

<p style="text-align: center;">Meeting of the</p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">CABINET</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">held on Thursday 13 February 2003</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PRESENT:-</p> <p>Councillor <b>Mrs HEALY</b> (Chairman and Leader of the Council), Councillor <b>TUTT</b> (Deputy Chairman and Deputy Leader of the Council), Councillors <b>HARRIS, LEGGETT</b> and <b>THOMPSON</b>.</p>	
<p><b>101.</b></p>	<p><b>MINUTES.</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2003 were submitted and approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.</p>
<p><b>102.</b></p>	<p><b>PUBLIC QUESTION</b> A question was asked by Mr D W Prince of 34 Beverington Close, Eastbourne on the subject of the costs and fees incurred by the Council in dealing with his objections to and questions on the Council's accounts over a number of years. The Chairman answered and undertook to put her answer in writing. A "supplementary" written question put by Mr Prince at the meeting was not allowed in view of its length and detail and that it did not arise directly out of the original question and reply. The Chairman did, however, agree to respond in writing.</p>
<p><b>103.</b></p>	<p><b>CALENDAR OF MEETINGS.</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the meeting of the Cabinet originally scheduled for 17 April be now held on 10 April 2003.</p>
<p><b>*104.</b></p>	<p><b>COUNCIL BUDGET 2003/04.</b> The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services on behalf of the Corporate Management Team setting out detailed budget proposals for the coming financial year. A supplementary paper with confidential addendum (under exempt information reason 1 – information relating to employees) had also been circulated giving additional detail on the proposed closure of the Devonshire Park Fitness Centre and reduced staffing in the Community Finance Fraud Investigation Team.</p> <p>The Cabinet had received reports on the 2003/04 financial position and development of budget proposals in September and December 2002 and again in January 2003. These reports explained the new approach to service and financial planning which had been adopted. The report to the Cabinet on 9 January had set out in detail all the growth and savings options identified through that process. The report now before Cabinet set out the final proposals and took into account feedback from consultation details of which were given in the report. This had included comments by the public sent in response to a leaflet giving information on the new refuse collection and recycling contracts and a meeting with representatives of the business and voluntary sectors.</p> <p>The report identified unavoidable cost increases totalling £3.217 million for 2003/04. These related to pay, contract and price inflation, insurance, treasury management, contract pressures (including the new cleansing contracts). The figure also included £846,000 which had been identified</p>

the practice in recent years. A contingency budget of £126,000 was proposed following appraisal of risks as set out in paragraph 2.7 of the report.

**The total of savings identified amounted to £1.373 million leaving a gap to be funded from council tax at £1.686 million. This equated to a Band D council tax payment of £181.32 representing a £50.18 increase on this year's tax or just under £1 a week.**

Details of a number of growth proposals which would not be funded were given. These included, among others, funding for repairs and maintenance, additional staffing in Planning Development and Control, a one-off recycling promotion initiative, progressing decriminalisation of car parking and funding for staff dealing with anti-social behaviour orders and the choice based lettings scheme.

The medium term forecast for 2004/05 to 2007/08 showed increasing funding shortfalls. Action required to improve the position included the accommodation strategy, e-procurement and document image processing which offered opportunities for long term cost savings after initial investment.

**Housing Revenue Account:** The report also gave details of the housing revenue account showing a forecast underspend for the year in the range of £150,000 - £200,000. Details of proposed rent and other charges were given in a separate report (see minute 106 below).

**Capital Programme:** Analysis of the current year's capital programme indicated expenditure of £7.540 million with expenditure of £2.960 million to be carried forward into 2003/04. The programme for next year was based upon the updated five year capital strategy considered by the Cabinet on 1 August 2002. The overall programme was budgeted at £13.395 million and resources to fund this were detailed in the report. A confidential addendum to the report (exempt information reason under 'paragraph 9 – terms of proposed land transactions') had also been circulated to Members giving a breakdown of the capital receipts totalling £5.474 million which it was expected to have available to fund the programme. This included asset disposals previously approved which were expected to be completed in 2003/04 together with a list of further disposals which were to be incorporated within the capital strategy.

**Devonshire Park Fitness Centre:** The Chairman reported that 3 members of public and 2 councillors had given notice of their wish to address the Cabinet with regard to the matter of the proposed closure of the Devonshire Park Fitness Centre which was identified in the budget proposals as a cost saving. She also reported the receipt of some 22 individual letters objecting to the proposal. A petition signed by 252 members, users and staff was also submitted. The following, who were members of the Fitness Centre, were invited to speak. Mrs B A Blauvelt of 9 Pevensey Court Flats, Eastbourne Road, Pevensey Bay; Mr N Parsons of 10

Motcombe Road, Eastbourne; and Mr A Kazamia of 24 Grange Road, Eastbourne. Councillors Marsden and Elkin were allowed to speak. The Deputy Chairman undertook to arrange a meeting with representative members of the Centre to discuss means by which offsetting income/savings of £12,000 could be achieved and thereby provide an opportunity of keeping the Centre open.

**RESOLVED (Key Decision):** That the Council be recommended to approve:-

**(1) That the general fund revenue account budget requirement for 2003/04 be set at £16.054 million.**

**(2) That the general fund revenue account service budgets for 2003/04 be as set out in appendix A to the Director's report incorporating the growth and savings detailed in appendices B and C.**

**(3) That all repairs and maintenance budgets at appendix A be ring-fenced for that purpose only, with any change requiring Cabinet approval. That under and overspends on these budgets be carried forward at year end.**

**(4) That performance against the high risk budgets listed in paragraph 2.7 of the report be reported separately as part of the monthly budget updates.**

**(5) That all "windfall" gains arising in year as a result of increases in income or other factors should be ring-fenced and transferred to the corporate contingency or strategic change fund, depending on the overall budget position.**

**(6) That the housing revenue account budget for 2003/04 be as set out in appendix D, incorporating gross income of £18.507 million and an equal amount of expenditure.**

**(7) That the capital programme for 2003/04 totalling £13.395 million, including estimated carry forward from 2002/03 of £2.960 million be as set out in appendix E.**

**(8) That the additional property disposals listed in the confidential addendum to the Director's supplementary report be approved to provide for estimated total capital receipts of £6,455,000 against the £5,474,000 receipts required to fund the 2003/04 capital programme.**

**(9) That expenditure against the approved capital programme be committed in accordance with the timetable in appendix E, subject to the authorisation of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services depending on progress of capital budgets.**

**(10) That Cabinet approval be required to proceed with any item within the capital programme where the actual expenditure will exceed the budget by 10% or £5,000 whichever is the greater.**

**(11) That the Corporate Management Team, Heads of Service and other members of staff who had contributed towards the preparation of the budget proposals be thanked for their efforts.**

	<p><b>*105. BORROWING LIMIT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR 2003/04.</b> The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 providing for the Council to make certain determinations at the commencement of the financial year.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED (Key Decision):</b> That for the year 2003/04 the Council be recommended to approve:-</p> <p>(1) That an overall borrowing limit of £39 million is determined.</p> <p>(2) That the short-term borrowing limit be set at 15% of the overall borrowing limit.</p> <p>(3) That the proportions of the total amount of interest payable by the Council which may be at variable rates be up to 25%.</p> <p>(4) That the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in paragraph 3 of the Director's report be approved.</p>	
	<p><b>*106. COUNCIL HOUSING RENT SETTING AND OUTLINE OF HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET FOR 2003/04.</b> The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Housing Management in respect of rents to be set for all of the Council's housing tenants. The report also outlined the proposed housing revenue account budget for 2003/04. The rents had been set in accordance with Government guidelines which were intended to bring the rents of all social housing into line over a ten year period.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED (Key Decision):</b> That subject to Council approval of the overall budget for 2003/04:-</p> <p>(1) That housing rents be set with an average increase of 2.62% with effect from 7 April 2003.</p> <p>(2) That garage rents be set with an increase of 2.6% in line with the rent increase.</p> <p>(3) That the arrangements for an average 2.4% increase on service charges, following the determinations of and implementation of the supporting people financial regime be agreed.</p>	

<p><b>107.</b></p>	<p><b>AN ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY FOR EASTBOURNE.</b> The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Amenities introducing a draft Economic Regeneration Strategy entitled “In Best for Success”. The strategy had been developed by Eastbourne Reborn of which the Council was a partner.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED (Key Decision):</b> (1) That the Cabinet welcomes the publication of the draft Economic Regeneration Strategy and congratulates Eastbourne Reborn on the work undertaken to date to develop the strategy.</p> <p>(2) That the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Amenities be authorised to provide the necessary resources to support Eastbourne Reborn in the launch of the strategy and in undertaking the consultation on the strategy within the local community on behalf of Eastbourne Reborn.</p> <p>(3) That Cabinet notes that following consultation the Council will have a further opportunity of considering the strategy prior to its submission to the Eastbourne Strategic Partnership for adoption.</p>	
	<p><b>108. CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN.</b> The Cabinet considered the report of the Corporate Projects Manager to which was appended a summarised version of the draft Corporate Equality Action Plan 2003/07. The plan detailed how the Council would achieve its commitments under its comprehensive equality policy (approved by the Council on 13 November 2002). A copy of the full version of the plan had been made available in the Members’ Room and otherwise open for public inspection. The plan detailed how the Council’s Equality Steering Group comprising external representatives and an internal Corporate Equality Planning Group would work towards mainstreaming equality in the Council’s services and employment practices. The Chairman expressed her thanks on behalf of the Cabinet for the work undertaken by the Corporate Projects Manager in preparing the Action Plan.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED (Key Decision):</b> That the Corporate Equality Action Plan be approved.</p>	
	<p><b>109. EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS AGED OVER 65 BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL.</b> Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Personnel proposing a revision to the Council’s policy with regard to employment of persons aged 65 and above. The Council’s policy dating from 1990 was that it would not normally recruit or retain staff over 65 years of age. Exceptions were allowed in certain circumstances. The proposed new policy set out in detail assessment criteria to be used when considering whether such people should be employed. The Chief Executive reported that UNISON had expressed no comment in respect of the policy revision.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED (Key Decision):</b> That the revised policy for the employment of persons aged 65 or over be adopted by the Council.</p>	
	<p><b>110. HOMELESSNESS REVIEW AND STRATEGY.</b> The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Housing Needs and Strategy informing Members of the new statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002. The main legislative changes were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Strengthening the duty to provide advice and assistance.</li> <li>· Extending the priority need categories whereby the Council has a duty</li> </ul>	

<p><b>111.</b></p>	<p><b>PERFORMANCE MONITORING – PAYMENT OF INVOICES.</b></p> <p>The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Financial Management examining in detail the steps being taken to improve the Council's performance in respect of invoices paid within 30 days. The Government had set Councils a target of 100% in the current year. For the first and second quarters of the year an 85% rate had been achieved. The third quarter's figure was 92%. The Cabinet noted improved recent performance and the need for further action to secure further improvement.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That current performance and future action plan be noted.</p>	
<p><b>112.</b></p>	<p><b>PERFORMANCE MONITORING – DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS.</b> The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Amenities regarding the Council's performance in determining planning applications. The number of planning applications had increased significantly in the last three years from 626 in 1999 to 796 in 2003. In addition there had been a substantial increase in the workload in Development Control generally as a result of enquiries by the public, solicitors and developers. Increased complexity had resulted from changes in Government regulations such as additional resources required to consider telecommunications proposals. The recent introduction of revised delegated powers for determining planning applications would help to improve performance times. Issues with regard to increasing staffing levels in Development Control, planning administrative support and Legal Services were in the course of being addressed. A growth bid was being made within the 2003/04 budget for a further 1.5 fte Senior Planning Officer posts. Steps to bring staffing levels within the administrative supportive unit were also being progressed. Legal Services was now fully staffed.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> (1) That the report be noted and the staffing difficulties in the Development Control, Planning Support Services and Legal Services be acknowledged.</p> <p>(2) That an action plan be put in place to enable the Council to achieve targets based on previous volumes of work.</p> <p>(3) That the growth bid of 1.5 fte Senior Planning Officer staff in the Planning Division for 2003/04 be noted.</p> <p>(4) That the recent appointments in the Legal Division to bring staff levels up to establishment and help reduce backlogs in Section 106 agreements be noted.</p>	

	<p><b>113. EASTBOURNE CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SCHEME.</b> The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Amenities on the need to renew the existing maintenance contract. The contract was due to terminate on 31 December 2003 and Sussex Police had requested the Council to contribute £30,000 to fund a refurbishment programme for the cameras. This would keep future maintenance costs to a minimum.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> (1) That the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Amenities in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and Cabinet Member for the Environment be authorised to arrange an extension to the agreement with the Sussex Police Authority for the management of the CCTV system.</p> <p>(2) That the requirement for a sum of £30,000 to be made for the refurbishment of the CCTV apparatus in the 2003/04 financial year be noted together with a potential increase in ongoing revenue budget requirements for future years.</p> <p>(3) That the growth bids made to meet the necessary financial provision through the current service and financial planning process be noted.</p>	
	<p><b>114. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CULTURAL SERVICES CONFERENCE.</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Thompson be appointed to attend this conference to be held in Newcastle on 18 – 19 March 2003.</p>	
	<p><b>115. CONTRACT FOR THE COLLECTION OF FUNDS OVER POST OFFICE AND OTHER COUNTERS.</b> The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Financial Management outlining the steps taken to re-tender this contract for the provision of swipe card and transaction services which provided taxpayers and tenants with the option of paying their council tax and housing and garage rents in cash over the counter at any Post Office. The current contract was due to end on 31 March 2003. Following public advertisement five companies had expressed an interest however only two companies Allpay.net Limited and Girobank PLC submitted formal tenders. Details of tender evaluation were given in the report and in a confidential addendum to the report. Although not the lowest price tender it was recommended that that submitted by Allpay.net Limited the current contractor offered best value for money.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the contract be awarded to Allpay.net Limited for the three years commencing 1 April 2003.</p> <p><b>(Notes: (1) Councillor Tutt declared a personal interest in this matter in view of his employment by the Post Office. He took no part in the proceedings).</b></p> <p><b>(2) Exempt information reason – Paragraph 8 – Amount of a proposed contract).</b></p>	

The meeting closed at 7.32 p.m.	
	<b>Mrs B Healy</b> <b>Chairman</b>
(der\P:\cabinet\minutes\03.02.13)	