

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Mid Sussex District  
Council Cabinet held on Tuesday, 6 September 2016  
from 4.00 p.m. to 4.39 p.m.**

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

**Also present:** Councillors: Pete Bradbury.

**Officers:** Kathryn Hall, Tom Clark, Judy Holmes, Peter Stuart, Simon Hughes and Mark Bristow.

**21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**22. APOLOGIES**

None.

**23. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

**24. URGENT BUSINESS**

None

**25. BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2016/17 – PROGRESS REPORT APRIL TO JULY 2016**

Peter Stuart the Head of Corporate Resources introduced the report stating that there is a projected underspend of £123,000 which was modest compared to the Council's total spending. He explained that notwithstanding expected underspend there were rising service pressures, particularly around the waste collection service and temporary housing accommodation.

Despite these service pressures the Council is still able to earmark £20,000 for a new Technically, Environmentally and Economically Practicable (TEEP) assessment in respect of the waste service and £30,000 in the following year should funds be available at Outturn. In addition investment in the green waste collection service which is experiencing an increase in demand should result in increased revenue and a shorter waiting time for the rollout of the service.

Paragraph 35 of the Report indicates the prudence of this Council in its investment decisions. The Local Authority Property Fund continues to be stable despite recent turbulence in the markets associated with the EU Referendum result.

Paragraphs 33 and 34 of the Report indicate the Treasury Management Interest received on the Council's cash holdings.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the Report which enabled the Council to look forward with clarity in terms of investments and service pressures. He was very

supportive of the proposed investment noting that the Council had to invest in order to save and these investments would result in an improved return.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Delivery stated that the Report presents a positive picture. He welcomed the expansion of the Green Waste Service. He was however concerned by the increasing costs of temporary accommodation. He stated that as far as is possible the Council should seek to deliver more Affordable Housing units and look for opportunities to secure good returns on investments.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Communities stated that he agreed with the Deputy Leader in relation to Affordable Housing which was under pressure.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development stated that he supported the expansion of the Green Waste Service.

The Cabinet Member for Planning stated that the income from Development Management Fees indicated the pressure the District was under and this was likely to continue for some time.

The Leader noted the income that had been received but also the pressures the Council was facing. On balance he concluded that despite the service pressures the Report gives some confidence of the financial health of the Council. He then moved to the recommendations which were agreed and noted unanimously.

## **RESOLVED**

To recommend to Council for approval:

- (i) That £20,000 from the revenue underspend is transferred to a Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 25;
- (ii) the variations to the Capital Programme contained in paragraph 30 in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B4.

To note:

- (iii) the remainder of the report;

## **26. SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING GUIDELINES – 2017/18**

Peter Stuart introduced the report and stated that there was an error in paragraph 66 which referred to an appendix which is not included in the Report. The figures however were presented in the preceding two paragraphs. He further noted that there was a letter K missing after £275 in paragraph 53, which should read £275K.

He stated that it was important to be cautious into the 2017/18 financial year as there would only be a small surplus. Business Plans were currently being worked up by each Business Unit to examine pressures and to ensure these remained under control. He further highlighted that whilst population growth brought increased tax revenue it also brings increased pressures on services.

In recent years a Member Working Group to advise Cabinet and Council on the Corporate Plan and Budget has been very productive. He suggested that the remit of such a working group be extended this year to include refreshing the Council's Core Priorities. Whilst these had served the Council well they were drawn up in 2004 and would benefit from a refreshment to ensure they remain relevant.

The Head of Corporate Resources warned that the Autumn Statement may see a reset of public finances. This would require the Council to remain prudent. As such there was the option of pursuing the 4 year funding deal offered by Government if the Council were to submit an Efficiency Plan. An Efficiency Plan would not need to be very detailed however Government would want to see finances under control. He then reminded Members that there was also an option of increasing Council Tax by either 1.99% or by £5 whichever was the greater and this may be something the working group would consider.

The Leader noted paragraph 20 of the Report and agreed that this was a good time to consider Corporate Priorities, although the existing Corporate Priorities have served the Council well over the past decade.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Delivery noted that the Council is in a position of financial strength given the national picture. It was important to continue to plan in a positive way. He reminded colleagues that Revenue Support Grant is to disappear entirely in the future. As such it was important to look to alternative revenue streams and nurture a strong local economy and economic growth. Signing up to a 4 year funding deal was sensible as it would provide a degree of certainty and security. He further supported a refreshment of the Council's Core Priorities to ensure they still reflect the direction of the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Communities stated that aligning spending priorities with the Corporate Priorities had been working well. He agreed that a 4 year Funding Deal was sensible and welcomed a brief review of the Council's Corporate Priorities.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Property stated he would like to see small improvements to the Corporate Priorities rather than fundamental changes as the three headlines had served the Council well. He further stated that he would like to see more information about the 4 year Funding Deal being offered by Central Government.

The Leader of the Council stated that the 4 year Funding Deal was sensible noting that it was not long ago that the Council was receiving Central Government Grants of over £6m and that it was now almost zero. The Council had delivered a wide variety of services despite the reduction in Government Grant and it was important that the Council remained aware of financial challenges in the future. He then moved to the recommendations which were agreed.

## **RESOLVED**

Cabinet agreed to:

- (i) endorse the guidelines set out within the report and use these principles in compiling the 2017/18 Corporate Plan and Budget and refresh of the Council's corporate priorities.

- (ii) set up a Working Group to advise the Cabinet and Council on this work.
- (iii) agree to the submission of an Efficiency Plan in order to secure a four-year funding deal.
- (iv) reserve its decision on Council Tax levels until after the November 2016 Budget.

## **27. REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive introduced the report. She explained that the scheme has been updated as the draft District Plan had now been submitted for Examination. She confirmed that the version included in the printed papers contained an error in the tables. A corrected copy had been published on the website and was now Tabled for Members at the meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Planning stated that whilst there was still work to do it was important that the deadlines for the work to be carried out were clearly defined and met.

The Leader then took Members to the recommendation which was agreed.

### **RESOLVED**

To approve the revised Local Development Scheme for Mid Sussex and agree that it will come into effect on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

## **28. ACCEPTANCE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE EAST GRINSTEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION REPORT.**

Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive, introduced the report stating that Mid Sussex now had 10 'made' Neighbourhood Plans and a further three recently passed successfully at Referendum. The Independent Examiner had recommended mostly minor modifications mainly to improve the clarity of policies. There was one main modification however relating to the provision of housing development outside the Built up Area Boundary. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that East Grinstead Town Council had accepted to all the modifications.

The Cabinet Member for Planning was pleased to see progress on another Neighbourhood Plan. A lot of time and effort had gone into creating it, in his view the modifications were sensible and he wished to congratulate East Grinstead Town Council.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Communities stated that this Plan was a long time in the making and had been through extensive consultation. He noted that East Grinstead Town Council had agreed unanimously to the recommendations of the Independent Examiner at a Special Meeting of the Council and as such he agreed with those recommendations.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Delivery stated that he was pleased to hear that East Grinstead Town Council had worked proactively with the District Council in order for the Neighbourhood Plan to be before Cabinet today.

The Leader thanked East Grinstead Town Council for their efforts and stated that having this Plan reach this stage would support the District Plan at examination he then moved to the recommendation which was agreed.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet agrees the District Council formally accept the recommendations of the Independent Examiner in relation to the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan.

**29. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Leader proposed that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt items on the agenda and this was seconded by the Cabinet Member Economic Development and Property. 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.

**30. EXEMPT ITEM**

The Leader brought the meeting back into open session on the completion of exempt business and closed the meeting at 4:39 pm.

Chairman.