

Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held in Ditchling Room at Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1AB on 28 October 2019 at 2.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Zoe Nicholson (Chair)

Councillors Matthew Bird, Julie Carr, Chris Collier, Johnny Denis, William Meyer and Emily O'Brien

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Homira Javadi (Chief Finance Officer), Ian Fitzpatrick (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning), Tim Whelan (Director of Service Delivery), Peter Finnis (Assistant Director for Corporate Governance), Catherine Knight (Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services), Linda Farley (Head of Customer First), Jane Goodall (Strategy and Partnership Lead, Quality Environment), Emma Kemp (Planning Policy Officer), Simon Russell (Committee and Civic Services Manager) and Tondra Thom (Planning Policy Lead)

Also in attendance:

Councillor Roy Burman, Councillor Isabelle Linington (Leader of the Opposition) and Councillor Julian Peterson (Chair of Audit and Standards Committee)

Ms John Langley (Tenants' Representative) and Ms Debbie Twitchen (Tenants' Representative)

36 Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2019 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

Following approval of the minutes, the Assistant Director for Corporate Governance provided an update on the Council's contingency planning for Brexit since the last meeting. The Cabinet were advised that discussions had taken place with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and 3VA and plans were being put in place to support EU Nationals in the Lewes District wishing to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Updated correspondence had also been received from the Department for Transport (DfT) in relation to Newhaven Port and this had been circulated to the Cabinet and communicated to the relevant Town and Parish Councils. The DfT still considered disruption in the event of a no-deal Brexit to be low to

zero however should any local implications arise it would be the responsibility of the Sussex Resilience Forum to put appropriate contingency plans in place. The Working Group for Newhaven Port continued to meet and assess risks and put mitigations in place should anything arise.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director for Corporate Governance confirmed that he would investigate the suggestion that East Sussex County Council were making plans to implement a lorry park in Newhaven in the event of Brexit and would provide an update to the Cabinet.

37 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were reported from Councillors MacCleary and O'Keeffe.

An apology for absence was also reported from visiting member and Chair of Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Joe Miller.

38 Declarations of interest

Visiting member and Chair of Audit and Standards Committee, Councillor Peterson declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 (Community Infrastructure Levy Spending Recommendations) as the Parish Clerk for Piddinhoe Parish Council and remained in the room and took part in the discussion.

39 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax Class C Discount

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery regarding the Local Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme 2020/21 and Council Tax Class C Discount.

It was clarified that the removal of the discount would raise an estimated £28,000 for the Council. The additional monies would be used to support those self-employed CTR claimants who were affected by the application of the minimum-income floor. Further details were contained in the report.

In response to points raised by visiting member, Councillor Linington, it was clarified that officers would be undertaking significant checks to ensure the scheme would not be exploited.

Ms Debbie Twitchen, Tenants Representative addressed the Cabinet in support of the recommendations.

The Cabinet welcomed the pilot scheme that would give more assistance to the most vulnerable residents.

Recommended to Council (Budget and policy framework):

(1) To recommend to Full Council that the 2019/20 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme be adopted as the 2020/21 scheme.

(2) To recommend to Full Council that the Council Tax Class C Discount for empty and unfurnished properties be ended from 1 April 2020.

(Key decision):

(3) To establish a pilot scheme during 2020/21 to provide additional relief to the self-employed on very low income.

Reasons for decisions:

(1) Ending the Class C discount would encourage property owners to try to avoid having properties that are not occupied.

(2) The additional monies raised would be used to support those self-employed CTR claimants who were affected by the application of the minimum income floor and during the year of 2020/21 assess the likely impact on the council tax base of removal of minimum income floor.

40 Pesticide policy and pollinator strategy

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery introducing the Council's Pesticide Policy and Pollinator Strategy.

Ms Debbie Twitchen, Tenants Representative praised Karen Rigby-Faux, Community Liaison Officer for Burleys for her tireless work campaigning for pesticide free areas across Lewes District.

Visiting member, Councillor Linington supported the proposals outlined in the report and commented that the process had begun during the previous administration.

Thanks were conveyed to Jane Goodall, Strategy and Partnership Lead (Quality Environment) and Andy Frost, Senior Specialist Advisor (Open Spaces / Contracts) for their work in carrying out the vision of the administration, as well as an appreciation of the expertise in the team.

It was hoped that the strategy and policy would help influence East Sussex County Council and other partners to take a similar approach.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To approve the Pesticide Policy and agree that the policy would be reviewed one year from adoption

(2) To approve the Pollinator Strategy for adoption and agree that the strategy would be reviewed in 2021.

Reason for decisions:

To provide a framework and action plans for Lewes District Council in its approach to land management

41 Community Infrastructure Levy Spending Recommendations

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning seeking their approval to release Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds, as recommended by the CIL Executive Board. This would assist in the delivery of certain infrastructure projects required to support development in the district.

It was clarified that the figure for Newhaven Band Stand was £13,280 as this had not been confirmed prior to the report's publication.

Visiting member and Chair of Audit and Standards Committee, Councillor Peterson declared a personal interest in this item as the Parish Clerk for Piddinhoe Parish Council and remained in the room and took part in the discussion. He addressed the Cabinet and raised concerns about the safety at Egrets Way. It was clarified that Cabinet did not interfere in the bidding process and its remit was to consider whether or not to release funds as applied for.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning commented that the Council took a robust approach to collection and enforcement which had resulted in a significantly high collection rate.

Resolved (Key decision):

To agree the release of funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) governance pots as recommended by the CIL Executive Board.

Reason for decision:

To support the delivery of the right level and type of infrastructure to support the growth identified for the local planning authority in the adopted Joint Core Strategy.

42 Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning seeking their approval to publish the Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement for a consultation period of 8 weeks.

A revised version of section 1.17 of the Statement of Community Involvement had been circulated to the Cabinet and would be amended for the version that would be sent out to consultation.

Thanks were conveyed to Tondra Thom, Planning Policy Lead and her team for their work in producing the document.

Resolved (Budget and policy framework):

To approve the publication of the Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement for a consultation period of 8 weeks.

Reason for decision:

To ensure that progress is made in reviewing and updating the Council's Statement of Community Involvement in accordance with national legislation.

43 Adoption of the Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning regarding the potential adoption of the Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan following a successful referendum on the 10 October 2019.

1,105 voted in support of the Neighbourhood Plan, with 192 voting against.

Thanks were conveyed to Newhaven Town Council for their work in producing the Plan, with support and advice from the District Council.

Recommended to Council (Budget and policy framework):

To recommend to Full Council that the Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan be formally adopted as part of the statutory development plan for the district.

Reason for decision:

To ensure the Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' within the timeframe set out by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

44 Property Disposal and Transfer Policy Revision

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning asking them to consider revisions to the Property Disposal and Transfer Policy to include reference to Community Asset Transfer and Devolution.

Resolved (Key decision):

To agree and adopt the revisions to the Policy Disposal and Transfer Policy to include provision for Community Asset Transfer.

Reason for decision:

The Policy Disposal and Transfer Policy needs to be updated to include provision for Community Asset Transfer.

45 Housing development update

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning seeking their approval for a new sustainable Council housing project and to amend plans for ongoing housing development schemes, ensuring they have a focus on sustainable design and delivery.

Ms Debbie Twitchen, Tenants Representative, addressed the Cabinet in support of the proposed recommendations.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning advised that as the schemes progressed the Council would be incorporating as many sustainability measures to ensure they meet the priorities of the administration.

It was clarified that residents for the areas affected would be consulted in detail as part of the standard planning process.

Resolved (Key decision):

- (1) To note and approve the updated Lewes Town & Ringmer Council Housing Infill programme, as laid out at appendix 1 to the report, subject to a final costed plan being approved by Cabinet.
- (2) To approve an in principle programme of Council housing on infill land in Newhaven, as laid out at appendix 2 to the report, subject to a final costed plan being approved by Cabinet.
- (3) To note the updated development scheme at Anchor Field, Ringmer.
- (4) To approve the sale of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land to Aspiration Homes LLP (AHLLP) for the construction of 11 affordable rented homes at Anchor Field, Ringmer and associated loan to deliver the affordable housing. The delegations for the sale of HRA land and loan facilities are as contained in the Cabinet report of 23rd April 2018 entitled "Housing Development Update".

Reason for decisions:

The overarching reason for the recommendations is to maximise the Council's ability to provide affordable housing within the District, partly through the full utilisation of receipts received from Council homes sold under the Right to Buy.

46 Any other business

Ms Debbie Twitchen, Tenants Representative addressed the Cabinet in relation to Tenants of Lewes District's (TOLD) input into the budget setting process for the Housing Revenue Account. The Director of Service Delivery confirmed that a meeting had been booked and would answer the questions that had been raised.

The meeting ended at 3.28 pm

Councillor Zoe Nicholson (Chair)