

**Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet
held on Monday, 18th July, 2022
from 4.00 pm - 4.47 pm**

Present: J Ash-Edwards (Chair)
J Belsey (Deputy)

R Cromie
R de Mierre

S Hillier
R Salisbury

N Webster

Also Present: Councillors Bates & Dabell

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

None.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

None.

3. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 6 JUNE 2022.

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

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

None.

5. BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2022/23 - PROGRESS REPORT APRIL TO MAY 2023.

Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim Head of Corporate Resources, introduced the report which set out the progress on the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Revenue Projects and Treasury Management for 2022/23. He noted it was the first report for 2022/23, and there is a projected underspend of £81,000 but it is difficult to make accurate predictions for the year end. He highlighted car parking income, and the leisure contract which is consistent with other national contracts for leisure facilities. Other areas of concern are the current inflationary pressures affecting all large organisations and the movement of interest rates.

The Leader welcomed the positive start outlined in the first progress report.

The Cabinet Member for Community noted that the report demonstrates the Council's competent in financial management, expressed concerns on inflation, energy costs, wage demands and increasing construction costs which will impact on future projects.

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parking queried whether the Council had budgeted sufficient additional funds for increases in energy costs and wages increases. She congratulated the officers on good financial management after a couple of challenging years.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the positive start to the year, he confirmed there will be national and global challenges which will impact on the budget as the year progresses. He highlighted the Centre for Outdoor Sports in Burgess Hill which will deliver high quality sports provision, noting the work to continue consulting with local sports clubs in the area to try and fulfil their future aspirations.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth referenced Paragraph 8 of the report expressing optimism that car parking income would continue to increase as footfall figures return to pre-pandemic levels, and that any changes to the use of sustainable transport should be noted.

In response to a Member's questions Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive advised there were no concerns with the garden waste income, the discrepancy was due to profiling. With regard to the Domestic Violence Fund the Government had asked councils to develop a strategy with county councils and other district and boroughs, she confirmed the money is ring fenced to deliver that strategy.

The Leader noted that no Member wished to speak further and moved to vote on the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

Cabinet recommended to Council:

- (i) that £7,293 grant income in respect of a payment for Rough Sleepers be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 27;
- (ii) that £20,761 grant income relating to Implementing Welfare Reform be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 28;
- (iii) that that £23,237 grant income for new burdens relating to Verify Earnings & Pensions be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 29;
- (iv) that £33,660 grant income relating to Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation funding be transferred to Specific Reserves as detailed in paragraphs 30;
- (v) that £50,000 grant income relating to delivery of the Local Land Charges Programme timetable for the transition of LLC1 be transferred to General Reserve as detailed in paragraphs 31;
- (vi) the variations to the Capital Programme contained in paragraph 43 in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B3.

To note:

- (vii) The remainder of the report.

6. CLAIR HALL: INTERIM REPORT OF WORK TO DEVELOP INVESTMENT OPTIONS FOR THE SITE.

Rafal Hejne, Interim Head of Organisational Development introduced the report to update the Cabinet on the work of the officers and external partners. The work has

been delivered at an accelerated pace, he introduced Chris Carey, Development surveyor and Rachel Kuhn, of BOP Consulting. He highlighted that the work was data driven and a Member Steering Group had been set up to guide the work. He confirmed the main reports were included in the appendices, the property report and the cultural landscape report. The latter had been produced by BOP Consulting, a renowned consultancy in the arts and entertainment sector. The reports and site surveys are available on the engagement hub. He thanked Cllr Bennett for her questions about the reports and confirmed he had responded to the Member.

The Leader welcomed Rachel Kuhn and thanked her for her work on the project to date. The Leader confirmed he had shared Cllr Bennett's questions with the Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member for Community acknowledged the work completed to date, noted the three models offered in the report and added that the Council must make the valuable site work hard for the town for more than daylight hours. He noted there was little mention of the Chequer Mead Theatre in East Grinstead in the initial consultation. He requested more details of the subsidy offered on an annual basis to the Depot in Lewes and an overview of the state of the sector post and pre-pandemic. The Interim Head of Organisational Development advised the subsidy received by the Depot from local donors is significant and they are trying to get more information. These facilities are usually heavily subsidised, or donor funded. The Consultant advised pre-pandemic some cultural facilities were flourishing, and they had been working with clients on innovating projects; some projects have since been halted. Cultural facilities are now working hard to capture funding and are now facing new challenges i.e., fatigue, inflation, cost of living. It is not so favourable to secure funding for sites that require activation.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth noted the difficult times but felt that there are still clients looking for investment opportunities. He congratulated the officers and partners for the work to date. The Council he said, is committed to full utilisation of the site and Haywards Heath should have provision for cultural and leisure activities.

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parking expressed a concern that a wider cultural community than Haywards Heath must be considered. Planning housing developments should also be included in the data used to inform the multi-use facility and queried whether the Council is looking for a single or a group of investors. In response the Interim Head of Organisational Development advised the data from the recent census will be used to determine trends and predict the future, the next steps will focus on gathering market feedback to identify opportunities, including potential sources of investment. Obtaining information on the market from complimentary sectors should ensure the future proposal has the potential to succeed.

The Deputy Leader thanked the officers and partners for the comprehensive report, he sought assurance that cultural facilities already serviced within the district could still be provided at the new centre on the Clair Hall site. The Consultant confirmed a multi-cultural arts centre is a space where many art forms take place i.e., dance, drama theatre, gallery, cinema and leisure activities etc. The new facility will be determined by surveys on the state of the market and their viability. She confirmed the drive time mapping did go beyond the Haywards Heath area.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Housing requested clarification on the aims of further investigation into local clusters. The Consultant advised that this would be covered in the next phase of the project and could provide information on

what these clusters are, how these groups work together and what this could mean for this project.

The Cabinet Member for Planning asked what weighting had been given to travel times and to developing a modern attractive building to draw people to the venue; he also confirmed that the Council had no intentions to sell the site. The Consultant confirmed the next phase would look at the success criteria and how the three options would deliver against those criteria; they would use markets experts to inform this work.

The Cabinet Member for Community asked if the options for the site would be informed by discussions with the current users who may have specific needs and if the building was safe to use as a survey identified the existence of asbestos on the site. The Interim Head of Organisational Development confirmed they are monitoring the needs of the current users and that they would be consulted. Chris Carey, Development Surveyor advised the Council is working closely with the NHS to ensure continued compliance with current Health and Safety legislation.

The Leader confirmed a successful project should contribute to economic development of the local economy; this is one of the desirable criteria.

In response to a Member's question on potential funding the Consultant confirmed they will be working with officers to combine data from the recent census along with planned housing for the next 10 years. The Interim Head of Organisational Development confirmed that the Council would explore available grant funding, using the guidance from BOP Consulting. It was confirmed that the work is on schedule and a further report to Cabinet is planned for October. The outcome of the soft market testing will be discussed with the Member Steering Group.

The Leader welcomed the interim report, thanked BOP Consulting and the officers for their work which has been provided at pace. He highlighted that Haywards Heath Town Council have helped shape the work and success criteria, reiterated that the Council is not selling the site, noted the current status of the Beehive Project and that the Council has the right models to explore further. The research for the project will be robust and will identify a project that can be delivered.

The Leader noted that no Member wished to speak further and moved to vote on the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

Cabinet resolved to:

- (i) Note the interim report and the findings contained in the property report and the report of the Lead Advisor;
- (ii) Agree the strategic success criteria and the financial context statements in paragraphs 37-42 as the guidelines for consideration of options in the next phase of work;
- (iii) Approve the next steps in this work set out in paragraphs 43-48.

The meeting finished at 4.47 pm

Chairman