

Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 20 March 2024 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Stephen Holt (Chair).

Councillors Margaret Bannister (Deputy-Chair), Peter Diplock, Robin Maxted, Jim Murray and Colin Swansborough.

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Ian Fitzpatrick (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning), Becky Cooke (Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer), Kate Slattery (Head of Legal Services), Luke Dreeling (Performance Lead), Gary Hall (Head of Homes First), Jo Harper (Head of Business Planning and Performance), Lynn Ingram (Interim Head of Financial Planning), Emma Kemp (Senior Planning Policy Officer), Sarah Lawrence (Committee Team Manager) and Oliver Jones (Lead, Housing, Homelessness & Community Safety).

Also in attendance:

Councillor Penny di Cara (Opposition Deputy Leader) and Councillor Robert Smart (Opposition Leader).

51 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2024 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

52 Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was reported from the Director of Finance and Performance.

53 Declaration of members' interests

Councillor Holt declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 (Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership – Annual Report (Eastbourne)) as his employer worked closely with the Business Crime Reduction Partnership. He remained in the room and took part in discussions.

54 Questions by members of the public

The Cabinet received a written question from Sara De Siena, in relation to the Council's understanding of the term Net Zero and impact on Eastbourne.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, a supplementary question was asked to the Cabinet. The questions were verbally responded to at the meeting by Councillor Murray. A further written response to the supplementary question would be sent following the meeting.

55 Stability and Growth Programme Update

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive, updating it on the Stability and Growth Programme.

The Stability and Growth Programme had, over the past year, delivered significant savings for the council, helping to address the financial challenges currently being faced. A summary of this was included in the budget report presented to Cabinet in February 2024. Future savings and initiatives would continue to be monitored and overseen by the cross-party member board, and it was reported that independent appointees would also sit on the board in the future, to assist the Council in its journey towards financial sustainability.

Resolved (Key decision):

To note the report and delegate authority to the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder, to deliver additional savings in council service areas once the budget reviews are completed.

Reason for decision:

The Stability and Growth programme works to drive improvement and efficiency, in line with the needs of the organisation, and also the recommendations made by the Assurance Reviews and the Local Government Association Peer Challenge.

56 Eastbourne and Lewes Community Safety Partnership - Annual Report (Eastbourne)

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, regarding the 2023/24 performance of the Eastbourne and Lewes Community Safety Partnership (E&L CSP).

Key highlights, activities and achievements across the Partnership's priorities were detailed throughout the report and were commended by Cabinet.

Resolved (Non-key decision):

To note the achievements and activities of the Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership in 2023/24.

Reason for decision:

To consider progress on delivery of the current Community Safety Plan.

57 Corporate performance -quarter 3 - 2023/24

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Finance and Performance, regarding the council's progress and performance in respect of service areas for the third quarter of the year (July-September 2023), as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Steve Wallis, member of the public, addressed the Cabinet on this item around the issue of reporting and removal of graffiti around the town. In response, the Cabinet advised that reporting of graffiti were part of the meetings of the South East Environmental Services Ltd (SEESL) Board on a quarterly basis. The Council would look at potentially adding in a key performance indicator in relation to graffiti at their next refresh.

The Council would also explore potentially undertaking a scheme similar to Brighton & Hove City Council, whereby companies that own properties within the Borough would potentially be charged, should they not remove graffiti, once reported and notified within a time period, and the Council was required to act to remove it.

The report detailed that 13 performance indicators achieved their target for the quarter, 2 were slightly below target and 7 were below target. 13 positive trends and 11 negative trends were reported from quarter 2 to quarter 3. Further details were contained at Appendix 1.

Resolved (Non-key decision):

To note progress and performance for quarter 3 2023/24.

Reason for decision:

To enable Cabinet members to consider specific aspects of the Council's progress and performance.

58 Revenue and Capital Financial Monitoring Report - Quarter 3 2023-24

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Finance and Performance, providing an assessment of the Council's financial performance against its approved 2023-24 budget, incorporating key financial risks, issues and opportunities identified since 1 April 2023 for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The forecast outturn position for 2023-24 as at 31st December 2023 was an overspend of £3.99m as shown in Table 1 of the report. This projection did not reflect the recent successful application to government for Exceptional Financial Support.

The Council would continue to lobby central government for additional funding

in recognition of the exceptional financial pressures placed on local councils in tackling the cost of homelessness.

Resolved (Non-key decision):

(1) To note the forecast outturn position for 2023-24 and associated risks.

(2) To delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Performance and the portfolio holder for finance to apply the required budget virements to support effective management of the overall budget.

(3) To approve the additional release of £17,000 from the Housing Revenue Account to support the allocation of twelve HRA properties to support Emergency & Temporary Accommodation pressures.

(4) To note Appendix 1 and 2 to the report.

Reason for decisions:

To update members on the financial position of the Council and ensure that the Authority complies with its financial regulations.

59 Options on the future model for the management and maintenance of Eastbourne Council Housing

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive, asking it to agree the preferred option for the delivery of Eastbourne Council Housing, following public consultation.

Thanks were conveyed to all involved with Eastbourne Homes Limited Board that had contributed to its success.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To approve the termination of all the existing arrangements between the Council and Eastbourne Homes Limited in respect of the Council's housing service which shall in future be provided and governed directly by the Council.

(2) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and s151 Officer, and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, be given delegated authority to undertake the necessary arrangements to give effect to (1) above including the negotiation and signature of any necessary agreements and the establishment of an advisory body to assist the Council in the governance of its housing service.

Reason for decisions:

The consultation feedback clearly demonstrated support for a transition to an in-house governance of housing services.

60 Off-Street Car Parking Enforcement

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, seeking approval to explore the options for a move from criminal to civil enforcement of off-street parking regulations in accordance with legislation, government advice and best practice.

Resolved (Key decision):

To authorise officers to explore the options for a move to civil enforcement of off-street parking regulations, and to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet member for tourism, leisure, accessibility and community safety, and the Cabinet member for enterprise, community spaces and heritage assets, to take all necessary actions to implement the enforcement change.

Reason for decision:

The shift from criminal to civil enforcement of off-street parking regulations is consistent with legislation, government advice and best practice across local government, and such an approach would support an improved enforcement regime and the maximum recovery of income for the council.

61 Local Employment and Training Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, seeking approval for the proposed Local Employment and Training Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for publication for an eight-week period to receive representations in preparation for formal adoption by the Council.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To approve the Local Employment and Training SPD for publication for an 8-week consultation period to receive representations and comments.

(2) To delegate authority to the Regeneration Lead in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member to make minor amendments before the commencement of the representation period.

Reason for decisions:

A refresh of the policy is required to reflect changes in employment and training.

62 Eastbourne Community Infrastructure Levy NCIL Governance Review

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive, providing a review and recommendations for updating the CIL Governance Arrangements,

particularly in relation to Neighbourhood CIL Spending within Eastbourne Borough.

Thanks were conveyed to the work of officers and cross-party group towards the proposals set out in the report.

Resolved (Key decision):

To amend the existing CIL Governance Arrangements previously agreed by Cabinet in July 2015, particularly those relating to Neighbourhood CIL spending, as detailed in the report.

Reason for decision:

To allow for a fairer and transparent spending mechanism for Neighbourhood CIL across the Borough.

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm

Councillor Stephen Holt (Chair)