

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 January 2021 at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes

PRESENT Councillors Keith Glazier (Chair)
Councillors Nick Bennett (Vice Chair), Bill Bentley, Claire Dowling,
Carl Maynard, Rupert Simmons, Bob Standley and Sylvia Tidy

Members spoke on the items indicated

Councillor Barnes	- items 5, 6 and 7 (minutes 37, 38 and 39)
Councillor Beaver	- item 5 (minute 37)
Councillor Belsey	- item 6 (item 38)
Councillor Bennett	- items 5 and 7 (minutes 37 and 39)
Councillor Bowdler	- items 5, 6 and 7 (minutes 37, 38 and 39)
Councillor Martin Clarke	- item 7 (minute 39)
Councillor Godfrey Daniel	- items 5 and 7 (minutes 37 and 39)
Councillor Philip Daniel	- item 5 (minute 37)
Councillor Claire Dowling	- items 6 and 7 (minutes 38 and 39)
Councillor Field	- items 5 and 7 (minutes 37 and 39)
Councillor Fox	- item 6 (minute 38)
Councillor Galley	- item 6 (minute 38)
Councillor Rodohan	- item 7 (minute 39)
Councillor Stephen Shing	- items 5 and 6 (minute 37 and 38)
Councillor Shuttleworth	- item 5 (minute 37)
Councillor Standley	- item 6 (minute 38)
Councillor Stogdon	- item 6 (minute 38)
Councillor Tidy	- item 7 (minute 39)
Councillor Tutt	- items 5 and 6 (minutes 37 and 38)
Councillor Ungar	- items 5 and 6 (minutes 37 and 38)
Councillor Whetstone	- items 6 and 7 (minutes 38 and 39)

36 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2020

36.1 The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8 December 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

37 RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES

37.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive together a summary of the consultation meeting held with Trade Unions which was received after publication of the Cabinet agenda.

37.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1. recommend the County Council to:

- i) Approve in principle the draft Council Plan 2021/22 at Appendix 1 and authorise the Chief Executive to finalise the Plan in consultation with the relevant Lead Members;
- ii) Increase Council Tax by 1.99%;
- iii) Increase the Adult Social Care precept by 1.5% in 2021/22;
- iv) Issue precepts to be paid by Borough and District Councils in accordance with the agreed schedule of instalments at Appendix 6 (Draft);
- v) Approve the net Revenue Budget estimate of £416.7m for 2021/22 set out in Appendix 3 (Medium Term Financial Plan) and Appendix 4 (Budget Summary) and

- authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, Leader and Deputy Leader, to make adjustments to the presentation of the Budget Summary to reflect the final settlement and final budget decisions;
- vi) Approve the Capital Strategy and Programme at Appendix 9;
 - vii) Note progress with the Council Plan and Budget 2020/21 since quarter 2 at Appendix 2;
 - viii) Note the Medium Term Financial Plan forecast for 2021/22 to 2023/24, set out in Appendix 3;
 - ix) Note the comments of the Chief Finance Officer on budget risks and robustness, as set out in Appendix 7;
 - x) Note the comments from engagement exercises set out in Appendix 8; and
 - xi) Note the schedule of fees and charges that have increased above inflation at Appendix 10.

2. agree that Chief Officers consult, where appropriate, on the savings proposals set out in Appendix 5.

Reason

37.3 Prudent planning by the Council, and short-term Government support for the COVID-19 response and social care, means the Council can offer some stability for our residents for the coming year. Whilst the additional funding from Government for social care is welcome, there is continued reliance on raising funding for Adult Social Care through local Council Tax which is unrelated to social care need and unsustainable, particularly given the significant ongoing pressures experienced by our residents as a result of the pandemic. It is essential that proposals for longer term reform of social care funding are brought forward as soon as possible. In the meantime, the proposals in this report will ensure the Council is able to protect services for the most vulnerable for the coming year and spread the contribution to this from Council Tax paid by our residents over two years. Support will continue to be available through local Council Tax Support Schemes for those residents eligible. The budget presented is for one year, with considerable unpredictability about what that year will hold.

37.4 The situation beyond 2021/22 remains highly uncertain and we face a significant gap between the funding we currently expect to have and the cost of providing our services. The short term support provided by Government does not make up for the amount of funding lost over the last 10 years and neither will it be sufficient to prevent the need to consider further savings in future to fund pressures from the rising demand for and cost of social care. Any further savings, beyond those already factored into our planning, would take the Council below its Core Offer.

37.5 Our lobbying endeavours therefore remain as important as ever and we will need to continue to work with our local, regional and national partners to press for fair and sustainable funding that enables us to continue to meet the needs of our residents. Core to this is a need for Government to bring forward reforms for sustainable funding and provision of social care at the earliest possible opportunity, as until this is delivered our medium term financial position will remain very challenging. We will also continue to press for a real terms increase in grant funding for the sector and for delivery of the Fair Funding Review to allocate funding in line with evidenced need.

37.6 Given the scale of the current recession and future economic uncertainty, we will also prioritise work with our partners, including in the South East 7 and County Councils Network, and local Borough and District Councils to ensure that plans for economic recovery factor in the specific skills, employment and infrastructure needs of East Sussex. Lobbying to ensure that our residents and businesses have what they need to be successful in the future will be fundamental to achieving a strong recovery from the economic disruption brought by the pandemic and reducing the need for county council support and services in future.

38 HIGHWAYS SERVICES RE-PROCUREMENT PROJECT

38.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport together with comments from the Highways Contract Re-procurement Reference Group of the Place Scrutiny Committee which were received after publication of the Cabinet agenda.

38.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the Outline Business Case contained in appendix 1 of the report; and
- (2) approve the development two options (Option 1, Separate Contractor Contract & Separate Designer Contract and Option 2, Integrated Contractor & Designer Contract) to determine the new service delivery model for future highway services in the Detailed Business Case, which will be reported to Cabinet for approval later in the year.

Reason

38.3 To approve the Outline Business Case and agree the proposal to develop two options in the Detailed Business Case to determine the new highways service delivery model. The Detailed Business Case will be presented to Cabinet for approval later in the year prior to procurement of the new contract

39 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF BECOMING A CARBON NEUTRAL COUNCIL

39.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Place Scrutiny Committee and a joint report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport and Chief Operating Officer with observations on the Scrutiny Committee's report.

39.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) note and welcome the report of the Scrutiny Committee;
- 2) recommend the County Council to welcome the report of the Scrutiny Committee and to agree the response of the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport and Chief Operating Officer to the recommendations and their implementation as set out in the action plan attached as Appendix 1 to the Director's report; and
- 3) agree to moving the annual report to full Council on progress in delivering the climate emergency plan from May to October each year.

Reason

39.3 The Scrutiny review has been welcomed as it provides an opportunity to review the climate emergency plan.

40 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021/22

40.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer.

40.2 It was RESOLVED to recommend the County Council to:

- 1) approve the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Statement for 2021/22;
- 2) approve the Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22;
- 3) approve the Prudential and Treasury Indicators 2021/22 to 2023/24;
- 4) approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement 2021/22 at Appendix A (Section 3).

Reason

40.3 This policy sets out the acceptable limits on ratings, investment periods, amounts to be invested and the borrowing strategy. The financial position is kept under constant review and if at any time it is felt that any of these limits represent an unacceptable risk appropriate and immediate action will be taken accordingly.

ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL

41.1 It was agreed that items 5, 7 and 8 should be reported to the County Council.

[Note: The items being reported to the County Council refer to minute numbers 37, 39 and 40]