

Cabinet
8 JUNE 2023

Present: Councillors: Martin Boffey (Leader), John Milne (Deputy Leader), Mark Baynham, Colette Blackburn, Ruth Fletcher, Jay Mercer, Jon Olson and Sam Raby

Also Present: Jon Campbell, Philip Circus, Mike Croker, Warwick Hellowell, Liz Kitchen, Lynn Lambert, Alan Manton, Colin Minto, Roger Noel and Belinda Walters

EX/1 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 23 March were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

EX/2 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

EX/3 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

EX/4 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received.

EX/5 **TRANSFORMATION FUND 2023-24**

Councillor Mark Baynham, Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources, summarised the purpose and use of the Transformation Fund, which had been set up in 2016/2017 to help improve the running of Council services with efficiency measures and improved processing, in particular digital change. £500,000 was available each year to support these initiatives.

Last year £221,000 had been spent and the Cabinet Member proposed that this sum be topped up to £500,000 for the current year so the fund can continue to improve Council services as it has done since 2017.

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the transfer of £221,000 from the General Fund reserve to the earmarked transformation reserve.

- (ii) To delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, the authority to use the transformation fund as appropriate.

REASON

To top up of the earmarked transformation reserve for projects that will help transform the Council in the future; being effectively funded from the 2022/23 budget surplus.

EX/6

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE FOR COWFOLD, ITCHINGFIELD, LOWER BEEDING AND PULBOROUGH PARISHES

Councillor John Milne, Cabinet Member for Planning & Infrastructure, outlined the impact that Water Neutrality and the delay in finalising the Council's Local Plan was having on the development of Neighbourhood Plans. The issue had prevented four emerging Neighbourhood Plans from progressing to referendum. The purpose of the proposal was to provide a Planning Advice Note for each of these parishes to help strengthen their position until the Council's Local Plan was in place. The Cabinet Member confirmed that it would carry some weight in the determining of planning applications.

The Cabinet Member agreed to amend recommendation (ii) as printed in the report to include consultation with relevant Ward Members should any minor editorial changes be required.

In response to concerns raised, the Cabinet Member reassured Members that Neighbourhood Plans would be taken into consideration when allocating sites in the Local Plan to the extent that the law allowed; he had asked Jeremy Quin MP for clarification on the current legal obligations regarding housing numbers and would share this information with all Councillors once available.

RESOLVED

- (i) To Formally endorse the Neighbourhood Planning Advice Notes for Cowfold, Itchingfield, Lower Beeding and Pulborough Parishes and agree to the publication of the document for use as a non-statutory Planning Advice Note.
- (ii) To grant the Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure delegated authority to agree any necessary minor editorial changes to the documents referenced in (i) above, in consultation and mutual agreement with relevant Ward Members.

REASON

To support Neighbourhood Planning groups affected by water neutrality, and to ensure compliance with the Duty to Support obligations placed upon Local Authorities to assist Neighbourhood Planning groups,

EX/7 **ADOPTION OF RUSPER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Councillor John Milne, Cabinet Member for Planning & Infrastructure, reminded Members of the Council's rolling programme of reviewing existing Conservation Areas and assessing potential areas for new ones. Rusper Conservation Area had now been reviewed and it was proposed that the area be extended to include the grounds of Ghyll Manor.

There had been one consultation response suggesting that the recreation field be included. This had been considered by officers but omitted as it was not of historic or architectural interest.

When asked to reconsider the omission of the recreation field, the Cabinet Member advised that this valued amenity space did not meet the criteria. However, it was confirmed at the meeting that this area had already been registered as an Asset of Community Value, which afforded it some protection.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (i) To approve the designation of the revised Conservation Area boundary for Rusper, as shown on the Conservation Area designation map (1) included in this report;
- (ii) to approve and adopt the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Rusper, as set out in Appendix 2 to be used in the determination of planning applications from 26 June 2022; and
- (iii) to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Infrastructure to approve minor editorial changes prior to final publication of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

REASON

- (i) To formally designate the amended conservation area boundary.
- (ii) To provide updated conservation area guidance for residents, occupiers, developers and Members in determining applications and to designate the locally listed buildings.
- (iii) To give the Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure delegated authority to approve minor changes to the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

EX/8

BISHOPRIC/WORTHING ROAD AND CARFAX PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS - APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANT AND CONTRACTOR

Councillor Ruth Fletcher, Cabinet Member for the Local Economy & Place, introduced her report, which sought approval to design and deliver a public realm improvement scheme for the Bishopric and Worthing Road area, and also develop a 'shovel ready' scheme for the Carfax to allow the Council to bid for future funding as opportunities arise.

The Bishopric area had deteriorated over the years, with paved areas damaged by the weight of traffic. The layout would be improved, including enhanced provision for pedestrians and cyclists, as detailed in the report.

A design for the Carfax would make crossing the Carfax easier for pedestrians and those with mobility difficulties and provide safe cycle access. A capital provision to support delivery of the scheme had already been approved by Cabinet.

Recommendation (ii), as printed on the report, was amended so that the correct Cabinet portfolio was named.

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the call-off from the SCAPE Framework agreement to facilitate the delivery of the public realm improvements; and
- (ii) To award the contracts to the relevant suppliers named in the SCAPE Framework, and, delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Local Economy and Place, to approve the final terms including the contract sums.

REASON

To ensure that the procurement methodology is compliant and to deliver the projects within budget

EX/9

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & LICENSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAFFING

Councillor Jay Mercer, Cabinet Member for Environmental Health, Recycling & Waste, advised that the number of housing inspections carried out by the Environmental Health & Licensing Team had increased significantly. This was due to an increased awareness of the detrimental impact that mould could have in people's homes, with new Government guidance that will impose additional burden on regulatory services. There had also been a sharp increase in the number of applications for Houses in Multiple Occupation, for reasons set out in the report, which involved extensive liaison with officers.

Councillor Ruth Fletcher, Cabinet Member for Local Economy & Place, advised that three key Economic Development staff were approaching retirement and succession planning was needed to manage a transition, with staff recruitment and promotions. The current team also needed to expand so that it could take forward the next two years of the Shared Prosperity Fund.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (i) To approve the £41,200 increase in the 2023/24 salaries budget to accommodate the creation two extra posts, one in Environmental Health team and a temporary post in Economic Development.

REASON

- (i) All local authorities are under a statutory duty to inspect housing and ensure that the powers used to tackle housing problems are effectively discharged. The increase in awareness of damp issues, new guidance on damp and in the increase in the number of applications houses in multiple occupation has led to a need for an extra employee permanently in the Environmental Health Private Sector Housing Team.
- (ii) In the Economic Development Service there is a need for a temporary role to carry out the extra work associated with the Shared Prosperity Fund and get the service prepared for the likely full or phased retirement of its three officers.

EX/10 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no matters currently outstanding for consideration. Councillor Belinda Walters said that the training had been excellent and anticipated a full work programme going forward.

EX/11 FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was noted.

EX/12 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