

Cabinet



Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday, 21 October 2015 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Councillors **David Tutt** (Chairman and Leader of the Council), **Gill Mattock** (Deputy Chairman and Deputy Leader of the Council), **Margaret Bannister**, **Alan Shuttleworth**, **Troy Tester** and **Steve Wallis**.

30 Minutes of meeting held on 2 September 2015.

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2015 were submitted and approved and the chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

31 Declarations of interests by members.

Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) by members as required under section 31 of the Localism Act and other interests as required by the council's code of conduct and regulation 12(2)(d) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. The following declaration was made:-

- Councillor David Tutt declared a personal (and non-prejudicial) interest in matters reported in minute 34 (sustainable service delivery strategy/shared services update) as as he was a council appointed non-executive director iESE Limited.

32 * Eastbourne community safety plan (BPF).

32.1 Cabinet considered the report of the senior head of community consider the current performance of the Eastbourne Community Safety Partnership (ECSP) under the updated Eastbourne community safety plan and to outline issues that may potentially impact future crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) performance.

32.2 Bob Gough, Eastbourne crime reduction officer, and chief inspector Emma Brice, Eastbourne district commander, Sussex Police, were invited to address the Cabinet. Bob Gough highlighted noted a 'smoothing-off' of the recent increase in reported crime and that Home Office statistics showed that Eastbourne when compared with similar towns fared particularly favourably. He also highlighted that budget reductions facing Sussex Police would have significant implications for the local partnership. Emma Brice spoke of the strengths of the local safety partnership and the importance of continued partnership working as a means of meeting future financial challenge.

32.3 Cabinet had previously endorsed the successful crime reduction performance of the partnership. In 2000/06 Eastbourne was subject to

around 11,000 crimes. For the performance year 2010/11 this had dropped to approximately 7,500 crimes and to the end of June 2014, this had reduced to around 5,700 crimes, a further reduction of 5% compared with the same period last year.

32.4 Police recorded crime had, however, seen a considerable increase since the last report. Up to the end of June 2015 overall crime had gone up from 5,753 crimes to over 6,800 an increase of 18.5%, compared with the same period last year. This increase was due to 2 factors; (i) Sussex Police strict adherence to Home Office crime recording procedures and (ii) the PCC led initiative to increase crime reporting in a number of categories including, domestic abuse, hate crime and sexual offences.

32.5 The current plan (2014/17) had been developed in consultation with key partners including the police and other members of the ECSP. A copy of the action plan was appended to the report to cabinet as appendix A. Priorities for 2015/16 and measurement criteria were attached as appendix B. Plan targets were reviewed at the end of each performance year and key performance targets had been incorporated into the relevant sections of the Council's corporate plan.

32.6 Cabinet praised the work of the partnership and noted the value of the neighbourhood panels and benefits of partnership working. They expressed concern at the prospect of further reductions in police funding which it was believed would hit Sussex especially hard.

***32.7 Resolved (budget and policy framework):** (1) That cabinet notes the community safety partnership's achievements and future risks/opportunities to performance and endorses the 2014/17 community safety plan with continued delegated implementation authority to senior head of community.

(2) That full council be asked to approve the plan.

33 * Local council tax reduction scheme 2016/17 (BPF).

33.1 Councillor Tony Freebody addressed the cabinet. He had a number of concerns asking if there a definition of exceptional hardship should be given in the proposed policy and the impact of the proposed policies upon people with profound and severe learning disabilities.

33.2 Cabinet considered the report of the senior head of community. The council was under a duty to review its local scheme each year and any changes to the scheme must be adopted by 31 January preceding the start of the new financial year.

33.3 The current scheme, which was also adopted by the other East Sussex districts and boroughs, followed the principles of protecting the most vulnerable, incentivising individuals into work and took into account and responds to the requirement of government to reduce the cost by 10% of the previous council tax benefit scheme. Key features of the

adopted were the removal of the second adult rebate, a minimum award of £5 per week, and a reasonable increase in non-dependant deductions.

33.4 A county-wide project team reporting to chief executives and council leaders had been set up to consider options for the 2016/17 scheme. This review was being conducted against a need for councils to seek budget savings in the face of continuing funding reductions by the government. The estimated net cost to the council of the council tax reduction scheme for 2016/17, without making any changes, was £351,000 – a significant increase over an estimated cost of £18,000 if government grant had been maintained at 2013/14 levels.

33.5 The following of options were put forward for consideration:

- Limiting council tax reduction (CTR) to a percentage of the council tax liability.
- Assumption of a minimum income for self-employed claimants.
- Reduction of the capital limit to £6,000 (currently £16,000).

It was noted that many local authorities had adopted a minimum level of 20% and that a similar limit in Eastbourne on current costs would save £164,629 and affect 5,672 claimants.

33.6 Alongside the above options it was proposed that a separate exceptional hardship fund be created to mitigate the impact of any changes to the local scheme. The report also highlighted the possible impact on collection rates from changes to the scheme and need to take steps to minimise any fall in collection and outlined the staffing arrangements and costs necessary to administer the hardship fund which would be shared among all the precepting and billing authorities.

33.7 The following papers were included with the report:

- Draft exceptional hardship scheme
- East Sussex County Council response to consultation.
- Consultation results and comments.
- Equality and fairness analysis.

The draft local council tax reduction scheme was available as a background paper. Cabinet considered the responses to the consultation and the question of granting transitional relief.

***33.8 Resolved (budget and policy framework):** (1) That full council be asked to (a) approve the following changes to the current council tax reduction scheme:

- To limit the maximum amount of council tax reduction to 80% of the claimant's council tax liability.
- To introduce a minimum income floor for self-employed claimants.

and (b) agree that no transitional arrangements be made in respect of the above changes.

(2) That the senior head of community, in consultation with the deputy chief executive/S.151 officer, be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the text of the final scheme.

(3) That the exceptional hardship scheme be adopted.

34 Sustainable service delivery strategy (SSDS) /shared services update (KD).

34.1 Councillor Tony Freebody addressed the cabinet giving a cautious welcome to the proposals.

34.2 Cabinet considered the report of the deputy chief executive. Two of the key SSDS programmes currently underway were the implementation of the Future Model, which aimed to improve service delivery whilst delivering savings of 1.7m to £2m across the organisation, and the shared corporate services programme with Lewes District Council (LDC) which, to date, had seen a shared legal service and a shared human resources service set up, as well as a number of other successful sharing arrangements noted update reported to cabinet last July.

34.3 Despite the significant savings delivered to date through the SSDS, the council continued to face challenging savings targets going forward. The council's medium term financial strategy (MTFS) set a target of £900,000 of recurring savings to be delivered between now and 2020 from shared services. LDC had an MTFS target of £1.7m through transformation, including shared services. Both councils had jointly commissioned Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE) to set out the options for the development of shared services and, in particular, an outline business case for wider integration between EBC and LDC.

34.4 The outline business case from iESE was given in appendix A to the report. It presented two options:

- a) An integrated council - full integration of management and services (with the exclusion of waste and housing due to the current difference in delivery models).
- b) An integrated management team.

The report set out details of the strategic, financial and management case for integration and followed the guidance laid down in the HM Treasury Green Book guidance for business case development. The legal services team had been consulted on the proposals and the report outlined a number of legal structures and powers which could be used as the basis of integrating the councils.

34.5 Given the national context of increasing collaboration, sharing and devolution, the successful track record of EBC and LDC in delivering shared services to date and the requirements of the MTFS to deliver further significant savings, cabinet was recommended to adopt a strategy for the development of shared services with LDC based on option A above. In order to validate the savings estimates, analyse the risks of implementation and develop an outline programme plan including costs, governance and technology, further work was required to

develop a more detailed business case, which would be brought back to cabinet at a future date.

34.6 On 24 September LDC's cabinet had considered iESE's outline business case and agreed to adopt the recommended strategy. It was noted that although staffing and management structures would be integrated, the two councils would remain separate bodies under the control of their respective elected members.

34.7 Resolved (key decision): (1) That option A (integration of the staff and services of both councils) be the council's preferred option for wider integration of services with Lewes District Council as set out in appendix A to the report.

(2) That the proposed strategy for the development of shared services based on option A be approved.

(3) That expenditure of up to £30,000 on the preparation of a more detailed business case and programme plan be approved.

(4) That an exception to contract procedure rules, in order to appoint Ignite Consulting Ltd to carry out detailed work to inform the business case, be approved.

35 Devonshire Park redevelopment - forward funding of design work (KD).

35.1 Cabinet considered the report of the senior head of regeneration, planning and assets and senior head of tourism and enterprise on a proposal to mitigate procurement and cost risks by funding some of the stage 4 design work for the scheme in advance of the expected decision by the cabinet at their meeting on 9 December 2015 to proceed with the overall scheme. This forward funding would allow the professional team to prepare some of the detailed designs which would be essential part of the tender documents. By advancing the work it would be possible to engage a contractor as early as possible and gain their input into how the project was delivered. This would mitigate risk and encourage the most cost effective tenders.

35.2 The proposal was to advance fund a total of £498,000 for design and procurement work for the period November to December 2015. This represented some 35% of the total approved stage 4 fees. This would be funded using the capital programme (revenue) reserve which had a balance of £1.583m as at 31 March 2015.

35.3 Resolved (key decision): That a variation to the capital programme of £500,000 for continued work on Devonshire Park, ahead of the final scheme being brought back to cabinet in December, be approved.

36 Exclusion of the public.

Resolved: That the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting as otherwise there was a likelihood of disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The relevant paragraphs of schedule 12A and descriptions of the exempt information are shown beneath the items below. (*The requisite notice having been given under regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.*)

37 Summary of confidential proceedings for information.

(Note: The full minutes of the under-mentioned items are set out in the confidential section of these minutes. The reports remain confidential.)

(a) Corporate assets - investments and disposal (KD).

Cabinet agreed to the acquisition and disposal of certain land and property assets subject to agreement of terms and all due diligence, and subject to full compliance with any statutory requirements. The senior head of regeneration, planning and assets was given delegated authority to take the actions required to acquire and dispose of these assets, including exemption to the council's contract procedure rules where necessary, in consultation with the lead cabinet members for core support and strategic services and financial services. The decisions were in line with the council's corporate plan and medium term financial strategy (MTFS). The acquisition would enable the council to ensure the long term future of an important asset and further investment and development of the site would deliver regeneration and community benefits and potentially homes. The disposal would allow for reinvestment of the capital receipt with a consequential significant positive impact on the council's MTFS. Confidentiality was required at this early stage to protect the council's interests in future negotiations and allow for the formulation of a communications strategy to engage with relevant stakeholders.

Exempt information reasons: 3 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and 5 (information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings).

(b) Redundancy and redeployment - activity update.

Cabinet noted that 4 employees were currently subject to the procedure at present. They noted the actions taken to manage implications of change for displaced individuals through support, redeployment and assistance with self marketing under the redundancy and redeployment procedure and the use of the procedure in managing the change resulting from implementation of phase two of Future Model.

Exempt information reasons 1 and 2 – Information relating to an individual or likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

The meeting closed at 6.55 pm

**Councillor David Tutt
Chairman**