

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Mid Sussex District
Council Cabinet held on Monday, 1 February 2016
from 4.00 p.m. to 4.31 p.m.**

Present: Councillors: Jonathan Ash-Edwards, Andrew MacNaughton, Gary Marsh, Pru Moore*, Garry Wall (Leader) and Norman Webster.

Also present: Councillors: Pete Bradbury and Ginny Heard.

Officers: Kathryn Hall, Tom Clark, Judy Holmes, Peter Stuart, Claire Tester, Mark Fisher, Simon Hughes, Lynne Standing and Hannah Martin.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

39. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Pru Moore.

40. MINUTES

The Minutes of the open session of the meeting held on 30 November 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

41. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

42. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2016/17

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced the report and advised that the report outlined the proposals for the Corporate Plan and Budget 2016/17 and the views of the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery who had carried out an in-depth review of the proposals at its meeting on 12 January 2016.

She referred Members to paragraph 5 of the report which outlined the Council's priorities for the forthcoming year, with the paramount focus continuing to be financial independence alongside prudent investment in front line services. The Assistant Chief Executive advised that the Council was still waiting for the final Settlement figures from the Government which were expected the following week but officers were confident that there would be no significant impacts on the 2016/17 budget proposals.

The Leader stated that the work undertaken over the previous years to manage the Council's resources in the face of Government cutbacks meant that the Council was in a solid position to meet the challenges moving forward. He advised that excellent scrutiny of the proposals had been carried out at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Delivery echoed the comments of the Leader and welcomed the thorough debate by the Scrutiny Committee and drew Members' attention to the minutes of the meeting in the report

which showed a high level of Member engagement and a number of searching questions that had been asked.

He went on to say that he welcomed the prudent and proactive approach this Council has taken in managing its finances so that services such as Green Waste can be expanded as well as supporting growth in other key areas.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Community said that he had been pleased to see the issues raised at the Scrutiny Committee regarding the outlook for the provision and affordable housing in future years. He commented that he was also pleased to see that the support to the voluntary sector will continue and that work with partners will be undertaken to retain and improve the existing services. In addition to this, the Cabinet Member was pleased that due to a proactive approach Mid Sussex had numerous leisure facilities and playgrounds for the community to enjoy.

The Cabinet Member for Planning acknowledged that the problem of providing affordable housing will be a new challenge for the Council to face. He advised that work will be done to seek legal advice in order to interpret the latest guidance from Government.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Property agreed with the comments raised about affordable housing and said that this was a constant issue raised at meetings with local businesses who say they are unable to recruit due to workers not being able to access affordable housing in the area. In addition, he said that he welcomed the proposed growth fund for the Burgess Hill Northern Arc project.

The Leader thanked colleagues for their comments. He commented that a lot of hard work by Members and officers had been put in to get to this point and that setting the budget was not an easy process. He took Members back to paragraph 5 and the focus of the budget and noted that the balance between delivering and investing in services providing value for money processes had been met.

As there were no further comments, the Leader took Members to the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet recommends to Council the proposals for 2016/17, as set out in the report to the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery on 12 January 2016, and as amended by this report, specifically:

- (1) the proposed level of Council Tax in 2016/17;
- (2) the proposed Capital Programme;
- (3) the service commentaries and summary budget tables for each Business Unit;
- (4) Transfer £4m from General Reserve to an earmarked Land and Property Specific Reserve; and
- (5) Transfer £440,000 from General Reserve into the Burgess Hill Growth Reserve.

43. BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2015/16 – PROGRESS REPORT APRIL TO DECEMBER 2015

The Head of Finance and HR introduced the report and stated that expenditure was continuing to be tightly managed. He also stated that income from Development

Management and Parking continues to exceed expectations. He referred Members to paragraph 24 of the report which outlined a variety of opportunities to invest the over-achievement in income into several specific reserves.

The Leader welcomed the report which highlighted the positive performance against the budget. He advised that the continuing over-achievement had allowed the Council to set a precedent of in-year investments so that money can be recycled in year and used to support services. He also noted that all other income and expenditure was on target.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Delivery stated that the over-achievement in income from Development Management and Parking charges was a sign of a strong local economy with more people travelling into the District. He supported the recommendations as this provided an opportunity to be proactive in areas of work such as supporting the work to Digitalisation and ICT. He also noted the encouraging position of Treasury Management.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Property was pleased to see £50,000 being allocated to both the Community and Economic Development Fund Specific Reserve and the Parks Improvement Specific Reserve as these will make a difference for residents.

The Cabinet Member for Planning advised that the extra income was always useful and that it was prudent to use it wisely to top up certain reserves while it was available.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Community remarked that it was important to have a strong local economy in order that voluntary services could be supported. He supported the investment into ICT improvements in order to provide easier ways for residents and businesses to contact the Council. He commented that the proposals aimed to facilitate the provision of a better quality of life for all Mid Sussex residents.

The Leader noted the comments raised and advised that this was a sensible and prudent use of the extra income. He went on to say that it was important to build up the resilience for certain reserves so that work can continue moving forward. He ended by stating that the sound and prudent fiscal policy that the Council has adopted has secured the delivery of services to residents and that this was vitally important for the future.

As there were no further comments, the Leader took Members to the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

- (1) That Council be recommended to:-
 - (a) transfer £65,000 grant income relating to Neighbourhood Planning to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 21 of the report;
 - (b) transfer £99,292 grant income relating to Property Searches New Burdens funding 2015/16 to General Reserve, as detailed in paragraph 22 of the report;
 - (c) transfer £791 grant income to General Reserve, as detailed in paragraph 23 of the report;

- (d) transfer £150,000 from the revenue underspend to the Local Development Framework Specific Reserve, as detailed in paragraph 24 of the report;
 - (e) transfer £50,000 from the revenue underspend to the Community and Economic Development Fund Specific Reserve, as detailed in paragraph 24 of the report;
 - (f) transfer £50,000 from the revenue underspend to the ICT Specific Reserve, as detailed in paragraph 24 of the report;
 - (g) transfer £50,000 from the revenue underspend to the Parks improvement Specific Reserve, as detailed in paragraph 24 of the report;
 - (h) transfer £50,000 from the revenue underspend to a CenSus consultancy Specific Reserve, as detailed in paragraph 24 of the report;
 - (i) transfer £50,000 from the revenue underspend to the Business Digitalisation Specific Reserve, as detailed in paragraph 24 of the report
 - (j) approve the variations to the Capital Programme contained in paragraph 33 in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rule B4; and
- (2) note the remainder of the report.

44. REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning introduced the report and advised that the Local Development Scheme (LDS) was the project plan for all major planning policy documents, such as the District Plan. She advised that it was important to keep the Local Development Scheme up to date as the District Plan will be tested against it at Examination.

She stated that the other documents in the LDS were the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and the Traveller Sites Allocations Document and that it was proposed to submit these for Examination in the summer of 2016. She advised that there had been a delay to the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule due to proposed changes from Government about starter homes which affected the viability of developments.

The Cabinet Member for Planning highlighted the volume of work that this document outlined and that it was essential that it was correct and up to date. He thanked officers for their continuing hard work in this area.

As there were no further comments, the Leader took Members to the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet approves the revised Local Development Scheme for Mid Sussex and agrees that it will come into effect on 1 February 2016.

45. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Leader proposed that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2015 and this was seconded by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Delivery. This was agreed.

RESOLVED

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item in accordance with Section 1100A of the Local Government Act 1972, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

46. EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CABINET ON 30 NOVEMBER 2015

Following the consideration of this exempt item, the Leader brought the meeting back into open session.

As there were no further questions, the minutes were agreed as a correct record.

RESOLVED

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet on 30 November 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

The meeting was brought back into open session and the Leader closed the meeting.

Chairman.