

COUNCIL
19 October 2022
CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to Council made at the Cabinet meeting held on 29 September 2022

(a) Update on the Council's financial position in 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy update 2023/24 to 2026/27

The report to Cabinet gave an update on the Council's financial position and on how the medium-term financial planning scenarios and assumptions have changed since the budget was set in February 2022. The update and assumptions were made in the light of the high level of uncertainty due to inflation, pressure from salary increases, uncertainty on business rates reform and other factors. The Council's high levels of reserves allows for considered decisions in the short term.

As more information becomes available during 2022/23, there will be further updates, with the focus on levels of inflation and also the work needed to set balanced budgets across the medium-term which is likely to require substantial action.

Paragraph 3.22 of the report sets out fees and charges for hiring Blackbridge Community Centre, which had recently been refurbished and is now available for hire, along with comparisons with other Horsham venues.

Cabinet RESOLVED

- (i) To note the changes to the Council's financial position in 2022/23 and the medium-term; and

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (ii) To approve the updated list of fees and charges in paragraph 3.22.

REASON

- (i) The Council needs to acknowledge the effects that high levels of inflation will have on its financial position both in the short and medium-term. This has moved the council from what has been a long-term healthy financial position to one with predicted deficits unless action is taken on fees and charges. Given the level of uncertainty in the projections, the economy and proposed Government action, the report does not recommend direct action to reduce expenditure at this stage.
- (ii) To ensure these fees and charges are approved by full Council as per the constitution.

(b) Housing Register and Nominations Policy revisions

The Council adopted its new Housing and Homelessness Strategy in October 2021. As part of the strategy 2021-2026 five overall objectives (set out in the executive summary of the Cabinet report) had been identified to assist in tackling the challenges surrounding housing and homelessness in the district.

Following a review with staff and stakeholders, a number of changes relating to Objective 4 (to provide and maintain an accessible and fair Housing Register) had been proposed. These changes to the Council's Housing Register and Nominations Policy sought to improve the process used to meet the housing needs of those who require housing with the district.

Council RESOLVED

To approve the proposed changes set out in the report to Cabinet; and

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

That the revised Housing Register and Nominations Policy is adopted.

REASON

To ensure the Council fulfils its statutory responsibility of having a current Housing Register and Nominations Policy.

(c) Use of 'A' Boards and other Advertising Structures on the Highway - Policy, Guidelines and Enforcement Procedure (The 'A' Boards Policy)

The proposed 'A' Boards Policy provides a set of comprehensive guidelines and advice as to the number, size, positioning and management of 'A' Boards and other advertising structures on the highway.

This follows representations from ward members and Denne Neighbourhood Council on the effect the current arrangements for 'A' boards are having on general accessibility around the town centre and a negative visual impact. The draft policy has been developed to balance the needs of businesses and pedestrians and to address visual impacts.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To approve the 'A' Boards and other Advertising Structures on the Highway - Policy, Guidelines and Enforcement Procedure (as set out in [Appendix A](#) of the Cabinet report).

REASON

- (i) To set out the policy and procedure for dealing with items placed upon the highway, (which includes the highway verge, footpaths, paved areas and pavements) and/or attached to highway property.
- (ii) To ensure public safety and the free passage for pedestrians along footpaths and the highway.

(d) Facilitating Appropriate Development and Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure Planning Guidance documents

Two advice documents have been drafted to provide guidance to those involved in submitting and determining planning applications prior to the adoption of the new Local Plan. Both the Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD) and the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Planning Advice Note (PAN) are non-statutory planning documents.

Cabinet resolved to seek formal endorsement of both documents so that they can be published and used in the consideration of planning applications. This will help to ensure that the Council is clear on its emerging aspirations and evidence including biodiversity net gain requirements, climate change measures and emerging evidence indicating the potential for higher levels of affordable housing provision.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (i) To formally endorse the Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD) and agree to the publication of the document for use as a non-statutory Planning Guidance document.
- (ii) To formally endorse the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Planning Advice Note (PAN) and agree to the publication of the document for use as a non-statutory Planning Guidance document.
- (iii) To grant the Cabinet Member for Planning and Development delegated authority to agree any necessary minor editorial changes to the documents referenced in (i) and (ii) above.

REASON

To provide clear and consistent planning guidance to aid applicants, stakeholders and those involved in determining planning applications in advance of the adoption of the new Local Plan.