

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 28 September 2023.

PRESENT Councillors Keith Glazier (Chair), Nick Bennett (Vice Chair), Bob Bowdler, Claire Dowling, Carl Maynard and Bob Standley

Members spoke on the items indicated

Councillor Bennett	- Items 5,6 and 8 (minutes 17,18 and 20)
Councillor Collier	- Items 5 and 6 (minutes 17 and 18)
Councillor Claire Dowling	- Item 8 (minute 20)
Councillor Field	- Item 6 and 8 (minutes 18 and 20)
Councillor Hilton	- Item 6, 7 and 8 (minutes 18, 19 and 20)
Councillor Howell	- Item 7 (minute 19)
Councillor Maples	- Item 8 (minute 20)
Councillor Maynard	- Item 6 and 7 (minute 18 and 19)
Councillor Stephen Shing	- Item 6 and 8 (minute 18 and 20)
Councillor Shuttleworth	- Item 5 (minute 17)
Councillor Standley	- Item 5 (minute 17)
Councillor Swansborough	- Item 5 (minute 17)
Councillor Tutt	- Item 5 and 6 (minutes 17 and 18)
Councillor Webb	- Items 5, 6 and 7 (minutes 17, 18 and 19)

15. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JULY 2023

15.1 The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

16. REPORTS

16.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

17. COUNCIL MONITORING QUARTER 1

17.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive.

17.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the latest monitoring position for the Council;
- 2) note the addition of the new Prudential Indicators information at Appendix 2 of the report
- 3) undertake a broader engagement exercise in autumn 2023 to inform RPPR planning for 2024/25 and beyond.

Reason

17.3 The report sets out the Council's position and year-end projections for the Council Plan targets, Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, and Savings Plan, together with Risks at the end of June 2023.

18. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

18.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive.

18.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the report of the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge (Appendix 1 of the report) and agreed its publication; and
- 2) publish the Council's response to the recommendations within it, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

Reason

18.3 As a key part of its sector-led support programme, the Local Government Association (LGA) offers a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) to all councils, approximately every five years. LGA CPCs are intended to be a robust and effective continuous improvement tool managed and delivered by the sector, for the sector, with local government officers and members – as 'peers' - at the heart of the process. They help councils with their development by providing a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge.

18.4 Following discussions with the LGA, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) commissioned a CPC to take place in June 2023, including a site visit from 20-23 June. The review offered a timely opportunity to check in on progress over the recent challenging years, including the impact of the pandemic, and to provide an external perspective on how ESCC has been approaching future challenges and whether we are capturing all we can from national best practice.

18.5 It is an expectation of the CPC process that the report produced by the CPC team is published by the relevant council alongside a response to the recommendations in the form of an action plan. The LGA will also publish the CPC report on its website. The publication of the report and the response is an opportunity to celebrate and publicise the positive feedback received and to set out our plans for the coming months to strengthen our approach further in tackling the challenges ahead.

19. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EQUALITY AND INCLUSION IN ASCH - REPORT OF THE PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive and a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health with observations on the Scrutiny Committee's report.

19.2 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 Adult Social Care and Health to the recommendations and their implementation as set out in the action plan as found at Appendix 1 of the Director's report.

Reason

19.3 The Scrutiny review has been welcomed as it provided an opportunity to review Equality and Inclusion in Adult Social Care and Health.

20. REPORT ON THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S PROGRESS IN BECOMING A CARBON NEUTRAL COUNCIL

20.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport and the Chief Operating Officer.

20.2 It was RESOLVED to note the progress report.

Reason

20.3 The Council has recognised the severity of the climate crisis by declaring a climate emergency, by setting a clear science-based target and by committing an additional £9.9m of funding up to March 2025 to cutting corporate carbon emissions. The scale of the Council's functions and the diversity of providers the Council works with makes this a complex and substantial task. Significant work has already been undertaken to reduce emissions and will continue to be undertaken. This report sets out the further progress made during 2022-23.

21. EAST SUSSEX, BRIGHTON & HOVE AND THE SOUTH DOWNS NPA WASTE AND MINERALS PLAN REVIEW

21.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

21.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) agree, subject to the approval of Brighton & Hove City Council and the South Downs National Park Authority, that the Proposed Modifications to the Submission draft of the Waste and Minerals Revised Policies document, and its supporting documents, is published for a representation period of eight weeks.
- 2) agree that a revised draft of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is published for consultation.

Reason

21.3 With the Waste and Minerals Revised Policies document now at the Examination stage, it is clear that the Authorities are at a significantly advanced stage in the preparation of this Plan. To enable the Examination to be concluded, and a positive outcome to be reached by the Planning Inspectors, some modifications need to be made to the version of the Plan that was originally submitted for Examination. The Authorities need to give interested parties the opportunity to comment upon these proposed modifications and, should such comments be forthcoming, it will be for the Inspectors to consider these as part of their considerations of the Plan.

21.4 Approval to publish and consult on the proposed modifications will therefore allow the Authorities to progress the Waste and Minerals Revised Policies towards adoption, thereby ensuring an up-to-date Plan exists in which to consider relevant planning applications against.

21.5 Approval to consult on a revised draft of the Statement of Community Involvement will ensure that the County Council is compliant with the relevant legislation concerning this matter.

22. THE CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST - 2022/23 OUTTURN

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

22.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) note the 2022/23 Outturn for the Conservators' Core and Countryside Stewardship budgets; and

2) approve the contribution of £23,013 to offset the deficit on the Conservators' Core Budget for 2022/23.

Reason

22.3 While the Council has a statutory obligation to meet the shortfall between expenditure and income of the Conservators' Core Budget, it also has the responsibility for approving the level of expenditure. It is recognised that the 2022/23 deficit in the Core Budget has arisen primarily from the delay in implementing the car park charging scheme, the provision for a potential H&S Executive claim and the write off of historical bad debt which was not wholly foreseeable when the budget was agreed.

22.4 A financial contribution to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest of £23,013, being the adjusted Core Budget operational deficit of £82,861 less the adjustments for non-cash accounting items and the provision for the HSE penalty totalling £59,848 will offset the deficit on the Conservators' Core Budget for 2022/23

23. TO AGREE WHICH ITEMS ARE TO BE REPORTED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL

23.1 It was agreed that items 5, 7, 8, and 9 should be reported to the County Council.
[Note: The items being reported to the County Council refer to minute number 17, 19, 20 and 21.]