

**Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet
held on Monday, 13th November, 2023
from 12.59 pm**

Present: R Eggleston (Chairman)
A Bennett (Vice-Chair)

AM Cooke

I Gibson

C Hobbs

Also Present: Councillors Bates and Eves

1. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.

None.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

No apologies were received as all Members were present.

3. TO BE AGREED BY GENERAL AFFIRMATION THE MINUTES AND EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2023.

The Cabinet agreed the minutes and they were signed by the Chairman.

4. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.

None.

5. BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2023/24 - PROGRESS REPORT APRIL TO JUNE 2023.

Louise Duffield, Director Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report, noting the revenue pressures would be funded through income generated from Treasury Management activity.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Revenues and Benefits welcomed the report and endorsed the recommendations.

In response to a query from the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Economy and Housing, the Director, Resources and Organisational Development advised there had been a change to the method of accounting for capitalisation and, additionally, insurance costs had been higher than expected.

The Leader confirmed funds had been set aside for the temporary urban park at the Martlets Shopping Centre, but the Council were still discussing the future development of the town centre and had delayed the implementation of the temporary park.

As there were no further comments, he took the Members to a vote on the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

Cabinet recommends that Council:

- (i) Note the current forecast outturn;
- (ii) Endorse the variations to the Capital Programme contained in Table 3 in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B3 and the Capital Strategy;
- (iii) Approve the formal creation of the Specific Reserves as identified in Table 2, funded from external grant funding as detailed in paragraphs 19-21.

6. BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2023/24 - PROGRESS REPORT JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2023.

Before the report was presented to Cabinet for debate, Councillor Eves attending the meeting (but not being a member of Cabinet) was asked for her contribution. Cllr Eves queried whether the funding for Bedelands Gypsy and Travellers site and the Burgess Hill Place and Connectivity Programme was still available and when the schemes would be implemented.

Louise Duffield, Director Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report and noted the figures for tranche 2 of the Local Authority Housing Fund have been agreed. She also confirmed the funds for Bedelands Gypsy and Travellers site and the Burgess Hill Place and Connectivity Programme had been reprofiled so the funds, which remain available, are likely to be spent in the next financial year.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Revenues and Benefits thanked the officers for the report. She anticipated that Treasury Management activity would fund the predicted shortfall and endorsed the recommendations.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Economy and Housing noted the pressures from landscapes and building control.

Simon Hughes, Director of People and Commercial Services confirmed that the Council are in competition with external companies, and that large developers often have agreements with other companies for building control services, limiting the potential for further income generation.

The Leader noted the pressures in the budget and that Treasury Management income was supporting the budget shortfall.

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

RESOLVED

Cabinet recommends to Council to:

- (i) Note the current forecast outturn;

- (ii) Endorse the variations to the Capital Programme contained in Table 3 in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B3 and the Capital Strategy;
- (iii) Approve the use of £2,080m for LAHF Tranche 1 and £1,252m for LAHF Tranche 2, as detailed in paragraphs 23 and 24.

The Leader advised that Cabinet had reviewed both exempt annexes and proposed items 7 and 9, then 10 and 12 would be discussed in open session.

7. PROCUREMENT OF CLEANING CONTRACT.

Simon Hughes, Director of People and Commercial Services introduced the report. He noted that the joint procurement with Horsham District Council and Crawley Borough Council should ensure value for money for the cleaning of the council offices, pavilions and public toilets.

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Customer Services highlighted the benefit of a partner contract with other local authorities. He thanked the current cleaning company and noted the procurement of a new contract demonstrated the Council's commitment to keeping the facilities open.

8. TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 100A 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 Cabinet meeting remained in open session.

9. EXEMPT ANNEXE - PROCUREMENT OF CLEANING CONTRACT.

The exempt annexe contained project costings. These costings are commercially sensitive and exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The Leader noted that Cabinet had considered the contents of the exempt annexe.

The Leader took the Members to a vote on the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agreed to:

- (i) Delegate authority to the Director of People and Commercial Services to procure the new cleaning contract to ensure continuity of service from 1 June 2024.
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Director of People and Commercial Services to award the new cleaning contract to the preferred bidder following the evaluation of tenders.

10. REVENUES AND BENEFITS ENFORCEMENT AGENT PROCUREMENT.

Simon Hughes, Director of People and Commercial Services introduced the report, noting that most residents and businesses pay their taxes as billed. He advised that officers work proactively to support households to enable them to pay. If people refuse to pay the case is referred to an enforcement agent.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Revenues and Benefits noted the sensitive nature of any collection arrangement and supported the recommendations.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Economy and Housing highlighted the importance of supporting people in arrears and the homeless; he noted that tranche four for the Housing Support Fund had been released.

The Director of People and Commercial Services noted that the contract will assist the Council to claim any debts, however he advised that the officers focus on working with people to avoid debt. In addition, the Council supports the voluntary sector to also provide help.

11. TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 100A 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 Cabinet meeting remained in open session.

12. EXEMPT ANNEXE - REVENUES AND BENEFITS ENFORCEMENT AGENT PROCUREMENT.

The exempt annexe contained project costings. These costings are commercially sensitive and exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The Leader noted that Cabinet had considered the contents of the exempt annexe.

The Leader took the Members to a vote on the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agreed to:

- (i) Approve the procurement of two enforcement agent contracts for the Revenues and Benefits department, and;
- (ii) Note that the award of the contract is delegated to the Director of People and Commercial Services.

The meeting finished at 1.19 pm

Chairman