Group expressed concerns that the Cabinet report did not reflect the Cabinet Member's reassurances that residents would be involved before the Panel produced its recommendations. Some Members also considered that a Citizen's Assembly would be more effective.

The Cabinet Member confirmed there would be a number of workshops for stakeholders and residents, and public meetings to help inform the process and encourage community engagement. He also emphasised the importance of professional help in developing an effective strategy in a timely manner, and stated that the proposed level of funding would be sufficient at this stage of the process.

Councillor Jon Olson proposed the following amendment to the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Martin Boffey:

- (ii) 'To approve a revenue budget of £160k in 2022/23 to support the development of the plan, enabling extensive stakeholder engagement at every stage of the process.'

On being put, the amendment was LOST.

RESOLVED

To approve a revenue budget of £70k in 2022/23 to support the development of the plan.

REASON

- (i) A new Panel of experts will give external input to the development of a District wide strategy and plan to generate new ideas and increase the legitimacy of the plan.
- (ii) Budget is required to secure a consultant to facilitate the meetings of the Climate Change Panel, support the drafting of the action plan and the follow up engagement to gain support from partners and the wider community to deliver the action plan.
- (iii) Ensure that the Councils procurement process are followed.

6 (e) Evidence Resourcing – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in development

Councillor Lynn Lambert stated that a statutory requirement was being introduced requiring new development to deliver 10% biodiversity net gain. In order for the Council to deliver its environmental priorities, there was an aspiration to exceed the biodiversity net gain target above this national standard.

Further evidence was required to enable a requirement for biodiversity net gain above the national standard to be supported by a Local Plan inspector. A budget was sought to fund the additional specialist ecological work required. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Roger Noel.

The Cabinet Member stated that the Council intended net gain to happen on-site and, should it not be possible, to ensure it happens within the district. Councillor Noel advised that the consultants would help the Council know what to demand of developers and help to protect and enhance the district's nature recovery network.

RESOLVED

That a revenue expenditure budget of £20,000 in Strategic Planning in 2022/2023 be approved to enable the commissioning of consultants to assess the deliverability of a higher percentage threshold than the statutory 10% biodiversity net gain target.

REASON

Additional resourcing is required to provide robust evidence to enable the Council to justify setting a higher biodiversity net gain target in the Local Plan than the statutory 10%. This will ensure that the Council delivers against its high environmental aspirations as set out in the Corporate Strategy.

CO/17 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES**

7 (a) Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

Councillor Tony Bevis asked Council to note the Committee's annual report, which provided a review of the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee during the municipal year 2021/22.

RESOLVED

That the annual report and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's forward plan be noted.

REASON

The Constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to tell the Council about its work at the end of each municipal year and about the work it plans for the new municipal year.

7 (b) Receipt of External Grant Funding

Councillor Philip Circus, Chairman of Governance Committee, stated that this proposal was a means of dealing with grant income of up to £100,000 on a delegated basis, thus streamlining the process by removing the need for full Council agreement. He stated that this would be reviewed in a year's time. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Ray Dawe.

RESOLVED

- i) To allow the receipt of grant monies and consequent expenditure up to a threshold of £100,000 to be approved by the Section 151 Finance Officer and the Leader in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Parking and the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- ii) That the Monitoring Officer be given the authority to make the necessary changes to the Constitution to reflect this.

REASON

The receipt by the Council of grant money has become more and more commonplace. Currently approval is needed which means every grant received needs approval from Full Council, preventing service areas from operating swiftly and efficiently by not being able to bid and spend the monies in time and as a consequence grant opportunity may be missed.

CO/18 **PAY POLICY STATEMENT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2022/23**

Councillor Jonathan Chowen stated that the Pay Policy Statement was a statutory document that the Council was required to publish, and its function was set out in the accompanying report. It was noted that there had not been a nationally agreed pay settlement yet this year, but this did not affect the current pay policy.

RESOLVED

That the Pay Policy 2022/23 be approved for publication.

REASON

To comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, to publish an approved pay policy.

CO/19 **APPOINTMENT OF THE PERMANENT DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES**

Councillor Chowen, who had chaired the Employment Committee on 13 June, stated that, following a rigorous recruitment and interview process, the Committee had nominated Paul Anderson to be the Director of Communities. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Martin Boffey.

RESOLVED

- i) To note the Employment Committee nomination of Paul Anderson as the new Director of Communities.
- ii) To agree the appointment of Paul Anderson to the position of Director of Communities of Horsham District Council with effect from September 2022, or thereafter, subject to notice period, at a salary of £94,270 to £101,269 p.a. (subject to national cost of living award).

REASON

To comply with Section 40 of the Localism Act 2011 that elected Members are to vote on salary packages upon appointments of a threshold of £100,000 or above.

CO/20 **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Councillor Diana van der Klugt, HDC representative on South Downs National Park Authority, updated Council on the consultation process for the development of the Shoreham Cement Works as an exemplar sustainable mixed-use development compatible with its location within the SDNP. An eight-week consultation on the Area Action Plan would run until 2 August.

Councillor Tony Bevis, HDC representative on WSCC Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, had circulated a report on his attendance to all Members. He stated that the focus of the Committee had been largely on the University Hospitals Trust based around Brighton and Chichester. He intended to work with Councillors in Crawley to encourage more discussion about the health services in the north of Horsham District.

CO/21 **NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Clive Trott and seconded by Councillor Martin Boffey:

‘Council notes the recent closure of numerous bank branches, which is causing great distress to residents. In Horsham Town, six branches have closed since 2018 including TSB just a few weeks ago. Across the district, almost every branch has gone in Storrington, Steyning, Southwater, Billingshurst and Henfield. Their loss has not been compensated for by increased access to ATMs – instead, approximately 25% have been removed in the same period. Hopes that banks might provide mobile banking facilities in our car parks in some of our market towns have not been fulfilled as yet.

‘Council further notes that whilst most residents are able to bank online, a significant number of vulnerable or older residents continue to rely on banking in person and access to free cash-dispensing and deposit facilities. Furthermore, for local businesses it’s often not practical to hold large amounts of cash on the premises.

‘Although these closures are a commercial decision for the banks, they have social consequences for Horsham District. A range of possible replacements for traditional banking services have already been trialled nationally by the Cash Action Group, including some alternatives to banks. We ask that Council seeks to explore these and all other possible solutions where we can have influence for Horsham District.’

Following debate, Councillor James Wright stated that he had campaigned on this issue for some time after the closure of Storrington banks, and outlined other progress and actions taken by officers. He therefore proposed the motion be AMENDED to include the following concluding paragraph:

‘That we recognise the work the Council has done and continues to do in supporting our communities and acknowledges that the Cabinet Member for Environment & Rural Affairs has written to the five major high street banks to ask them to attend a meeting to discuss this issue further.’

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Christian Mitchell.

After further debate, it was agreed that the motion be amended to include the additional paragraph.

On being put, the motion, as amended, was declared CARRIED.

CO/22 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

No questions had been received.

CO/23 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm having commenced at 6.00 pm

CHAIRMAN