

Council
23 JUNE 2021

Present: Councillors: David Skipp (Chairman), Kate Rowbottom (Vice-Chairman), Matthew Allen, Andrew Baldwin, Tony Bevis, John Blackall, Martin Boffey, Toni Bradnum, Chris Brown, Philip Circus, Christine Costin, Michael Croker, Brian Donnelly, Ruth Fletcher, Billy Greening, Frances Haigh, Tony Hogben (Deputy Leader), Nigel Jupp, Liz Kitchen, Lynn Lambert, Gordon Lindsay, Tim Lloyd, John Milne, Colin Minto, Christian Mitchell, Mike Morgan, Roger Noel, Bob Platt, Louise Potter, Stuart Ritchie, Jack Saheid, Jim Sanson, Diana van der Klugt, Claire Vickers, Belinda Walters, Tricia Youtan and James Wright

Apologies: Councillors: Karen Burgess, Peter Burgess, Jonathan Chowen, Paul Clarke, Roy Cornell, Ray Dawe, Richard Landeryou, Godfrey Newman, Josh Potts and Ian Stannard

Absent: Councillor: Alan Britten

CO/13 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 28 April and 26 May 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CO/14 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

CO/15 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Claire Vickers, Cabinet Member for Community & Wellbeing, announced that the Wellbeing Hub in The Forum had opened on Saturday. She spoke of the importance of this initiative, given the impact of lockdown on people's health, and urged Members to visit the centre.

Councillor Philip Circus, Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste, Recycling & Cleansing, advised that two briefings on the introduction of food waste collections had been arranged for Members and he urged as many as possible to attend.

The Chief Executive commented on the Notice of Motion put forward by Councillor Croker (agenda item 11). He stated that, while debating this motion, Members needed to be aware of the consequences should they vote to delay the Local Plan timetable for a year. To do so would be premature, given that the evidence base informing the draft Local Plan would be debated at Cabinet and Council meetings in July. He stated that legal opinion confirmed that delaying the Local Plan because of the pandemic was not a valid reason. He gave a number of reasons why delaying it would be damaging to the district and reduce the amount of control the Council has over future development.

CO/16 **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

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

CO/17 **NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

Councillor Lynn Lambert, Cabinet Member for Planning & Development, introduced the recommendation that, following successful referendum results, 10 Neighbourhood Plans be formally made by Council. These comprised Ashington, Billingshurst, Bramber, Henfield, Rudgwick, Rusper, Shipley, Southwater, Upper Beeding and West Grinstead.

Each plan had involved extensive consultation and been robustly examined by an independent examiner. Once made, the plans would have statutory status and be used alongside other local planning policies when determining future planning applications. The Director of Place confirmed that once the Local Plan was in place, it would not take away from the good work done in producing Neighbourhood Plans.

The Cabinet Member acknowledged the commitment of Parish Councils and members of the communities in completing this work and congratulated all those who had contributed to the processes. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Tim Lloyd.

RESOLVED

- i) To formally “make” the following Neighbourhood Plans for as part of the statutory Development Plan for Horsham District and apply these for the purpose of determining planning applications within the respective parish areas following the Referendums that took place on 6 May 2021:
1. Ashington Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031;
 2. The Billingshurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031;
 3. Bramber Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2031;
 4. Henfield Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2031;
 5. Rudgwick Neighbourhood Development Plan for the period to 2031;
 6. Rusper Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031;
 7. Shipley Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031;
 8. Southwater Neighbourhood Development Plan (2019-2031);
 9. Upper Beeding Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031
 10. 2019 -2031West Grinstead Parish Development Plan.

REASON

To meet the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

CO/18 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES (PART A)**

The Mobile Homes (Requirement for Manager of Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020: introduction of the test and amendment to the Fees Policy

Councillor Jim Sanson, Chairman of Licensing Committee, introduced the report regarding a new test that was being introduced to regulate site owners of residential caravan sites to ensure sites were managed by a fit and proper person. The report to Licensing Committee had approved a Mobile Homes Act Fees Policy, which established a fees policy and a process for receiving applications and making and issuing decisions.

The Chairman of Licensing recommended that Council approve £3,000 of fee income and £3,000 of additional officer costs in the 2021/22 budget to facilitate the new process.

RESOLVED

That £3,000 of fee income and £3,000 of additional officer costs in the 2021/22 budget be approved.

REASON

- i) To ensure compliance with legislative requirements;
- ii) To ensure transparency and openness in decision making;
- iii) To ensure that the budget is approved in line with the constitution.

CO/19 **ALTERATIONS TO CABINET PORTFOLIOS**

Details of the alterations to the Cabinet Portfolios, announced at the Annual Council Meeting in May, were noted.

Councillor Claire Vickers, Cabinet Member for Community Matters & Wellbeing, asked for clarification as to which portfolio holder was responsible for emergency planning and business continuity, as it appeared under the Housing & Public Protection portfolio as well. The Monitoring Officer would confirm this after the meeting.

CO/20 **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES**

There were none to report.

CO/21 **TO NOTE CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIPS OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT
ADVISORY GROUPS**

The changes were noted.

CO/22 **NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Mike Croker and seconded by Councillor Bob Platt:

'Due to the likely impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic on many of the assumptions made in its production, this Council agrees to a moratorium (for a minimum of one year) on the recently revised Local Plan production timetable in order to ensure the plan's soundness going forward.'

Members debated the proposal. Whilst there was a degree of sympathy for the motion, there was almost unanimous agreement that it was essential that the Council deliver a Local Plan within the proposed timeframe. Therefore, on being put, the motion was declared LOST.

CO/23 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Councillor Billy Greening asked Councillor Claire Vickers, Cabinet Member for Community & Wellbeing, the following question:

'The whole country is facing a mental health crisis, no more is this evident than amongst young people. 80% of young people feel that the Coronavirus pandemic had made their mental health worse. This was often related to increased feelings of anxiety, isolation, a loss of coping mechanisms or a loss of motivation. I too have been one of these people.'

Research published by the British Medical Journal found that women, young adults, socially disadvantaged people, and people with pre-existing mental health problems reported the worst mental health outcomes during the pandemic. And, tragically, we have seen the impacts of Mental Health problems throughout our district in recent months.

What more can HDC do to work with youth services, schools, WSCC and others to ensure that young people throughout the Horsham District are able to get the help that their mental and emotional health needs?

Would the Council consider setting up a youth body that engaged more proactively with young people, to ensure their voices are heard and that they are considered and listened to with decisions that this Council makes.'

The Cabinet Member replied:

'The events in recent weeks have tragically highlighted how young people have suffered during the Coronavirus pandemic. There are a range of services available for people of all ages to access immediate support, with more details available on the

Council's website. However, we need our young people to know it really is okay not to be okay. And we need to make sure advice and support is there when they need it. This includes resources for those worried about a friend or relative.

HDC is not the expert in this field, nor do we lead on this agenda. However we do have a number of initiatives to engage with young people including the Youth Engagement Bus, and Local Youth Officers. But there will always be more that can be done. We are keen to explore with our partners that lead on Mental Health Service provision, and those partners in the Education Sector, to see how we can all work together to prevent the deaths of young residents who may feel they have no other options available to them.

As the newly appointed Cabinet Member for Community & Wellbeing, I will make the commitment now for our teams to talk to young residents of our district and see how we can work more closely together. Whether this is a youth body or similar, it is important that it's shaped by young residents themselves, one which can be sure Council services meet the needs of our young people, gives an appropriate platform for those residents to be able to raise their concerns, consider ideas for improvement and help shape services. Councillor Greening, you have my absolute commitment that young people's mental health is a priority for me and I will ask this to go on my next PDAG (Policy Development Advisory Group) agenda on 5 July.'

In reply, Councillor Greening asked a supplementary question:

'When this goes on the agenda for your next PDAG would you consider the idea of a mental health festival that could incorporate things throughout our district and could show that the Council can lead on these things, and that it is okay not to be okay and bring young people into that conversation?'

The Cabinet Member replied:

'I will be very happy to consider anything that I think will help young people's mental health and we will discuss all those options.'

The Chairman stated that Councillors were all aware of the circumstances surrounding this question and the Members joined him in sending condolences to those grieving for the young lives that had been lost.

CO/24 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

To consider two items containing exempt or confidential information

RESOLVED

That, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following two items of business, on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, by virtue of paragraph 5 (information in respect of which a claim

to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings) and paragraph 2 (information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual) and in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

CO/25 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES (PART B)**

Setting of Fees, Charges, Concessions and Prices

Councillor Christian Mitchell, Chairman of Governance Committee, outlined the reasons for the recommendation regarding the setting of fees, charges, concessions and prices within the Constitution, in particular with regard to those that could be delegated to Cabinet Members rather than being taken by Full Council.

RESOLVED

To amend the wording of part 3.4.4 d) of the Constitution to:

‘any power to change fees, charges or concession policies with the exception of pricing in The Capitol, museum or seasonal offers for paid for waste services which will be delegated to the Cabinet Member as appropriate’.

CO/26 **GRANT DECISIONS ARISING FROM THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

The Chief Executive introduced the report, which sought approval of a budget decision related to facilitating projects supported by Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) funding. These projects would help the economic recovery of the district’s towns and villages after lockdown.

The emergency powers granted to the Chief Executive in March 2021 allowed this report to be brought direct to Council, and not via Cabinet, to gain an early decision so that government grants provided because of the Covid-19 emergency could be put to good use (Minute No CO/59 (21//03/21) refers).

The meeting closed at 7.14 pm having commenced at 6.00 pm

CHAIRMAN