

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 24 January 2023.

PRESENT Councillors Keith Glazier (Chair)

Councillors Nick Bennett (Vice Chair), Bob Bowdler, Claire Dowling, Carl Maynard, Rupert Simmons and Bob Standley

Members spoke on the items indicated:

Councillor Bennett	- item 5, 7 (minute 36 and 38)
Councillor Daniel	- item 5, 7 (minute 36 and 38)
Councillor di Cara	- item 8 (minute 39)
Councillor Field	- item 8 (minute 39)
Councillor Howell	- item 8 (minute 39)
Councillor Maynard	- item 8 (minute 39)
Councillor Stephen Shing	- item 7 (minute 38)
Councillor Standley	- item 5 (minute 36)
Councillor Swansborough	- item 7 (minute 38)
Councillor Tutt	- item 5, 7 (minute 36 and 38)

34. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2022

34.1 The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 13 December 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

35. REPORTS

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

36. RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES: DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN 23/24, REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

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

36.2 It was RESOLVED to recommend the County Council to:

- 1) Approve in principle the draft Council Plan 2023/24 at Appendix 1 and authorise the Chief Executive to finalise the Plan in consultation with the relevant Lead Members;
- 2) Increase Council Tax by 2.99% in 2023/24;
- 3) Increase the Adult Social Care Precept by 2% in 2023/24;
- 4) Issue precepts to be paid by Borough and District Councils in accordance with the agreed schedule of instalments at Appendix 5 (Draft);
- 5) Approve the net Revenue Budget estimate of £501.4m for 2023/24 set out in Appendix 2 (Medium Term Financial Plan) and Appendix 3 (Draft) (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;
- 6) Agree the Reserves Policy set out in Appendix 6;
- 7) Approve the Capital Strategy and Programme at Appendix 8;

- 8) Note progress with the Council Plan and Budget 2022/23 since quarter 2 set out in section 4;
- 9) Note the Medium Term Financial Plan forecast for 2023/24 to 2025/26, set out in Appendix 2;
- 10) Note the comments of the Chief Finance Officer on budget risks and robustness, as set out in Appendix 6;
- 11) Note the comments from engagement exercises set out in Appendix 7; and
- 12) Note the schedule of fees and charges that have increased above 4% at Appendix 9.

Reason

36.3 Based on a firm foundation of sound financial management over many years, and with additional Government funding for the coming year, the Council can again offer service stability for our residents. Whilst the additional national funding is welcome, it is short term, with uncertainty about the level and distribution of funding in future years. Coupled with major reforms to key services, the implications of which remain unclear, this creates significant risk and uncertainty for the future and we must continue to do all we can now to prepare for the demands ahead.

36.4 There is continued reliance on raising funding for core pressures, particularly growing demand in adult social care, through local Council Tax which is unrelated to social care need and unsustainable. In this context we must again ask local people to contribute more to protect services for the most vulnerable for the future. This recommendation is not made lightly, given the current pressures on household budgets, but it is essential if we are to protect services for the years to come. Support will continue to be available through local Council Tax Support Schemes for those residents eligible and we will continue to work with partners to signpost residents to sources of support with the cost of living, including access to benefits they may be entitled to.

36.5 The budget presented is for one year, with significant uncertainty remaining about the outlook beyond this. Looking further ahead, we still face a significant gap between the funding we currently expect to have and the cost of providing our services as well as the undefined impacts of reforms. The proposals set out in the report put us in the best position we can to manage this situation and maintain our support to residents, particularly the most vulnerable children and adults, as well as making provision for investment to help manage future demand in Children's Services and achieve the best possible outcomes for families.

36.6 In this context, we will need to continue to work with our local, regional and national partners to highlight the specific needs of East Sussex and to press for fair and sustainable allocation of funding that enables us to continue to meet the needs of our residents. Core to this is a requirement for Government to ensure sustainable, needs-based funding for growth in demand. Until this is delivered our medium term financial position will remain very challenging. 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 current economic challenges and reducing the need for County Council support and services in future.

37. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023/24

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

37.2 It was RESOLVED to recommend the County Council to:

- 1) approve the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Statement for 2023/24;
- 2) approve the Annual Investment Strategy for 2023/24;
- 3) approve the Prudential and Treasury Indicators 2023/24 to 2025/26;

- 4) approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement 2023/24 at Appendix A (Section 3).

Reason

37.3 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.

38. CORPORATE CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN

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

38.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) agree the final draft of the corporate Climate Emergency Plan as set out in appendix 1; and
- 2) agree the draft summary version of the Climate Emergency Plan as set out in appendix 2.

Reason

38.3 In October 2019 the County Council set a target of achieving carbon neutrality from its activities as soon as possible and in any event by 2050. In June 2020 Cabinet approved a corporate climate emergency action plan for 2020-22. In 2021-22 Cabinet agreed an additional £9.9m to address corporate climate change up to March 2025. The report covers an updated corporate Climate Emergency Plan covering 2023-25. The final draft of the Climate Emergency Plan is set out in Appendix 1 of the report and a summary version is set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

39. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF USE OF DIGITAL AND TECHNOLOGY IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH - REPORT OF THE PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

39.1 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.

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 Adult Social Care to the recommendations and their implementation as set out in the action plan attached as Appendix 1 to the Director's report.

Reason

39.3 The Scrutiny review has been welcomed as it provided an opportunity to review the use of digital and technology in Adult Social Care and Health.

40. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR LEWES PUBLIC LIBRARY AND MUSEUM CHARITABLE TRUST

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

40.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the final note the final accounts for 2021/22 for the Lewes Public Library and Museum Charitable Trust; and
- 2) note that there are no issues that require any further action by the County Council as the Corporate Trustee.

Reason

40.3 The report fulfils the requirement for the annual accounts for the Lewes Public Library and Museum Charitable Trust to be submitted to the Cabinet.

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

41.1 It was agreed that items 5, 6, 7 and 8 be reported to the County Council.

[Note: The items being reported to the County Council refer to minute numbers 36,37, 38 and 39]