

**Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet
held on Monday, 26th July, 2021
from 4.02 pm - 4.31 pm**

Present: J Ash-Edwards (Chair)
J Llewellyn-Burke (Vice-Chair)

J Belsey
R de Mierre

S Hillier
R Salisbury

N Webster

Also Present: Councillor A Eves

1. ROLL CALL AND VIRTUAL MEETING EXPLANATION.

The Leader conducted the roll call to confirm the Members present and welcomed Cllr Salisbury following his appointment as the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning.

Tom Clark, Head of Regulatory Services advised that The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) Regulations 2012 permit remote attendance at Cabinet meetings provided they are live streamed to allow for public access.

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

None.

3. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

No apologies were received as all Members were present.

4. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 7 JUNE 2021.

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record and electronically signed by the Leader after a minor amendment. A comment had been attributed to the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth instead of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery.

5. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE LEADER AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.

None.

6. BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2021/22 - PROGRESS REPORT APRIL TO MAY 2021.

The Leader drew Members' attention to the tabled amendments for Appendix B.

Peter Stuart, Head of Corporate Resources introduced the report which established the Council's position for the start of the financial year. He highlighted that the Council had budgeted for a pay freeze in line with Government's advice. An offer of 1.5% has been made to and rejected by Unison, 1.5% has been allowed in the current financial year and the budget forecast for future years. The income compensation scheme finished at the end of June. Some projected income receipts had not reduced as expected and income receipts would still be unpredictable for a while. The use of the Leisure Reserve reduced the projected overspend but this overspend will change during the year. He noted the amendments to Appendix B for the Rural Connectivity Project.

Simon Hughes, Head of Digital and Customer Services advised that Appendix B has been amended to reflect an inter authority agreement with Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) to provide project management and design expertise. Mid Sussex District Council has experience in delivering similar fibre projects. All costs have been recovered including some additional costs. The Mid Sussex network will connect with that of Brighton and Hove. The Council can leverage investments with investors including the Brighton Digital Exchange and the Digital Catapult, which focuses on supporting and developing business to create further opportunities.

The Deputy Leader noted the overspend. The Council should still be prudent as the future is uncertain, but climate change targets must be met. Burgess Hill Place and Connectivity has funding including Section 106 match funding.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth commended the officers for the digital fibre project which is on budget and on time. He highlighted the loss of season ticket income noting it will be difficult to know if the income will bounce back. He queried the loss on green waste bins, the additional capital revenue costs and requested clarification on the extension of the local Council Tax Support scheme (CTS).

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services confirmed her decision as portfolio holder to continue the CTS scheme to ensure help for residents during challenging times, the total support to be offered is less than last year.

The Head of Corporate Resources advised that income could fall short of the predicted level and noted an inconsistency in the report which would be adjusted to match Appendix B.

Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive confirmed the Council had taken early delivery of more green waste bins and are well placed to recoup the income.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services thanked the Deputy Leader and the officers for a good report and highlighted the Full Fibre Project. She queried the continued loss of the Leisure Management Fee for this and future years requesting updated figures at the earliest opportunity. She welcomed the use of reserves to aid rough sleepers for next Winter.

The Assistant Chief Executive highlighted the difficulty in predicting and budgeting during uncertain times. The Leisure Services contract requires the Council to support the leisure service, noting the Council is working closely to help them manage their costs and increase their income. There is a fine balance in ensuring a safe environment and increasing capacity. The Council has engaged consultants to assist in monitoring the financial returns provided by the leisure service provider.

The Leader welcomed the report and advised the Council would monitor the projected overspend as the Government are no longer underwriting losses. The next report would provide a better financial position for the Council. He took the Members to the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet recommend to Council for approval:

- (i) that £432,728 grant income relating to Homelessness Prevention be transferred to Specific Reserves as detailed in paragraphs 26;
- (ii) that £6,400 grant income relating to the Cold Weather Fund be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 27;
- (iii) that £563,194 grant income relating to the Covid-19 Test and Trace Contain Management Outbreak Fund (COMF) be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 28;
- (iv) that £21,215 grant income relating to Implementing Welfare Reform be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 29;
- (v) that £27,618 grant income for new burdens relating to Verify Earnings & Pensions be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 30;
- (vi) that £5,000 grant income in respect of a payment for Rough Sleepers be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 31;
- (vii) that £2,973 grant income relating to Revenues and Benefits New Burdens be transferred to Specific Reserves as detailed in paragraph 32;
- (viii) that £166,800 grant income in respect of New Burdens Local Authority Discretionary funding be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 33;
- (ix) that £33,632 grant income relating to Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation funding be transferred to Specific Reserves as detailed in paragraphs 34;
- (x) that £25,000 grant income relating to Additional Emergency Accommodation funding be transferred to Specific Reserves as detailed in paragraphs 35;
- (xi) that £107,395 grant income relating to Admin Subsidy be transferred to Specific Reserves as detailed in paragraphs 36;
- (xii) the variations to the Capital Programme contained in paragraph 50 in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B3.

To note:

- (xiii) the remainder of the report.

7. COPTHORNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.

Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive highlighted the Council's good progress in delivering Neighbourhood Plans (NP), this plan would leave one left to complete. Andrew Marsh, Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy confirmed 18 Neighbourhood Plans were already in place. Cabinet is recommended to approve the Copthorne NP for referendum. The Parish Council requested designation of the NP area in 2012 and work started the same year. Though work on the Plan paused in 2017, it resumed in September 2020 and was submitted to the Council for consultation and examination in February 2021. The examiner's report was received in June 2021, he confirmed the NP met the legal requirements and recommended the plan go to referendum after some amendments, which are listed in Appendix 1. The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy confirmed that the officers and the Parish Council have accepted the examiner's proposed recommendations. Subject to Cabinet's approval the provisional date for the referendum is 16 September 2021. If over 50% of residents agree the plan can be made by Council at its meeting on 29 September 2021. It will then form part of the Development Plan for the assessment of planning applications.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning confirmed it was helpful that the Parish Council have accepted the examiner's recommendations in full and was glad to see another NP come through. He highlighted that all NPs would be subject to revisions as Government issue revised requirements. He recommended the report to Cabinet for approval.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth noted his support and asked what the test was for the loss of employment floor space and land when the purpose is no longer viable.

The Business Unit Leader confirmed no set test is in place. The Inspector for the Site Allocation DPD when reviewing policy SA34 which seeks to retain employment space, suggested the Council add wording relating to a viability test. This is still to be agreed but similar local authority wording states that "the land has been marketed for a certain length of time".

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

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- a) Formally accepted the Examiner's recommended modifications to the Copthorne Neighbourhood Plan to enable the Plan to proceed to Referendum;
- b) Agreed to publish the 'Decision Statement' as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

The meeting finished at 4.31 pm

Chairman