

Cabinet
24 SEPTEMBER 2020

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

Apologies: Councillors: Paul Clarke

Also Present: Councillors: Tony Bevis, Ruth Fletcher, Lynn Lambert, Mike Morgan and Roger Noel

EX/24 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 23 July were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Leader at a later date.

EX/25 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

EX/26 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture recommended that everyone visit The Capitol, which had been refurbished during the lockdown and was now welcoming visitors to a safe and greatly improved venue.

He also reported that the Warnham Discovery Hub was looking magnificent and would compliment the ambitions for the nature reserve going forward. It was hoped that the hub would open by the end of October.

The Cabinet Member for Horsham Town gave some background details on the pop-up cycle lane along Albion Way, in particular the part that the County Council had played in securing a government grant for this particular scheme. It had originally been intended to install a less extensive scheme during lockdown when traffic was much lighter, and HDC had not been aware when the chosen scheme was being installed. The Cabinet Member had urged the County Council to revise the scheme further in response to congestion and safety concerns. Some amendments had been made and the Cabinet Member advised that traffic was flowing again.

EX/27 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Paul Kornycy asked the Cabinet Member for Planning & Development:

I welcome the revised timetable for the Local Plan Review published in the Local Development Scheme, Agenda Item 10. Not only will the 6 month delay

allow for proper preparation and consultation but it should also facilitate dodging the worst impacts of the 'mutant algorithm'.

This new timetable correctly recognises that on 27 November this year the HDPF does not expire, but carries on, albeit with an increased housing requirement of 920. Our target last year was 800 homes. This increases to just 841 this year because the higher 920 only applies for the latter third of the year.

Unfortunately we also face the risk of a much higher 1,715 target as part of the government's revised Standard Methodology. But, even if this is confirmed, it should not come into force until the start of next year, that's from 1 April 2021. Furthermore, I note that the Statement of Community Involvement, Agenda Item 11, states that the new Local Plan will run to 2037 but with a 2019 base date. This implies an effective start date for the new local plan of 1st April 2019, regardless of its actual adoption date.

This unnecessary backdating of the Local Plan may have serious consequences for our housing requirement. With a 2019 start date, a potentially much higher figure will overlay 2 years that currently have annual requirements of just 800 and 841 homes respectively.

Please explain why HDC is proposing the new plan start from 2019 and not from 2021, thus unnecessarily raising our already difficult housing target?

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Development replied:

As part of our work to prepare the Horsham District Local Plan we need our evidence to look at past, current and future trends in order to understand what we should plan for and include. Therefore, some of our evidence base studies for example, have a 2019 start date, which is why we currently have 2019 as our Local Plan start.

As plan preparation takes a number of years it is common practice for Local Plans to update their plan period, if needed, during the plan preparation process so long as the plan period cover 15 years once a plan is adopted. This is a requirement of Government guidance.

As the Horsham District Local Plan is yet to be finalised I cannot comment on the final period that the plan will cover, but I can confirm that there is absolutely no intention whatsoever to increase our housing target unnecessarily.

Paul Kornicky, as a supplementary question, asked:

I'd like to draw your attention to Crawley, our neighbouring Council, who's Regulation 19 consultation was undertaken in January/February 2020 and yet their plan is starting from 2020. Given that our Regulation 19 consultation is due to run in January/February 2021 it therefore seems strange that we would even contemplate starting our plan from 2019. So could I please ask that you have a look at what Crawley have done and, frankly, why they seem to be getting away with it?

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Development replied:

The Plan Period is under review, Mr Kornycky, and I will take up that question with the officers.

EX/28 **UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL POSITION**

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets presented an update on the projected scale of the financial impact from Covid-19 in 2020/21 and how the ongoing considerable uncertainty could impact on current forecasts.

This uncertainty was effecting the medium term financial strategy and the identified potential savings of £1.5m, as set out in the report, would not be enough and further substantial action would therefore be needed to achieve a balanced 2021/22 budget. Work was being undertaken on what could be done to reduce costs further and there would be an update to Cabinet in November with possible further updates before the budget is agreed in February 2021.

The Cabinet Member advised that there had already been cost reductions at the museum and the £50k for museum improvements would help it operate with a lower subsidy when it re-opens. It was noted that the £125k towards the Henfield carpark included essential work to address underlying problems with the foundations.

RESOLVED

- i) To note the changes in the Council's financial position in 2020/21 and the Medium Term.
- ii) To recommend Council approve a £50k capital budget for the refresh and refurbishment of the museum whilst it remains closed during 2020/21.
- iii) To recommend Council approve a £125k capital budget increase to the £180k Henfield Library car park capital project, to address significant issues in the foundations.
- iv) To enter into a four year £0.75m scheme to deliver supported accommodation for rough sleepers, providing full funding is approved by MHCLG.
- v) Subject to iv) above, to recommend Council approve a £69k capital budget and £25.5k revenue expenditure budget in 2020/21 and the associated matching income obtained from MHCLG.

REASON

- i) The Council needs to acknowledge the highly unpredictable nature of the national and local situation occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic and the huge impact this is having on its financial position both in the short and longer term. This has moved the council from what has been a long term healthy financial position to one with predicted large deficits unless action is taken.
- ii) Work is needed to modernise and refresh museum displays, introduce a digital cultural heritage offer, and improve the customer experience.
- iii) The more expensive dig out and rebuild of the car park in Henfield will address structural defects and make the asset last much longer and is therefore more economical in the long term.
- iv) & v) establishing supported accommodation will help support and reduce the number of rough sleepers in the district.

EX/29 **ADOPTION OF CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS AND MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR SLINFOLD AND WARNHAM**

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Development reminded Members that there were 37 conservation areas in the District and the Council had adopted a rolling programme for producing appraisals and management plans for each area. So far nine areas had an adopted appraisal and management plan.

Slinfold and Warnham had been identified as experiencing pressure for development and last November Cabinet agreed to approve draft appraisals and management plans for both areas, followed by public consultation between 6 February and 5 March. The 29 consultation responses, as set out in the appendices to the report, had been reviewed and, where appropriate, changes made to the proposed documents.

With regard to Warnham Cricket Ground, the Cabinet Member explained why it was not appropriate for inclusion within the consultation area, given that it did not meet the required architectural or historic interest test. She outlined the planning policies that would put development constraints on this area.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that, with regards to future reviews, including Richmond Road and the surrounding area, the relevant Neighbourhood or Parish Councils would be consulted and effected residents written to. They would also be publicised in the local press.

RESOLVED

- i) To approve the revised Conservation Area boundaries for Slinfold and Warnham, as shown on the Conservation Area designation maps (1 and 2) included in this report.

- ii) To approve the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for Slinfold and Warnham, as set out in Appendices 3 and 4, to be used in the determination of planning applications from 25 September 2020.
- iii) To delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Development to approve minor editorial changes prior to final publication of the documentation.

REASON

- i) To formally designate the amended Conservation Area boundaries.
- ii) To provide updated Conservation Area guidance for the two settlements and Members in determining applications.
- iii) To give the Cabinet Member for Planning and Development delegated authority to approve minor changes to the document, without the need for it to be referred back to Cabinet.

EX/30 **CARBON REDUCTION TARGET AND ACTION PLAN**

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling & Waste introduced the report and recommended carbon reduction targets relating to the Council's properties and activities. This was a positive response to the Council's recognition of the climate emergency in June 2019, and a recognition of concern expressed by the public in general.

The Cabinet Member stated that the financial uncertainty caused by the pandemic would add to the challenge, although there would be some public sector decarbonisation funding available. The projected targets and expenditure would be reviewed annually as part of the budget process.

The Environmental Coordination Manager briefly summarised technical aspects of the report, based on the paper produced by the carbon reduction consultants Anthesis. In addition to emission targets, a short term action plan was also proposed; this was an 18-month programme that included an energy audit of HDC properties; costing retrofitting options; and staff training.

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets emphasised the financial challenges ahead and their potential impact on future budget decisions.

RESOLVED

- i) To approve an aspirational target for the Council's direct emissions to be carbon neutral by 2030.

- ii) To approve an additional target for the emissions that are not directly within the Council's control to be carbon neutral by 2050.
- iii) To approve a short term action plan for carbon reduction measures to run until March 2022.

REASON

- i & ii) To implement the priorities of the Corporate Plan for Horsham District Council to become carbon neutral.
- iii) To commence the work required to reach the approved targets.

EX/31 **COMMUNITY LOTTERY**

The Cabinet Member for Community Matters & Wellbeing reminded Members that the Community Lottery had been running successfully as a trial for a year. She outlined how much had been raised for local charities, and voluntary and community groups and emphasised the importance of continuing this funding source. The pandemic had increased pressures on the voluntary sector and the Cabinet Member advised that the community had responded with an increase in lottery ticket sales in recent months.

In response to concerns that participation in lotteries could cause gambling problems for vulnerable people, Members were advised studies showed a very small percentage of 'soft' gamblers developed a harmful habit. The Cabinet Member advised that there were measures in place to prevent individuals buying an excessive number of tickets.

RESOLVED

- i) To approve the continuation of the Horsham District Community Lottery after a successful year one trial.

REASON

- i) To continue to raise funds for local voluntary and community groups.

EX/32 **HORSHAM DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Development reported that the Local Development Scheme, which set out the timetable for the Council's preparation of the Horsham District Local Plan, required updating because of the impact of the pandemic. The pandemic had adversely effected a number of organisations' ability to feed into the preparation process within the available timeframe

The previous Local Development Scheme covered the period between June 2019 and June 2022. The revised scheme would reflect the delays caused by

the pandemic and would cover the period from January 2020 to December 2022.

The Cabinet Member recommended publication of the revised scheme to ensure the Council meets its legal obligations and to ensure that the revised timescales are available to residents, stakeholders and the government.

RESOLVED

- i) To approve the publication of the attached Local Development Scheme January 2020 – December 2022.

REASON

- i) To ensure that the Council acts in accordance with the requirements of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011).

EX/33 **HORSHAM DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Development advised that the Council was required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to set out how the Council engages with residents, businesses, community groups and other organisations to ensure everyone can comment on planning decisions which may affect them.

The current SCI, which was published in September 2019, required updating because of the impact of the pandemic on how the Council can conduct its business, including how public consultations operate. The revised SCI would take account of any public health rules or guidance, and ensure engagement with the public as part of the Local Plan process.

The revised SCI also took into account the latest government position on the Community Infrastructure Levy, and provided greater clarity on the stages of Neighbourhood Plan preparation.

RESOLVED

- i) To adopt the Statement of Community Involvement, attached at Appendix 1.
- ii) That the Cabinet Member for Planning and Development has delegated authority to agree minor editorial changes such as typographical errors prior to publication.

REASON

- i) To enable an up to date and accurate SCI to set out guidance on how the planning system works and sets out how the council will inform, consult and involve people in planning decisions within Horsham District.
- ii) To undertake minor editorial or typographical amendments.

EX/34 **UPDATE TO BUILDING CONTROL CHARGES SCHEME**

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Development presented the report on the updated Building Control Charges Scheme. Following a review of the costs and income, an update of the current scheme, published in October 2017, was required in order to reflect the current level of costs and maintain cost recovery in line with regulations.

The Cabinet Member stated that the revised charges still represented good value for the service and was subject to annual review. The proposed implementation date of the updated scheme was 1 November 2020.

RESOLVED

- i) To recommend to Council that the revised Charges Scheme as set out in Appendix A is approved.

REASON

- i) To ensure Building Control Charges are able to cover the costs associated with the relevant functions and kept in line with inflation.

EX/35 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no matters currently outstanding for consideration.

EX/36 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan was noted.

EX/37 **TO CONSIDER MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY**

There were no matters of special urgency to be considered.

The meeting closed at 6.25 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN