

Cabinet
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

Present: Councillors: Jonathan Chowen (Leader), Tony Hogben (Deputy Leader), Toni Bradnum, Lynn Lambert, Christian Mitchell, Roger Noel, James Wright and Tricia Youtan

Apologies: Councillors: Liz Kitchen

Also Present: John Blackall, Martin Boffey and Ruth Fletcher

EX/28 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21 July were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

EX/29 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

EX/30 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Lynn Lambert, Cabinet Member for Planning & Development, congratulated the Head of Development & Building Control and the Building Control Team for doing so well at the LABC Building Excellence Awards 2022 regional finals. They won Best Residential & Small Commercial Designer, Public Service Superstar and Best Partnership. They go forward to the finals in London in January.

EX/31 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received.

EX/32 **UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL POSITION IN 2022/23 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE 2023/24 TO 2026/27**

Councillor Tony Hogben, Cabinet Member for Finance & Parking, introduced the report on the Council's financial position and how the Medium-Term Financial Planning scenarios and assumptions had changed since the budget was set in February 2022. The level of uncertainty had increased due to a number of factors including inflation, world events, the payment settlement, uncertainty on government funding, and how food waste collections would be funded.

Action would be required to prevent a deficit of approximately £1m per year in future years. The Cabinet Member stated that it was not practicable to reduce staffing numbers further and there would therefore be an emphasis on

increasing income and revenue. This would include: an increase in council tax of £5 next Financial Year; a modest increase in the charge for garden waste collection; and an increase in fees and charges of approximately 6%.

As more information becomes available during 2022/23, there will be further updates with the focus on levels of inflation and the work needed to set balanced budgets across the medium-term. An update would be brought to Cabinet in November.

Councillor Martin Boffey, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, questioned whether there should be some flexibility regarding the standard rates for the hire of community spaces referenced in paragraph 3.22 of the report. The Cabinet Member confirmed that there was a mechanism for some discretion through delegated authority held by the Head of Property & Facilities. The Leader agreed that there was a case for some flexibility regarding the standard rate of hire for long-term users, but the community rate already offered very good value.

RESOLVED

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

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.

EX/33 **DECOMMISSIONING OF LONDON ROAD CAR PARK**

Councillor Hogben presented the report, which sought to approve the decommissioning of the London Road Car Park. It had been used by season ticket holders before the pandemic, but had been closed and then used as an NHS Covid-19 testing centre. The car park remained closed with previous users accommodated elsewhere in town. There had been a healthy recovery in

parking levels in the town, but changes in working behaviours had led to a 66% reduction in demand for season tickets.

The Cabinet Member stated that there was ample parking within Horsham town centre and reminded Members that the Council is obliged to make best use of its assets.

RESOLVED

To approve the decommissioning of the London Road Car Park and investigate alternative uses/options for the land.

REASON

To ensure best possible use is made of council assets whilst meeting the needs of the public.

EX/34 **SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY ENERGY HORSHAM**

Councillor James Wright, Cabinet Member for Environment & Rural Affairs, outlined the proposal to work with the resident-led group, Community Energy Horsham, to install photovoltaic (PV) panels on suitable Council owned buildings. He praised their innovative business model, which would forward the Council's Carbon Reduction Plan at no cost to the Council.

The Bridge leisure centre had been chosen as a pilot for the scheme and, if successful, other suitable Council owned properties would be identified. The Cabinet Member stated that he looked forward to working with Community Energy Horsham on promoting the scheme to other businesses and communities in the district.

Roger Noel, Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture, gave his full support to the scheme and outlined the benefits to the contracted tenants of The Bridge, Places Leisure, with regards to energy consumption.

The Leader thanked Councillor Ruth Fletcher, who had introduced the project to the Cabinet Member, for championing the organisation.

RESOLVED

- (i) To support Community Energy Horsham installing photovoltaics on The Bridge to pilot this approach.
- (ii) To support the principle of working with Community Energy Horsham to install renewable/low carbon technology and demand management technology on other Council owned buildings.
- (iii) To delegate approval for individual buildings to be part of this scheme and to enter into the appropriate legal agreements to the Director of

Communities and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs.

REASON

The Bridge would be used to pilot the community energy model for installing PV, whilst supporting the principle of this approach, as well as delegated approval for the legal agreement, will allow further buildings to have renewable energy installed without the need to seek Cabinet approval for each building, therefore, speeding up the process.

EX/35 **HOUSING REGISTER AND NOMINATIONS POLICY REVISIONS**

Councillor Tricia Youtan, Cabinet Member for Housing & Public Protection, reminded Members of the five overall objectives of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy, which was adopted by Council in October 2021. The objectives 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. The Cabinet Member stated that the proposed changes had been reviewed by stakeholders and there had been input from her Policy Development Advisory Group.

The Leader wholeheartedly supported the objectives and the proposed amendment that helped some of the most disadvantaged in the community, and thanked officers for their work in helping to drive those objectives.

RESOLVED

To approve the proposed changes.

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.

EX/36 **BUSINESS CASE FOR HORSHAM DISTRICT HOMES FOR AFFORDABLE HOMES IN DUKES SQUARE, HORSHAM**

Councillor Youtan introduced the business case that the directors of HDH (the Council's affordable housing development company) had prepared, which set out an opportunity to develop eight affordable rented properties on the MT Garages in Dukes Square. The development would be funded through S106

funds that the Council holds to support the delivery of affordable homes. She gave details of the proposed development and confirmed that the housing would be allocated from the Council's Housing register.

In response to concerns regarding the rest of the site and the aspiration for a second phase, the Cabinet Member stated that she was determined that the entire site will be developed for affordable housing of high-quality design.

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the business case for the construction of eight homes for affordable rental on MT garage in Dukes Square, Horsham by Horsham District Homes Ltd.
- (ii) Delegate authority to the S151 officer in consultation with the Cabinet member for Finance and Parking to approve the final business case, subject to the transfer value not being in excess of £1.6m.

REASON

Approval of the recommendations will allow the Directors of the housing company to progress the planning application and obtain a contract sum.

EX/37 **USE OF 'A' BOARDS AND OTHER ADVERTISING STRUCTURES ON THE HIGHWAY - POLICY, GUIDELINES AND ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE (THE 'A' BOARDS POLICY)**

Councillor Christian Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Horsham Town, stated that the proposed policy and guidelines had been produced in response to growing concerns regarding the impact of 'A' Boards and other structures on the public highway, in particular concerns regarding access, movement and visual impact. The proposal took account of best practice and consultation responses, as set out in the report. The Cabinet Member thanked members of his Policy Development Advisory Group for their feedback.

Councillor Roger Noel, Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture, commented that the policy would benefit towns and villages across the district as well as Horsham Town.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To approve the 'A' Boards and other Advertising Structures on the Highway - Policy, Guidelines and Enforcement Procedure.

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.

EX/38 **CIL GOVERNANCE FOR THE UNPARISHED AREA OF HORSHAM TOWN**

Councillor Lynn Lambert, Cabinet Member for Planning & Development, reminded Members that governance arrangements for the allocation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which enabled developers to raise funds to pay for infrastructure, had been agreed by full Council in December 2019.

There was a further need to agree governance arrangements for the unparished area of Horsham Town as this was not subject to the same legislative spending process applied to Parish Councils. The Cabinet Member confirmed that, if Cabinet agreed the recommendation, further consultations would ensue before any governance arrangements are finalised.

Councillor Martin Boffey, Ward Member for Trafalgar Neighbourhood Council and Neighbourhood Councillor, stated that he understood that if approved further consultations would take place. He sought assurance that this would be in consultation with Local Members as well, and requested that the recommendation be amended to reflect this.

The Cabinet Member reiterated that further consultations with the relevant Members and the Neighbourhood Councils would take place before any governance arrangements are put in place. The Leader of the Council confirmed this to be the case and, on that understanding, the recommendation was put to the vote.

RESOLVED

To agree to delegate the Governance arrangements for the prioritisation, allocation and spend of the unparished areas of Horsham Town CIL receipts to the Director of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and the Cabinet Member for Horsham Town.

REASON

It is necessary to update the current CIL Governance arrangements to provide clarity, transparency and consistency in the collection, allocation and spending of CIL receipts within the three Neighbourhood Councils/unparished areas of Horsham Town.

EX/39 **CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF A NEW CONSERVATION AREA FOR THE AREA CHARACTERISED BY WELLS COTTAGES, IN WEST CHILTINGTON AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RUSPER CONSERVATION AREA**

Councillor Lambert reminded Members that, in addition to the rolling programme for developing Conservation Appraisals and Management Plans for existing Conservation Areas, there was also a legal duty to look for other potential Conservation Areas.

Wells Cottages area had been identified as having special architectural merit that gave a unique sense of place. Following a review of the Rusper Conservation Area, it was recommended to extend this area to the north.

The Cabinet Member advised that there would be a five-week consultation period from 6 October, after which amended draft appraisals and management plans would return to Cabinet for further consideration.

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the proposed new conservation area boundary, and draft Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for public consultation for both the new Conservation Area in West Chiltonton and the existing Conservation Area in Rusper.
- (ii) To approve that the Director of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Development be given delegated authority to agree minor editorial changes prior to publication.

REASON

- (i) To formally designate a new conservation area for the Wells Cottages, West Chiltonton.
- (ii) To enable Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans to be produced to help guide development in West Chiltonton and Rusper.
- (iii) To provide conservation area guidance for residents, occupiers, developers and Members in determining applications.
- (iv) 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/40 **FACILITATING APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT AND BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS**

Councillor Lambert advised that the two advice documents would provide guidance to those involved in submitting and determining planning applications prior to the adoption of the new Local Plan.

If endorsed both documents would be published and used in the consideration of planning applications. Both the Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD) and the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Planning Advice Note (PAN) were non-statutory planning documents rather than policy, but they would help to improve the quality of development coming forward before the Local Plan is in place and help with advice regarding water neutrality.

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.

EX/41 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no matters currently outstanding for consideration.

EX/42 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan was noted.

EX/43 **TO CONSIDER MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY**

There were no matters of special urgency to be considered.

The meeting closed at 6.26 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN