

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Mid Sussex District Council Cabinet  
held on 15 January 2018  
from 4.00 p.m. to 4.37 p.m.**

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

**Also present:** Councillors: Holden and Clarke.

**Officers:** Kathryn Hall, Tom Clark, Peter Stuart, Simon Hughes, Lois Partridge, Natasha Allen, Elaine Clarke, Terry Stanley and Hamish Evans.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**2. APOLOGIES**

None.

**3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

**4. URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**5. PARTNERSHIPS AGREEMENTS.**

Elaine Clarke the Community Leisure Officer, introduced the report to the Committee which provided an update on the Partnership Agreements with the Voluntary Sector and to seek approval to extend the existing funding arrangements with Citizens Advice and Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action for another year. It also outlined a proposal for the future funding arrangement for Citizens Advice with effect from April 2019 and sought a financial commitment to participate in a joint procurement exercise.

The Chairman noted that the report highlighted the Councils long term commitment to the voluntary sector.

The Cabinet Member for Community thanked the Officers for their hard work in putting together strong and robust contracts with the 5 organisations in the voluntary sector. He commented that the Citizens Advice Bureau was offering more help to less fortunate young people and was increasing its number of young volunteers. He also praised Action in Rural Sussex for their good work in supporting rural communities within the District. The Member queried whether there were processes in place to allow Officers to review whether the organisations were fulfilling their contracts. He also questioned whether there was a complaints and concerns procedure in place which was run by Age UK as recently members of the public had taken to social media to complain instead of contacting the organisation directly.

Elaine Clarke informed the Members that Age UK specifically had to provide a 60 hour programme to help a wide range of people in the community. This help would include lunch clubs, transport and information centres. She also stated that there was a 6 monthly review meeting between MSDC, WSCC and Age UK. Age UK produce their performance reports to Officers in these meetings. She also clarified that in the funding agreement with Age UK, they were required to have a written complaints procedure and that any complaints would have to be declared to Officers of MSDC.

In response to a question from the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery Elaine Clarke confirmed that Officers visited the sites run by Age UK outside the 6 monthly meetings. She also informed the Cabinet that the Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (HAMSVA) would be changing their name and that their funding would be spent within Mid Sussex.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth thanked Officers for the thorough report and was happy to see the report highlighted how much funding MSDC gives to voluntary organisations. He also commented that it was imperative for the organisations to deliver modern and up to date information and guidance to those who use the services. He queried whether there were any requirements in place for Age UK to increase their membership.

Elaine Clarke informed the Cabinet that the service principles in the contract with Age UK specify a minimum amount of members and if the number were to go below the level, the organisation would be reviewed by MSDC.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services commented on the good service that the Citizens Advice in Burgess Hill had provided to members of the community.

The Leader observed that although the financial constraints of recent times had not gone away, MSDC were still supporting the voluntary sector to deliver the best services possible. He also noted that for MSDC to give continued support it must continue to have sound budget and financial policy.

The Chairman noted that no more Members wished to speak so took them to the recommendation contained in the report, which was agreed unanimously.

## **RESOLVED**

Cabinet agreed to:

- (i) Enter into a one-year Voluntary and Community Sector Funding Agreement with West Sussex County Council to secure additional funds to grant aid to Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action;
- (ii) Sign up to a 'bridging contract' with Citizens Advice to fund the Service in 2018-19;
- (iii) Commit to recommissioning the Citizens Advice in 2019-21 (with the option to extend for a further 2 years).

## **6. NEW COMMUNITY BUILDING – FINCHES FIELD, PEASE POTTAGE, WEST SUSSEX – PROPOSED AGREEMENT FOR LEASE AND LEASE**

Peter Stuart, Head of Corporate Services, introduced the report which updated Cabinet on the progress of the provision of the new community hall and sports pavilion at Finches Field, Pease Pottage ("the Community Building"), the need to re-advertise the District Council's intention to grant a lease of the Community Building to Slaugham Parish Council ("the Parish Council") and confirmation of the District

Council's earlier decision to grant a lease of the Community Building, having regard to the outcome of re-advertising the proposed disposal of a larger area of open space to the Parish Council.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning observed that the project did take up a large area and that the recent move of the Community Building had a positive outcome as it allowed an increase in the number of parking spaces available within the site.

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery remarked that he was pleased to see the report and a start to the project as it has the support of the local community.

The Chairman stated that the new facility will serve the local community well and that although there had been complications it would be positive addition to the area.

The Chairman noted that no more Members wished to speak so took them to the recommendation contained in the report, which was agreed unanimously.

## **RESOLVED**

- (a) Cabinet noted the contents of the report and, in particular, noted that the District Council did not receive any objections to the proposed disposal of the land edged in red on the plan marked "Finches Field Community Centre" annexed to this report at Appendix A the new site of the Community Building ("the new site") by 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2018;
- (b) affirm the District Council's earlier decisions to grant a lease of the Community Building to Slaugham Parish Council and authorise the Head of Corporate Resources and the Solicitor and Head of Regulatory Services to enter into an agreement for lease for the construction of the community Building on the new site and following completion of construction of the Community Building on the new site to grant a lease of the Community Building on the terms already agreed by the Cabinet Member for Property on 16 March 2016.

## **7. JOINT STRATEGIC ACCESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING (SAMM) STRATEGY.**

Lois Partridge, Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy introduced the report which sought Cabinet's approval for the District Council to implement the Joint Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy. The report also stated that Natural England recommended that the impacts of proposed development that lay within a 7km zone of influence on the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area were managed through a twin tracked approach; firstly through the provision of Suitable, Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), and secondly through the collection of S106 funds for Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM), which funded strategies to manage visitors on-site at Ashdown Forest. The report referred only to the latter, the SAMM Strategy.

In 2013, MSDC developed an interim SAMM strategy. This interim strategy had 3 main benefits:

- It enabled MSDC to deliver development within 7km of Ashdown Forest since that time, and
- It enabled MSDC to collect contributions from developers for access management projects on the Forest, and,
- Most importantly it removed objections from Natural England to new developments within 7km of the Forest.

Since 2013, significant funds had been collected for SAMM mitigation works, but had not yet been spent.

The Council's interim strategy had been a temporary arrangement, while a joint SAMM strategy was agreed between the six affected authorities. Natural England had been closely involved in the preparation of the joint SAMM Strategy. The report set out the SAMM strategy financial and management arrangements for the joint SAMM Strategy.

A joint legal agreement had been reviewed by Mid Sussex District Legal and Finance Officers and found to be reasonable and appropriate for the District Council to sign off.

The joint SAMM strategy was needed to satisfy Natural England's requirements. It would ensure that Mid Sussex can continue to deliver new development within 7km of the Forest. It provided a permanent solution to the issue of managing and monitoring strategic access to the Ashdown Forest going forward.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning thanked Officers for covering this issue in detail. He noted that Mid Sussex had been at the forefront of this strategy and that the monies collected, which are to be transferred to Wealden District Council, are substantial. He questioned whether it was right that the strategy was effective in perpetuity. The Solicitor to the Council confirmed that in theory there will be continual building of new properties so there will need to be continual mitigation.

Members asked for more information on the Steering Group and Working Group, specifically whether only Officers would be attending the Groups and also whether those attending would be able to learn details of what MSDC money is being spent on and the outcomes of this expenditure.

The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy explained that the Groups would consist of 2 tiers of Officers and that the Senior Officer would report back to Members at regular intervals. She also explained that Wealden District Council would be audited and would have to report to the financial team at MSDC.

The Chief Executive confirmed to Members that if Officers were concerned with the performance of Wealden District Council they would report to the Cabinet and the portfolio holder.

The Chairman noted that no more Members wished to speak so took them to the recommendation contained in the report, which was agreed unanimously.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) Cabinet authorised the Solicitor and Head of Regulatory Services to sign the Joint SAMM Strategy legal agreement on behalf of the District Council.
- (ii) Cabinet agreed to implement the Joint SAMM Strategy which will supersede the District Council's current Interim SAMM Strategy;

Chairman.