

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Mid Sussex District  
Council Cabinet held on Monday, 28 November 2016  
from 4.00 p.m. to 4.39 p.m.**

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

**Also present:** Councillors: Pete Bradbury and Ginny Heard

**Officers:** Tom Clark, Judy Holmes, Peter Stuart, Simon Hughes, Tim Cusack and Lucinda Joyce.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Received from Kathryn Hall.

**3. MINUTES**

Subject to the amendment of one word on page 5, the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

**4. URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**5. ACCEPTANCE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE ANSTY, STAPLEFIELD AND BROOK STREET NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION REPORT**

Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive, introduced the report. She informed Cabinet that this was the 16<sup>th</sup> Neighbourhood Plan in Mid Sussex District to pass the examination phase.

She noted there were a number of proposed modifications to the plan as set out in Appendix 2. She directed Cabinet's attention to the most significant modification which relates to policy AS1 and proposes to allow small scale developments of up to 10 units subject to defined criteria to meet the local housing need. The recommended modifications were agreed at the Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council meeting on 14 November. The Examination Report recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to Referendum. Subject to Cabinet's approval, the date of the referendum is proposed for 19 January 2017.

The Leader noted that this was the 16th out of a total of 20 Neighbourhood Plans to pass the examination stage and acknowledged the large amount of work that has been put in by the Town and Parish Councils to get to this stage. He noted that the amendments were in keeping with the emerging changes in planning guidance.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning echoed the praise for the work invested in these plans. He noted that the Examiner's recommended amendments

were not uncommon and were designed to give more flexibility. He was content for the Plan to move forward to referendum.

The Cabinet Member for Community congratulated everyone involved, noting that difficult decisions have been made to ensure the varying needs of the three communities were well represented.

The Leader agreed that the Plan met the needs of the three separate parts of the Plan area and moved Cabinet to the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

## **RESOLVED**

That Cabinet formally accepts the modifications to the Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan as set out in Appendix 2 of this report.

## **6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2016/17**

Tim Cusack, Business Unit Leader for Performance and Partnerships introduced the report. He summarised that out of 49 indicators, 79% had met their target, which is an improvement from 71% at the same time in the previous year.

He stated that this was a positive development that was achieved even with increased demand to Council services. He drew the Cabinet's attention to two items of note, the speed of processing new Housing and Council Tax Support Claims, and the Change of Circumstances for Housing Benefit claims and Council Tax Support Claims. Both of these have now met targets and specific work is being carried out by the team to ensure that the Council remains below the lower error threshold set by the Department of Work and Pensions to avoid loss of subsidy. This had previously been a concern raised by Cabinet.

He noted that the performance indicator for Environmental Health Service requests missed the target by a small margin but that this still represented a significant improvement from Quarter 1. Other significant items highlighted to Cabinet were the new inclusion of a breakdown of compliments as well as complaints, and the comments on the performance report made by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth and detailed on page 47 and 48 of the report. The Scrutiny Committee had raised concern regarding the size of the budgetary pressure in addressing temporary accommodation for homeless residents. They acknowledged the expansion of the garden waste service and the clearing of the waiting list. They also agreed to hold a Performance Indicator Review working group meeting to consider new customer service indicators and potentially other changes to the bundle of indicators in 2017/18.

The Leader was satisfied that the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth had robustly reviewed the Council's performance at its meeting. He noted paragraph 39 of the report regarding the number of households in temporary accommodation and commented that this was a worrying trend for the Council and it was important that the Cabinet are aware of, so it can consider how it can be improved in the future.

The Deputy Leader stated that the overall figures in the report were positive especially with comparison to the same quarter last year. He agreed with the

Leader's comments regarding paragraph 39 as the impact of temporary accommodation affects both the Council and the families involved, reflecting the challenges of affordability in the area.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning confirmed that a great deal of work has been invested by both Cabinet Members and Officers to address housing issues. He acknowledged that temporary accommodation was not an acceptable situation. Ideas being explored to resolve the situation include the potential of purchasing properties to house people on a temporary basis. He also noted that completions of social housing within the District is high this year and he was pleased to say the target is likely to be over achieved. However he noted the need to look at target levels as the Council has to rely on developers. Therefore the target should potentially be rolling rather than yearly.

The Cabinet Member for Community confirmed that Officers have worked hard to improve the period that housing association houses are vacant for, to accommodate people in private rentals. He noted that housing also affects wellbeing and wished to acknowledge the good performance of the Council's Wellbeing team. He referenced the figures that lie behind the RAG status, particularly noting that the team delivered 385 interventions against a target of 249, and 88% of those assisted by the Wellbeing team felt a benefit, against a target of 66%, both of which were fantastic results.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services thanked the team for clearing the garden waste waiting list efficiently. She noted that active promotion on social media and the website has also contributed to the take up of new garden waste bins.

The Leader noted that the report compliments the Budget Management Report and presents a positive and encouraging set of performance indicators that the Council can take comfort in without being complacent. He noted the conclusion of the report which indicates a move in the right direction despite challenges. He also noted the need to learn from areas of good performance, as well as areas of concern. There is a real need to be aware that what lies behind the figures in the report are the lives of real people. He then moved Cabinet to the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

## **RESOLVED**

To note the Council's performance in the second Quarter of the year and identify any areas where further reporting or information is required.

## **7. BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2016/17 – PROGRESS REPORT – APRIL TO OCTOBER 2016**

Peter Stuart, Head of Corporate Resources, introduced the report. He stated that there were four key items to draw to Cabinet's attention.

1. In paragraph 2 of the report there is a projected £46,000 underspend by the year end, which is a result of more income generated.
2. The reasons for the growing underspend are set out on page 61 and in particular is due to a reversal on the shortfall previously reported on season ticket loans, due to the successful marketing of the car park in Boltro Road.

3. On page 62, paragraph 23, to acknowledge the importance of funding the District Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy examinations the Members are requested to approve a £200,000 'top-up' to the Local Development Framework Specific Reserve, to be funded initially from the General Reserve.
4. Page 66 indicates that £20,000 has been allocated to carry out a feasibility study providing options and budget costs for the proposed modernisation of the Council Chamber. Once recommendations have been made from the study, money will be allocated in next year's capital programme to facilitate the works.

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery congratulated Claire Onslow, Business Unit Leader for Parking Services for the fabulous work carried out to encourage people to use the Boltro Road car park. The ability for local businesses to expand their parking provided opportunities for their businesses to grow.

The Deputy Leader noted that the report was very comprehensive and was pleased to see the progress of the budget for the year, in particular with reference to the car park performance, which was a sign of the local economy performing well. He was also pleased at the further provision for the District Plan Examination but noted that whilst it is important to defend the District's position, it is also at significant cost to the tax payer, which must be borne in mind. With regard to the Treasury Management figures he urged that the Council use the money held in investments to the best possible benefit of the community, and with that in mind it was good to note that the Local Authority Property Fund was performing well.

He was pleased to note the proposals regarding the refresh of the Council Chamber, highlighting the benefits to output which can result from a modern working environment.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services reiterated her earlier comments relating to the power of social media, Facebook and Twitter in the marketing of the Boltro Road car park.

The Cabinet Member for Community welcomed the support to the District Plan provision and noted that the District's reasonable parking charges and positive approach to local business contributed to the District's thriving economy.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning was pleased that the report recognised an increasing income, as it indicated that the Council is performing well, which supports other work that the Council carries out. He noted the transparency of indicating when underspend is moved into the Local Development Framework Specific Reserve.

The Leader concluded that the report was very welcome, providing updates both for fellow Members and a wider audience and reflecting the Council's good record of transparency. He agreed with the proposal to invest in the Local Development Framework Specific Reserve as it was important to deliver the District Plan. He echoed other Members comments that increased income was welcome as it can be invested and spent on other benefits. He noted the good use of Section 106 money as indicated on page 64 of the report, acknowledging that the Council has a great record of maintaining and improving services with value for money, to the benefit of the community.

The Leader then moved Cabinet to the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet agrees to recommend to the Council for approval:

- (i) that £8,103 be transferred to a General Reserve as detailed in paragraph 22;
- (ii) that £200,000 be transferred to the Local Development Framework Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 23;

To note:

- (iii) The remainder of the report.

8. 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 agreed unanimously.

**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.

The Leader brought the meeting back into open session on the completion of exempt business noting that the recommendation of item 9 was approved and that item 10 was withdrawn. He closed the meeting at 4.39 p.m.

Chairman.