

LEAD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change, Councillor Nick Bennett, on 13 December 2022 Via MS Teams

Councillor Johnny Denis spoke on item 6 (see minute 61)

55. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 8 NOVEMBER 2022

55.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2022.

56. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

56.1 There were none.

57. URGENT ITEMS

57.1 There were none.

58. REPORTS

58.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

59. PARTNERSHIPS FOR PEOPLE AND PLACE PROJECT: AWARD OF GRANT

59.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive.

DECISIONS

59.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree the Stage 3 delivery plan for the Partnerships for People and Place Project as set out in the report;
- 2) Approve the Council procuring a contract for delivery of stage three of the Partnerships for People and Place project (as detailed in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.6 of the report);
- 3) Agree to use funding from the Partnership for People and Place Project to award one or more grants to organisations that are already supporting vulnerable people through the winter months as set out in paragraph 2.8 of the report;
- 4) Delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive to:
 - a) approve the award of the contract following the procurement process;
 - b) agree the terms of any grant agreements to be entered into as well as approving, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, the value of the grant to be awarded and to who it is awarded; and
 - c) take all other actions necessary to give effect to the recommendations in the report.

REASONS

59.3 The Local Place Board and Local Place Working Group have approved the suggested delivery plan for stage three of the Partnerships for People and Place project.

59.4 The stage 3 Delivery Plan and procurement of a contract to deliver the workstreams identified in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.6 of the report will ensure that the measures can be delivered within the timescales for the Partnerships for People and Place project.

59.5 Entering into a series of grant agreements with local partners as set out in paragraph 2.7 of the report will enable the project to address the concerns raised by local partners at the co-design workshops about the immediate needs of residents in the area, and with a view to providing continued support to residents beyond the end of the project.

59.6 The delegations to the Assistant Chief Executive will ensure effective administration of the grants.

60. FORMER ETCHINGHAM CE PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE

60.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer.

DECISIONS

60.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to:

- 1) declare property known as Former Etchingham CE Primary School site (the Property) surplus to requirements;

2) approve the disposal of the Property and any ancillary documentation required to give effect to the disposal as summarised below; and

3) delegate to the Chief Operating Officer to approve sale by Auction to secure best value in accordance with s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and to agree the terms of the disposal and any ancillary documentation.

REASONS

60.3 The property is no longer required for East Sussex County Council (ESCC) operational purposes.

60.4 Disposal of the property will reduce cost and liability and to achieve a capital receipt. The capital receipt will be used as required in line with any directive from the Department for Education (DfE).

61. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME: CONSULTATION RESPONSE

61.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer together with exempt information contained in a later agenda item.

DECISIONS

61.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to: approve the response to Wealden District Council on proposed changes to their Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (LCTRS) for 2023/24 as set out below:

East Sussex County Council recognises the impact that the pandemic had, and cost of living crisis is having, on local communities, particularly, those who are vulnerable, both financially and for other reasons.

As you will be aware, in common with all local authorities, the County Council continues to face significant financial challenges in responding to day-to-day service demands and the ongoing impact of the pandemic. As we wait for the government to provide details of funding through the local government finance settlement for 2023/24, the authority's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) presents a deficit position by 2025/26 of £29.7m. Any loss of income from Council Tax arising from these proposed changes would only serve to increase the deficit and consequently adversely impact the level of services provided to residents.

Council Tax is the County Council's most important funding stream (73% of net budget in 2022/23) and we rely on certainty of this income to enable the County Council to effectively plan services for the future. The Council will need to take account of any further reduction in the tax base on its income when considering options for achieving a balanced budget for 2023/24 and beyond. Any reductions in income from Wealden District residents will be felt across the whole of East Sussex and potentially impact on the services on which the most vulnerable in the whole rely.

Thereby, East Sussex County Council can only support Wealden District Council's proposals to change its LCTRS if opportunities are sought to mitigate the loss of Council Tax income, for

example, in the review of the treatment of empty properties. In addition, the County Council would request that every effort is made to implement and maximise income from the Council Tax flexibilities arising from the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

It is also requested that Wealden District Council provide East Sussex County Council, as the major precepting authority, with regular monitoring data that provides evidence of the actual impact of such changes.

REASONS

61.3 Wealden District Council are consulting on proposals to change their LCTRS which will see a reduction on Council Tax income received by the County Council. Whilst the proposals address particular concerns within the authority, the impact of the reduction in income will be felt for County Council services that support the needs of residents across the whole of East Sussex.

61.4 The response to the consultation reflects potential negative impact of the changes and recommends only supporting the proposed amendments to the LCTRS if opportunities are sought to mitigate the loss of Council Tax income, including the flexibilities arising from the Levelling UP and Regeneration Bill.

62. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

62.1 It was RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the remaining agenda items on the grounds that if the public and press were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as specified in paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

63. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME: CONSULTATION RESPONSE - EXEMPT INFORMATION

63.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer which provided exempt information in support of an earlier item on the agenda.

DECISIONS

63.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to note the information contained in the report in support of an earlier agenda item.

REASON

63.3 The report contained exempt information in relation to an earlier item on the agenda.