

**Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet
held on 06 February 2023
from 4.02 pm**

Present: J Ash-Edwards (Chair)

R Cromie
R de Mierre

S Hillier
R Salisbury

N Webster

Also Present: Councillors R Bates, R Clarke and J Dabell

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

None.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Cllr J Belsey.

3. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19 DECEMBER 2022.

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 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. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2023/24.

Louise Duffield, Director Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report which asked Cabinet to recommend to Council the draft corporate plan and budget. She confirmed the agreed process for consulting Members had been followed including at a recent Scrutiny meeting. The scrutiny committee had provided good feedback on a range of issues and had debated the matter of Council tax though they ultimately supported the lower level of 2.75% recommended in these papers. The only change to the papers is that the Local Government funding settlement has been formally announced with detailed amounts for MSDC provided. This resulted in a slight improvement on the projections in this paper resulting in a reduction in the planned draw on treasury management income of £286,000.

Members noted that Council Tax was one of the lowest in the region. They also discussed parking income and also the noted the Council's strong management of their finances during challenging times.

Simon Hughes, Director People and Commercial Services confirmed the car park usage had nearly returned to pre-Covid levels if season ticket holders were excluded. He advised the use had increased each year, and current use was above that forecast. This is in line with other authorities where post covid work patterns and town centre use continue to change the use of car parks. The Council will continue to use its data to respond to these changes.

The Director for Resources and Organisational Development confirmed that treasury management income had historically been put into the General Reserve, however in challenging times there would be a need to draw on this income to support the balancing of the budget. As the external financial climate also results in higher returns on our investments, she was confident that the income received will enable a balanced budget. The Audit Committee will receive an update on Treasury Management shortly, and the Council will be recommended to continue to invest prudently paying dividends in the future, noting that trends for the future of interest rates indicate they are likely to level off or fall in the coming year.

A Cabinet Member noted the comprehensive discussion at the scrutiny committee and that no changes had been made to the draft budget. They welcomed the current position of the Council's strong, prudent financial management and they thanked the Chief Executive and officers for their hard work.

The Leader thanked the scrutiny committee for considering the draft corporate plan and budget. He highlighted that the plan included important projects for local communities, and is a good, sensible approach to a difficult financial environment. With Mid Sussex residents struggling financially a reduced increase in Council Tax which is under the Government cap is helpful.

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 the proposals for 2023/24 as set out in the report to the Scrutiny Committee and as amended by this report, specifically:

- i. The financial outlook facing the Council over the medium term updated for the provisional settlement set out in table 1;
- ii. The proposed increase in Council Tax of 2.75%;
- iii. The strategy to use Treasury Management income and then, if needed, General Reserve to balance the budget over the medium term;
- iv. Updates to the Capital Programme and strategy; and
- v. The service commentaries and supporting summary budget tables for each service area; and,
- vii. To note the ongoing membership of the West Sussex Business Rates Pool.

6. BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2022/23 - PROGRESS REPORT APRIL TO DECEMBER 2022.

Louise Duffield, Director Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report which updated on the Council's budget position. She noted the predicted overspend was now a balanced budget due to the diligent work by officers and a strong performance in treasury management income. She also noted two capital programmes reporting a small underspend. The balance of any treasury management income would top up the general reserves.

A Cabinet Member welcomed the underspending on the capital programme, highlighting the sewage pumping scheme in East Grinstead and the inclusion of Swan Mead in the Temporary Accommodation programme.

The Leader welcomed the forecast of a balance budget, which would be a significant achievement considering the position at the start of the financial year.

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

RESOLVED

Cabinet recommended to Council:

- i. Agree the release of earmarked reserves of £471k to the General Reserve;
- ii. Agree to top up the Burgess Hill Growth Reserve by £200k from the General Reserve;
- iii. Agree to combine the following reserves: the Management Restructure Reserve, the JE (Job Evaluation) Reserve and the Efficiency Reserve;
- iv. To rename this reserve the Organisational Development and Efficiency Reserve.

7. APPROVAL OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE HORSTED KEYNES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION REPORT.

Judy Holmes, Deputy Chief Executive introduced the report which detailed the Examiner's recommendations received on 12 January 2023; she confirmed Horsted Keynes Parish Council had accepted the recommendations. If Cabinet accepted the Examiner's recommendations were accepted by the Cabinet, the referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan would be held on 4 May 2023. If the Plan is 'Made' this would represent a significant milestone as every Parish in the District would then have a 'Made' neighbourhood plan.

The Cabinet Member for Planning noted the time it had taken for all parishes to get neighbourhood plans in place, highlighting their importance as they help to ensure residents' wishes for future development in their local area are considered. He thanked the officers for supporting the work.

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

RESOLVED

Cabinet is recommended to:

- i. Formally accept the Examiner's recommended modifications to the Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan to enable the Plan to proceed to Referendum.

- ii. Agree to publish the 'Decision Statement' as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

The meeting finished at 4.18 pm

Chairman