

**Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet
held on Monday, 16th March, 2020
from 4.04 pm - 4.29 pm**

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

J Belsey
S Hillier

A MacNaughton
N Webster

Absent: Councillors R de Mierre

Also Present: Councillors A Bennett, P Brown, P Chapman, R Clarke and I Gibson

Also Present: Kathryn Hall (Chief Executive), Judy Holmes (Assistant Chief Executive), Tom Clark (Head of Regulatory Services), Simon Hughes (Head of Digital and Customer Services), Peter Stuart (Head of Corporate Resources), Emma Sheridan (Business Unit Leader for Community Services, Policy and Performance), Terry Stanley (Business Unit Leader for Democratic Services) and Alison Hammond (Democratic Services Officers)

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

Councillor Hillier declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5 and 6 as he is a Member of West Sussex County Council.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

The Leader noted that apologies had been received from Councillor Ruth de Mierre.

3. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2020.

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2020 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. STRATEGIC RISKS 2020-21.

Emma Sheridan, Business Unit Leader for Policy and Performance introduced the report. It was noted that emerging risks regarding the coronavirus would be developed and the Risk Register updated.

With regards to the Coronavirus, the Leader confirmed that the Council must follow advice issued by central government.

The Cabinet Member for Community noted the emergency and contingency plans of the Sussex Resilience Forum. He advised that any action by the forum would follow advice from Public Health England. He suggested that people should only accept help from known neighbours and organisations within the charity sector.

The Deputy Leader noted that the WSCC strategic risks were incorporated in several developments in the Burgess Hill growth area, funding was in place and had been agreed. The programme planning was in progress, and further funds would be applied for when required. She highlighted the good relationship with the Chief Executive and Leader of WSCC and that a strong partnership would be required to achieve the programme.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning noted the potential impact of the coronavirus on contractors completing projects on time.

The Leader took the Members to the recommendations contained in the report, which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

Cabinet agreed:

- (i) The MSDC Strategic Risk Management Policy, as set out in Appendix A; and
- (ii) The strategic risks for 2020-21 and management plans set out at Appendix B and C.

6. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION REVIEW AND THE CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive introduced the report. She confirmed the purchase of 14 properties, with another purchase to be finalised shortly, and the estimated saving of £240,000 per annum on guest house accommodation. An increased demand of 80% for temporary accommodation was noted the majority of whom were single vulnerable adults. Cabinet was advised that the additional funds requested in the report would provide an additional 5 properties for families to meet demand and 10 units to meet the specific needs of single homeless people with mental health or complex health needs.

The Assistant Chief Executive noted that recommendation (i) should read “agree to recommend to Council to provide additional resources of £4.2 m as a specific reserve to acquire temporary accommodation in order to meet the Council’s statutory responsibilities under the Homelessness Legislation.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning welcomed the report and highlighted that more had been achieved with the initial funding than anticipated. He noted that

additional work is required to identify the appropriate facilities for vulnerable adults and this is a new venture for the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Community noted that neighbouring local authorities were not able to invest in temporary accommodation. That keeping households within their community, family and jobs is important.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth praised the officers for their work and welcomed the opportunity to expand the project. He asked for clarification on the deficit for the leasing of public sector properties and whether this included remedial works for damage by tenants. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that housing benefit is capped and this can lead to a deficit between the amount the Council has to pay the owner and what the council can charge any tenants. She confirmed that the deficit also included remedial works.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery agreed with the proposal to buy more properties and asked if the properties for those with mental health issues or complex needs would be co-located where there are support services.

The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that the Council has a well-tested service for providing support to vulnerable households in temporary accommodation and that this would be extended to include tenants in the 10 new units if required.

The Leader confirmed supporting the homeless is an important service and the Council must provide the best support when people are most vulnerable. He was pleased that the Council has the ability to make the necessary investments to keep homeless people in their locality, as guest house accommodation is out of the District.

As no other Members wished to speak the Leader took Cabinet to the recommendations contained in the report, which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

Cabinet recommended to Council approve:

- (i) the additional resources of £4.2 m as a specific reserve to acquire temporary accommodation in order to meet the Council's statutory responsibilities under the Homelessness Legislation.
- (ii) to initially make available £1.4m to purchase 5 properties. The additional funds reserved to be accessed in stages as funds become available.

The meeting finished at 4.29 pm

Chairman