

COUNCIL
25 March 2021
CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to Council made at the Cabinet meeting held on 25 March 2021

The following recommendations, either as printed below or as amended at the Cabinet meeting, are recommended to Council:

(a) Improvement of Community Facilities in Denne Ward

The report to Cabinet related to proposed works to refurbish and reconfigure St Peter's Hall and the RAFA club, which are two buildings on the Needles Estate. The buildings have a number of shortcomings and are not fit for purpose in their current condition.

The Council has successfully applied for a government Energy Efficiency Grant to reduce the carbon emissions of the buildings, which have poor energy efficiency. These alterations are substantial and the grant is for £238,000. Alongside these works, it is proposed to create a fit-for-purpose and efficient space which can be used by the local community. The additional budget cost for remodelling the buildings is £262,000, bringing the total for all of the work to a budget of £500,000. A condition of the grant is that the works commence prior to the 31st March 2021 and are completed by the 30th September 2021.

It is intended to work with the local community and possible anchor organisations during the construction phase so that arrangements regarding future management of the building are in place on completion of the work. The report to Cabinet gives details of the project and a recommendation to Council for the allocation of a budget of £500,000 for the works, of which £238,000 will be grant funded.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

- i) To approve the project for the refurbishment of St Peter's Hall and the RAFA club.

TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- ii) That a budget of £500,000 for 2021/22 be approved for the project, of which £238,000 will be grant funded.

REASON

- i) 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.
- ii) Reasons for rejecting alternative courses of action are dealt with in the body of the report to Cabinet.

(b) Use of Additional Restrictions Grant for Projects to Assist Economic Recovery

The report to Cabinet recommended that a budget be sought from Council to spend Additional Restrictions Grant money not needed for the Discretionary Business Grants scheme to use on projects to encourage the restart and success of businesses in Horsham District.

The report seeks a delegation from Council to the Director of Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets and Local Economy & Parking, the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny and the Leader of the Council, to allocate funding to projects that will encourage this restart and success of our businesses.

This item is submitted under Rule 4g.22 (special urgency) of the Constitution as it was not published on the Forward Plan with 28 days' notice. This is because further information issued by the Government in March combined with an evaluation of claims under the discretionary scheme at the end of February changed our understanding of the scheme and the best way to use the money for the benefit of our local economy. Speed is of the essence to get the most money possible to help our businesses as quickly as possible.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- 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) 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 and Parish Councils when supported by an adequate business case and delivery plan that can be met before 31 March 2022.
- iii) Approve the allocation of funds for the four projects outlined in paragraph 3.3.

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.

(c) Council Tax Support Scheme – Additional Discretionary Discounts

Local Authorities received, as part of the local government finance settlement, a Council Tax Support Grant to compensate them for income lost due to the rise in Council Tax Reduction scheme claimants throughout the pandemic and to give Councils an opportunity to award additional discounts.

West Sussex County Council (WSCC) has offered HDC and other West Sussex districts and boroughs a share of its grant to replicate the additional COVID-related support given to working age Council Tax Reduction scheme claimants in 2020/21. This was a further council tax discount of up to £150 per household. This report proposes using HDC's Council Tax Support grant for 2021/22 and any residual grant from 2020/21 alongside WSCC's contribution to replicate this scheme.

The report includes recommendations to Council to put in place the budget and delegations to enable officers to make these payments.

This item is submitted under Rule 4g.22 (special urgency) of the Constitution as it was not published on the Forward Plan with 28 days' notice. This is because WSCC made this offer to support us in providing extra support to Council Tax Reduction scheme claimants and the need for urgency is to allow us to start putting through this support as soon as possible rather than waiting until July.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

- i) Approve an additional discretionary discount of up to £150 per household for working age claimants in 2021/22.

TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- 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.

