



## Lewes District Council

### Cabinet

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the **Ditchling Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes** on **Monday, 23 November 2015** at 2.30pm

#### **Present:**

Councillor A Smith (Chair)

Councillors P Franklin, B Giles, T Jones, R Maskell, E Merry and T Nicholson

#### **In Attendance:**

Councillor P Gardiner (Chair of the Scrutiny Committee)

Councillor S Osborne (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group)

#### **Apologies received:**

Councillor M Chartier (Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee)

Ms D Tideswell (Tenants' Representative)

### Minutes

#### **30 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **31 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Franklin declared his personal, non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 9.5 (Newhaven Enterprise Centre).

#### Action

### 32 Public Question Time

Written questions had been submitted to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Smith, by East Chiltington Parish Council and by Mr Ian Martin on behalf of East Chiltington Action Group, on the following subjects, copies of which were circulated to Councillors at the meeting and made available to the public attending the meeting (copies of which are contained in the Minute Book). Oral replies to the questions were given at the meeting.

#### Questioner

#### Question Concerning

East Chiltington Parish Council

The tendering process which was undertaken in respect of the New Homes Project

Mr Ian Martin on behalf of East Chiltington Action Group

The planning advice given in the past to the Council had consistently concluded that residential development on the Hollycroft site was unsustainable, what additional evidence had led the Council to invest public money in a proposal to do exactly the opposite?

### 33 Written Questions from Councillors

Councillor Carter asked questions of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Smith, relating to delivery expectations in respect of the proposed joint development of the North Street Quarter, Lewes, by the Council and Santon North Street Ltd, copies of which were circulated to Councillors at the meeting and made available to the public attending the meeting (copies of which are contained in the Minute Book).

Oral replies to the questions were given at the meeting by Councillor Smith.

### 34 Finance Update

The Cabinet considered Report No 148/15 which provided an update on financial matters that affected the General Fund Revenue Account, the Housing Revenue Account and the approved Capital Programme.

Treasury Management investment activity between 22 August and 19 October 2015 was summarised in the table in paragraph 3.1 of the Report, all of which was consistent with the Council's approved Treasury and Investment Strategy for 2015/2016.

In accordance with the Council's approved Treasury Strategy Statement, the Audit and Standards Committee reviewed all treasury activity that took place in order to confirm that it had been undertaken in accordance with the approved Strategy. In the event that the Audit and Standards Committee had any

observations, they would be recorded in its minutes and referred to Cabinet.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice recommended that all councillors be informed of Treasury Management activities at least twice each year. A Mid-year Report for 2015/2016, which covered the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015, was set out at Appendix 1 to the Report. It confirmed that the key elements of the approved Treasury and Investment Strategy had been complied with during the first half of the year.

Details relating to Financial Performance at the end of Quarter 2 (September) 2015/2016 was set out in the table in paragraph 4.1 of the Report and service details were shown at Appendix 2 thereto. Financial performance in the first quarter had resulted in a favourable net variation of £802,000, key elements of which were set out in the table in paragraph 4.2 of the Report which included employee costs, staff severance costs, Planning Development Control fees and the Business Rates local discount scheme.

Spending activity in many service areas had continued to be slow in Quarter 2 and the 'gap' between budgeted and actual spend was expected to close in Quarter 3.

Appendix 3 to the Report set out details of the capital programme spending in Quarter 2 which continued to be in line with expectations. Cabinet was invited to approve a variation to the programme namely, a reduction in respect of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points project which was funded by Government grant and was led by the Council on behalf of the Sussex Air Quality Partnership. 2 rapid chargers had been installed in the District but the Government funding period had closed on 30 September 2015 following which no further chargers would be installed.

The Council was implementing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from 1 December 2015. The associated administration was a complex process that involved the processing, acknowledging and recording of a series of events or triggers and CIL documents. The Council had a statutory duty to record and monitor its spending of CIL and produce annual reports thereon.

The need to procure a new or upgraded software system for the management and administration of Section 106 agreements and the CIL was considered fundamental to the proper implementation of the Council's CIL Charging Schedule which should ensure the accurate and expedient delivery of CIL processes and ultimately aid the delivery of infrastructure projects.

Officers had analysed available software solutions and sought quotations from three suppliers, two of which did not adequately meet the Council's requirements, with the preferred supplier being the most expensive. The Council's Contract Procedure Rules required the Head of Service to approve the acceptance of a quotation which was other than the lowest, which had been undertaken. The cost of implementing the software system amounted to £25,000 which would be met from the budget for Service Priorities. Future costs would be funded from a 5% share of CIL receipts that were retained as an administration 'pot'.

The Cabinet's attention was drawn to the Officers Recommendations numbered 3, 4 and 5, as set out on the first page of the Report, in respect of which it was reported that the text which read ".....as set out in section Error! Reference source not found.", should have referred to sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Report respectively.

Resolved:

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|-------------|--|-----|
| <b>34.1</b> | That it be agreed that Treasury Management activity since the last Report to Cabinet has been consistent with the Council's approved Treasury and Investment Strategy, as referred to in Report No 148/15; | DCS |
| <b>34.2</b> | That the mid-year position for the Council's 2015/2016 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy be agreed;  | DCS |
| <b>34.3</b> | That the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account financial performance for the quarter ended 30 September 2015, as set out in paragraph 4 of the Report, be agreed;                                       | DCS |
| <b>34.4</b> | That the Capital Programme financial performance for the quarter ended 30 September 2015, and associated variations, as set out in paragraph 5 of the Report, be agreed;                                   | DCS |
| <b>34.5</b> | That the action taken in respect of procurement, as set out in paragraph 6 of the Report, be confirmed.  | DCS |

It was further

Recommended:

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| <b>34.6</b> | That the Mid-Year Treasury Management Report 2015/2016, as set out at Appendix 1 to Report No 148/15, be approved. | DCS<br>(to<br>note) |
|-------------|--|---------------------|

Reasons for the Decisions:

A Report on funding issues in relation to the Council's General Fund Revenue Account, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme is made to each meeting of the Cabinet to ensure that the Council's financial health is kept under continual review. It is essential to ensure that the Council has a sound financial base from which to respond to changing activity levels and demand for statutory services and to ensure that, when appropriate, its finances are adjusted in response to reducing income levels and inflationary pressures on expenditure.

The Council's Treasury Management function deals with very large value transactions on a daily basis. It is essential that the Council is satisfied that appropriate controls are in place and in accordance with the Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services prepared by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and adopted by the Council.

**35 Portfolio Progress and Performance Report Quarter 2 (July – September 2015)**

The Cabinet considered Report No 149/15 which related to progress and performance in respect of key projects and targets for the second quarter of the year namely, July to September 2015.

It was important for the Council to monitor and assess its performance on a regular basis to ensure that it continued to deliver excellent services to its communities in line with planned targets. Furthermore, it was also important to monitor progress with key strategic projects to ensure that the Council was delivering what it had committed to or had set out to achieve.

The Council had an annual cycle for the preparation, delivery and monitoring of its corporate and service plans which enabled the regular review of the Council's work, and the targets it had set for performance, to ensure that they continued to reflect customer needs and Council aspirations.

Appendix A to the Report was structured around the six Cabinet Portfolios which had been agreed following the election in May 2015. It provided detailed information on progress and performance and clearly set out where performance and projects were 'on track' and where there were areas of concern. In instances where performance or projects were not achieving targets/deadlines set, an explanation in respect thereof was provided, together with a summary of the management action that was being taken to address the issue.

83% of the Council's key projects were either complete or on track at the end of the quarter and 81% of its performance targets were either met, exceeded or within a 5% variance. Only 4 indicators did not meet the planned targets.

Paragraphs 8 to 25 of the Report set out details of progress on projects and service performance which had been met or had exceeded target and paragraphs 26 and 27 set out details relating to where performance was very slightly below target, but within 5% tolerance, or the project was slightly off track.

Paragraphs 28 to 32 of the Report set out details of where performance was below target and/or projects were significantly off-schedule or revised.

The Report had been considered by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 November 2015 the Chair of which reported orally to Cabinet that the Committee had raised concerns in respect of the public engagement process that was being undertaken in respect of the first and second waves of the New Homes Project. The Committee had also felt that the Council needed to be fully aware of the issues associated with the supply and demand for housing in the District in light of changing legislation. Further details relating to those matters would be the subject of a scoping report to the Committee at its meeting in January 2016.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee drew Cabinet's attention to the details relating to the percentage of refuse bins/recycling boxes that had been collected on time in respect of which the Report indicated that performance was below target but within 5% tolerance but for which the Committee had felt

that the target had been met.

Resolved:

- 35.1** That progress and performance for the Quarter 2 period namely, July to September 2015, as set out in Report No 149/15, be considered and noted; and
- 35.2** That the oral Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee relating to that Committee's consideration of the Report at its meeting on 19 November 2015, be received and noted.

Reasons for the Decisions:

To enable Cabinet to consider any particular aspects of Council progress or performance and consider any recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Committee.

**36 Response to the South Downs Local Plan: Preferred Options Consultation**

The Cabinet considered Report No 150/15 which related to the Council's draft comments in respect of the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) Preferred Options document that had been published by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). The Cabinet was invited to consider and endorse those draft comments which had already been submitted to the SDNPA in order to meet the consultation deadline of 28 October 2015.

The SDLP set out the planning policies that would guide development in the National Park for the period to 2032. It covered the designated national park area, including more than half of Lewes District and the town of Lewes, a plan of which was set out at Appendix A to the Report. Once adopted, its policies would replace the 'saved' policies of the adopted Lewes District Local Plan 2003 and all the policies of the Lewes District Joint Core Strategy that were currently being applied in that part of the District which was located within the National Park.

The SDLP Preferred Options document built upon the framework of the South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan (PMP) that had been adopted in 2013, and the SDLP Issues and Options document which had been published for consultation in 2014. All the comments that were received would be taken into account by the SDNPA in formulating the next version of the Local Plan which would be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. It would then be subject to a further round of public consultation prior to the examination in public which, it was anticipated, would occur early in 2017.

The Preferred Options document set out a vision for the National Park which was taken from the adopted PMP, followed by a set of objectives and planning policies that would help to achieve that vision. The planning policies were grouped in the document as detailed in paragraph 3.1 of the Report. The text of the policies which were referred to in Report No 150/15 were set out at

Appendix B thereto.

Strategic Policies SD22 and SD23 identified towns and villages which were able to accommodate growth and which would have defined 'settlement boundaries'. In the District, such settlements were Ditchling (15 dwellings), Kingston (11 dwellings), Lewes town (835 dwellings), and Rodmell (11 dwellings). Those proposed levels of housing growth were in addition to extant planning permissions and windfall development.

Paragraph 4 of the Report set out details of the response to the SDNPA.

Resolved:

**36.1** That the comments set out in paragraph 4 of Report No 150/15 be endorsed as the Council's response to the South Downs Local Plan: Preferred Options consultation.

DBSD

Reason for the Decision:

To ensure that the next version of the South Downs Local Plan is informed by the Council's views prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

### **37 Lewes District Joint Core Strategy – Affordable Housing Policy**

The Cabinet considered Report No 151/15 which related to a recommendation that the proposed modification to the Council's affordable housing policy, as set out in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS), be withdrawn and that the Council reverts to the version of the policy as presented in the Joint Core Strategy - Submission document.

In partnership with the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), the Council had been preparing the JCS over a number of years and was currently at an advanced stage in the examination process. It was anticipated that it would be adopted in early 2016.

As part of the examination into the JCS, the Planning Inspector had written to authorities to set out his initial findings in respect of the plan. The authorities were invited to submit proposed modifications to the plan that would overcome some of the issues that had arisen during the examination. Such proposed modifications were agreed for publication, consultation and subsequent submission to the Planning Inspector at the Council meeting held on 16 July 2015.

One of the Main Modifications was to amend Core Policy 1 that related to the provision of affordable housing to ensure that it would be consistent with the Government's Written Ministerial Statement of 28 November 2014 and the associated advice in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The Statement and Guidance set a national threshold of 11 units for development size below which affordable housing contributions could not be sought. However, an allowance was made for financial contributions towards affordable housing provision to be sought on schemes between 6 and 10 units

within certain designated rural areas, which included the South Downs National Park.

Prior to the publication of the Ministerial Statement and NPPG additions, the Council and the SDNPA had proposed that Core Policy 1 would seek 40% affordable housing on schemes that delivered 10 or more units. On schemes of between 3 and 9 net additional dwellings, a graduated threshold and target was set out which allowed for levels of less than 40% affordable housing to be delivered on such smaller developments, which was consistent with local viability evidence.

The nationally prescribed policy position that was set out in the Ministerial Statement and NPPG was challenged in the High Court by West Berkshire District Council and Reading Borough Council. The judgement that was handed down on 31 July 2015 advised that the challenge had been successful and therefore the decision to adopt the new policy by way of Written Ministerial Statement had been quashed, together with the associated sections of the NPPG which had subsequently been deleted. The implication of the judgement for the JCS was that the reason for proposed modification MM15 no longer existed. The nationally prescribed 'policy' for affordable housing thresholds was quashed and appeared to give local planning authorities the flexibility to set their own, locally evidenced, thresholds once more.

On 28 September 2015 the Government was granted permission to appeal the High Court judgement which would be heard by the Court of Appeal in due course. It was premature to speculate on the appeal being allowed and the ruling being quashed but it had to be considered that such might be the outcome.

In the event that the Court of Appeal found in favour of the Government, or the Government reintroduced the intended policy (or alternative changes to affordable housing policy) at some point in the future, it was proposed that some additional future-proofing words be included in Core Policy 1 and its supporting text. It was considered that Core Policy 1 should set out that in the event of a further national (mandatory) policy change that affected the threshold or level of affordable housing provision, it would be superseded, as relevant and necessary, by any such changes in national policy. That was considered to be a minor modification to the policy as it would provide clarification, given that the national position might be subject to change again in the short term, potentially not long after the anticipated adoption of the JCS. The additional text was shown in italics and underlined in Appendix 2 to the Report.

The High Court judgement and deletion of the relevant parts of the NPPG occurred too late for MM15 to be removed from the schedule of proposed Main Modifications as published for consultation. However, a notice was published on the consultation website to update interested parties of the changed circumstances and our intention to write to the Planning Inspector to request that MM15 should not be pursued, subject to Council authorisation. A letter dated 5 October 2015, a copy of which was appended to the Report, explained the situation and had been submitted to the Inspector along with all material that related to the Proposed Modifications consultation.



Recommended:

- 37.1** That the proposed Main Modification MM15 to the Joint Core Strategy be withdrawn and that the Council makes it clear to the Planning Inspector, through the ratification of the letter of 5 October 2015 to the Inspector (as set out at Appendix 3 to Report No 151/15), that it wishes to adopt and implement the Submission version of Joint Core Strategy Core Policy 1 (affordable housing), subject to minor alterations (as set out in Appendix 2 to the Report).

DBSD  
(to  
note)Reasons for the Decision:

In order to reflect the recent removal of national planning policy and guidance and revert to an appropriate affordable housing policy for the District that is based upon and reflects robust local evidence of need and development viability.

**38 Newhaven Enterprise Centre**

The Cabinet considered Report No 152/15 which related to a proposed 2-year contract amendment to the existing Operational Management Agreement in respect of Basepoint Centres Ltd which managed Newhaven Enterprise Centre (NEC) on behalf of the Council. The existing contract was due to expire in November 2017.

Newhaven faced a number of challenges and opportunities which included pockets of high unemployment, low skills and poverty of aspiration; a weak economic base associated with the decline in traditional port and related manufacturing industries; and poor quality commercial property that was unsuitable for modern business needs within emerging higher value sectors.

However, the town had a real opportunity for growth, with money being committed through the Greater Brighton City Deal and Local Growth Funding to improve flood defences and build a new port access road, as well as the identified opportunity to establish Newhaven as a 'Clean Tech' Growth Hub linked to the development of the University Technical College, E.ON's Rampion Offshore Wind Farm, Newhaven Growth Quarter and the bid to obtain Enterprise Zone status for specific development sites.

NEC provided approximately 2,000 square metres of high quality managed business space across 45 furnished incubator units for business start-ups and larger units that were aimed at micro-businesses. They were let on flexible "easy in, easy out" terms that were ideal for new businesses. As part of the Newhaven Growth Quarter project the Council was currently extending the Centre to create an additional 769 square metres of managed business space.

Occupancy levels at the Centre have remained consistently high in recent years and at the end of August 2015 it had a waiting list of 33 potential new tenants to take space which emphasised its success under Basepoint's management.

The Report proposed that the Council's Contract Procedure Rules be waived for the reasons set out therein so as to enable the direct award of the contract amendment to Basepoint without a competitive tender process.

Resolved:

- 38.1** That the strong performance of Newhaven Enterprise Centre and the work being undertaken to expand the facility, as detailed in Report No 152/15, be noted; and
- 38.2** That the waiver of the Contract Procedure Rules for the reasons set out in the Report be approved to allow the direct award of the 2-year contract, to expire in November 2019, proposed to Basepoint without a competitive tender process.

DBSD

Reasons for the Decisions:

The existing Operational Management Agreement expires in November 2017 and it is considered financially advantageous for the Council to re-tender the Agreement once the new extension is fully occupied.

The existing arrangement between Basepoint and the Council has been highly successful and an excellent working relationship has been fostered between Centre management and the Council's Regeneration & Investment team.

*(Note: Councillor Franklin declared his personal, non-prejudicial interest in this item as he sometimes undertook work at Newhaven Enterprise Centre and, therefore, he took part in the consideration, discussion and voting thereon).*

**39 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2016/17**

The Cabinet considered Report No 153/15 which set out details that related to options for the local Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme for 2016/17.

The coalition government had abolished the national Council Tax Benefit scheme from April 2013 and required local authorities to develop and adopt their own scheme of financial support for working age claimants. Such change came with a 10% reduction in funding which, for the Council, amounted to c£90k.

In order to protect pensioners from any reduction in support, the government had put in place a national scheme that local authorities had to adopt. Therefore, any reduction in support had to come from those of working age. The Council was only permitted to change the scheme for working age claimants.

On 10 January 2013, the Council had adopted a local scheme of support for 2013/14 which, in the main, followed the rules of the Council Tax Benefit scheme, as well as agreeing changes to certain council tax discounts and exemptions.

The current CTR scheme, which had also been adopted by the other East Sussex district and borough councils, followed the principles of protecting the

most vulnerable, incentivising individuals into work and took into account and responded to the requirement of government to reduce the overall cost of the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme by 10%.

The local scheme had remained unchanged since 2013/14. However, a project team of senior officers from the East Sussex district and borough councils and East Sussex County Council had been investigating options for the 2016/17 scheme. A series of reports had been presented to Chief Executives and Council Leaders which outlined what options were available. Several options had been rejected for a variety of reasons, further details of which were set out in paragraph 4.1 of the Report. However, the project team has proposed that several options be considered for inclusion in the 2016/17 scheme:

Limiting CTR to a percentage of Council Tax liability - If adopted, such option would require claimants to pay at least a certain percentage of their Council Tax irrespective of their circumstances. 244 of the 336 Local Authorities had adopted some level of minimum payment, many of which were set above 20%.

Assumption of a minimum income for self-employed claimants – If adopted, such option would introduce an assumed minimum income for self-employed claimants of 35 hours times the minimum wage (currently £6.70). It would result in savings to the cost of the scheme of £270,000, for which the Council would save c£30,000, and would affect approximately 400 claimants. A period of 12 months grace from the start-up of a business would be allowed before the assumed minimum income would come into effect.

Reduction in the qualifying capital limit – If adopted, such option would reduce the limit that people could have in savings and still qualify for support. The current scheme had a limit of £16,000. A consultation exercise had been undertaken in respect of the options for inclusion in the 2016/17 scheme which was based on a reduction of the level of qualifying capital to £6,000. It would result in potential savings to the cost of the scheme of c£87,000, for which the Council would save c£9,500, and would affect at least 60 claimants in the District. However the Council did not currently have details of the capital of those claimants in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support or Employment Support Allowance and, in the event of the option being adopted, the Council would need to contact approximately 2,100 claimants in order to obtain details of their capital as well as implementing procedures to continually review such levels. The additional administrative burden of the option was likely to require an additional full time equivalent employee that would need to be funded by the Council. Furthermore, it was likely that the additional administrative processes would result in households that had very low income not receiving any financial support for their Council Tax due to them failing to supply the required information to the Council.

Extended payments for claimants going into work - When the Council had adopted the original CTR scheme in 2013, it took the decision to provide an additional incentive to work by doubling the extended payment award from four weeks to eight. Such extensions were awarded when Income Support, Employment Support Allowance, Job Seekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance ended because the claimant or their partner started work or increased their hours of work. To qualify for extended payments they must have been receiving one of the above benefits for at least

26 continuous weeks. The cost to the scheme in 2014/15 was c£18,000, with the cost to the Council being c£2,000.

Whichever changes were adopted, it was proposed that a separate hardship fund be created to assist those applicants who suffered exceptional hardship. As part of the process of applying for additional support, it was proposed that all applicants must be willing to provide sufficient personal information to enable the Officers to make the necessary decision.

Details relating to alternatives to reducing the amount of help that was provided by the CTR scheme were set out in paragraph 6 of the Report.

Before making a new scheme, or before making changes to the scheme, the Council needed to consult with the major preceptors and other interested parties, further details of which were set out in paragraph 9 of the Report.

The Cabinet's attention was drawn to several issues in respect of the proposed CTR scheme which, it was felt, needed to be clarified with the other district and borough councils in East Sussex that had been investigating options for the 2016/17 scheme, the outcome of which needed to be reported to all Members of the Council in advance of the Council's consideration of the proposed revised scheme at its Meeting on 9 December 2015, as it was not the Council's intention to increase the financial burden on the poorest people in the community. Such issues related to:

The legal opinion relating to the level of minimum earnings for the self-employed which, the Report suggested, was in line with the government's proposal for those who claimed Universal Credit. However, it was felt that the proposed CTR scheme did not make allowance for lone parents and the disabled nor did it make a notional reduction for national taxation and National Insurance contributions;

The proposed changes in respect of people who faced exceptional hardship, and those who were self-employed as well as employed who did not have access to the exceptional hardship scheme on the basis of their assumed level of minimum income; and

The CTR scheme did not currently take account of those who were self-employed as well as employed.

Recommended:

**39.1** That the following changes be made to the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17, as referred to in Report No 153/15:-

The maximum amount of Council Tax Reduction be limited to 80% of the claimant's Council Tax liability;

The current qualifying Capital savings limit at £16,000 be retained; and

The current eight week extended payment for claimants that go into work be retained;

DCS  
(to  
note)

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| <b>39.2</b> | That subject to the outcome of the clarification exercise undertaken in respect of the issues set out in the final paragraph of the preamble above, an assumed minimum income floor for self-employed claimants be introduced to the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17; | DCS<br>(to<br>note) |
| <b>39.3</b> | That the Assistant Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services/S151 officer, be authorised to make minor amendments to the text of the final Scheme; and   | DCS<br>(to<br>note) |
| <b>39.4</b> | That, subject to the outcome of the clarification exercise undertaken in respect of the issues set out in the final paragraph of the preamble above, an Exceptional Hardship scheme be adopted.  | DCS<br>(to<br>note) |

Reason for the Decisions:

The Council is under a duty to review its local Council Tax Reduction scheme each year and any changes to the scheme must be adopted by 31 January 2016, preceding the start of the new financial year. If it fails to do this the current year's scheme will remain in force.

#### **40 Devolution Update**

The Cabinet considered Report No 154/15 which provided an update on the Council's engagement with the Government's Devolution agenda and, specifically, the two local bids in which the Council was participating namely; - Greater Brighton and the 3 Southern Counties (3SC).

In November 2014 the Chancellor had signed a devolution agreement with the leaders of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority which had outlined new powers and responsibilities that were to be devolved to the city region.

In May 2015 the Chancellor had announced a wider programme of devolution to a larger number of local authorities and in the Queen's Speech in May 2015, the Queen had announced that a Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill would be laid before Parliament in 2015 to provide for the devolution of powers to cities and local authorities. The main purpose and benefit of the Bill were identified as to boost local and national economic growth by devolving power and increasing productivity and efficiency in local government.

In July 2015 the Government had published the 2015 Spending Review one of the aims of which was to begin the process of a radical devolution of powers from central government to local government within England, further details of which were set out in paragraph 1.3 of the Report.

In September 2015 both Greater Brighton and 3SC had submitted devolution prospectuses to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Treasury which represented discussions between the partners as to their mutual strengths, challenges and interests. They summarised such discussions with the intention that they would be used as an agenda for an ongoing dialogue with Government about devolution.

Paragraphs 1.5 to 1.8 of the Report set out details relating to the Greater Brighton bid whilst paragraphs 1.9 to 1.11 set out details relating to the 3SC bid, both of which constituted the beginning of discussions with the DCLG and the Treasury about the scope and timeline for the devolution of powers.

A summary of the Greater Brighton devolution prospectus was set out in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.4 of the Report and the full prospectus was set out at Appendix A thereto.

A summary of the 3SC devolution prospectus was set out in paragraph 2.6 of the Report and the full prospectus was set out at Appendix B thereto.

Greater Brighton and 3SC had signed a Memorandum of Understanding, a copy of which was set out at Appendix C to the Report, which acknowledged that their devolution bids raised key areas of common interest and would benefit from close cooperation between the organisations both in their development and realisation.

Resolved:

- 40.1** That progress of both the Greater Brighton and 3 Southern Counties (3SC) devolution bids to Government, as detailed in Report No 154/15, be noted; and
- 40.2** That the Officers continue to engage proactively with both bids.

CE

Reason for the Decisions:

In order that the Council continues to engage proactively with the devolution process.

**41 Ward Issues Raised by Councillors at Council**

The Cabinet considered Report No 155/15 which related to Ward issues that had been raised by councillors at the Meeting of the Council held on 14 October 2015.

The Cabinet's attention was drawn to the Ward issue that related to Steyning Avenue car park in Peacehaven in respect of which it was reported that, since the preparation of the Report, a meeting had been undertaken with Peacehaven Chamber of Commerce following which it had been agreed that a further survey of the car park and a further public consultation in respect thereof, including mitigation measures, would be undertaken.

Cabinet's attention was further drawn to the Ward issue that related to the provision of free parking concessions in Newhaven on the approach to Christmas in respect of which it was reported that some Councillors were concerned that, whilst the Council's agreement to allow up to three free parking days per year in the off-street car parks in some towns, including Newhaven, went some way to support the businesses therein, such provision was insufficient.

Resolved:

- 41.1** That the Officer action in respect of Ward issues that had been raised by Councillors at the Council Meeting held on 14 October 2015, as detailed in Report No 155/15 and as updated at the Cabinet meeting, be noted.

Reason for the Decision:

To ensure that appropriate follow up action is taken in respect of Ward issues raised by Councillors at Council Meetings.

The meeting ended at 4.12pm.

A Smith  
Chair