

## **Cabinet**

**Minutes of meeting held in Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 9 July 2019 at 6.00 pm**

### **Present:**

Councillor David Tutt (Chair)

Councillors Margaret Bannister, Jonathan Dow, Stephen Holt, Colin Swansborough and Rebecca Whippy

### **Officers in attendance:**

Ian Fitzpatrick (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning), Homira Javadi (Chief Finance Officer), Philip Evans (Director of Tourism & Enterprise), Peter Finnis (Assistant Director for Corporate Governance), Oliver Dixon (Senior Lawyer and Data Protection Officer), Jo Harper (Head of Business Planning and Performance), Brian Mew (Interim Deputy Chief Finance Officer) and Simon Russell (Committee and Civic Services Manager)

### **12 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2019 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

### **13 Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence was reported from Councillor Shuttleworth.

### **14 Declaration of members' interests**

Councillors Tutt and Holt declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 12 (Enabling the supply of homes for homeless families) as Non-Executive Directors on Eastbourne Housing Investment Company Limited. They both withdrew from the room whilst the item was considered. Councillor Bannister chaired the meeting for the duration of the item.

### **15 Medium term financial strategy**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer providing an update on the process and approach to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period of 2019/20 to 2024/25.

The strategy set out the strategic direction for the Council and was regularly updated as it evolved and developed throughout the year to form the framework for the Council's financial planning.

Several external factors were analysed in undertaking the mid-year review of the strategy including the national and local economic outlook, including the impact on Brexit, inflation, interest rates, public sector pay and factors affecting demand-led services.

**Resolved (Key decision):**

To note the background to the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2019/20 and to approve the approach outlined in the report.

**Reason for decision:**

To progress the Medium Term Financial Strategy process and update Cabinet on the background to this.

**16 Corporate performance - quarter 4 - 2018/19**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer and Director of Regeneration and Planning updating them on the Council's performance against Corporate Plan priority actions, performance indicators and targets for 2018/19.

Visiting members, Councillor Ansell and Councillor Freebody addressed the Cabinet on this item.

The report detailed good news for the year including the official opening of the Beacon, Congress Theatre and significant improvements for the Town Centre including delivery of new bus shelters.

Missed targets included planning, emergency accommodation and call handling. It was acknowledged that significant external pressures such as the national housing crisis and Universal credit continued to affect the authority.

The Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 10 June 2019 requested the Cabinet to consider making some changes to the Council's performance indicators for 2019/20. The Cabinet unanimously agreed to support the recommendations of Scrutiny Committee.

The Assistant Director for Corporate Governance reported on the impact of the devolved budget scheme that was designed to spend on quick fix one-off works or initiative to improve the lives of residents. Since its introduction in 2008, over 700 schemes had been delivered to the community, totalling over £750,000.

Part B of the report detailed the Council's financial performance for the same quarter and included the end of year outturn.

Section 1.3 of the report detailed the main variances between the revised budget and actual net expenditure. Section 3.5 of the report detailed commentary on the council's larger capital expenditure schemes.

The Cabinet thanked officers for their work in ensuring that the Council's finances were on target and significant reserves had been secured.

**Resolved (Key decision)**

(1) To note the achievements and progress against Corporate Plan priorities for 2018/19, as set out in Part A of the report.

(2) To agree changes to the Council's performance indicators for 2019/20, as recommended by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 10 June 2019.

(3) To agree the General Fund, HRA and Collection Fund financial performance for 2018/19, as set out in part B of the report.

(4) To approve the transfer from/to reserves as set out at appendix 4 to the report.

(5) To approve the amended capital programme as set out at appendix 5 to the report.

**Reason for decisions:**

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

**17 Treasury management annual report 2018/19**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer regarding the activities and performance of the Treasury Management services during 2018/19.

**Recommended to Council (Budget and policy framework):**

(1) To agree the annual Treasury Management report for 2018/19.

(2) To approve the 2018/19 prudential and treasury indicators detailed in the report.

**Reason for decisions:**

It is a duty of the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) to maintain and up to date set of Financial Procedure Rules to ensure the Council has effective governance of finances in place.

**18 Financial procedure rules**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer presenting them with updated Financial Procedure Rules.

Ahead of its submission to Full Council, the updated rules would be considered by the Audit and Governance Committee on 24 July 2019.

**Recommended to Council (Budget and Policy Framework):**

To review the draft Financial Procedure Rules in advance of them being submitted to Full Council for approval.

**Reason for decision:**

It is a duty of the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) to maintain an up to date set of Financial Procedure Rules to ensure the Council has effective governance of finances in place.

**19 Access audit**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Planning seeking their agreement for an audit to be undertaken to determine the current levels of accessibility of public buildings and services for disabled people.

Visiting member, Councillor Freebody addressed the Cabinet on this item.

Further work was needed to fully scope the audit and to determine the resource requirements. Once this was undertaken, a report would be considered by Cabinet at a future meeting.

Councillor Whippy outlined the ambition of the project that would see Eastbourne Borough Council as a leading expert on the topic and eventually advise other Councils.

The Cabinet congratulated Councillor Whippy for completing 12 hours of professional development at the Access Audit course.

**Resolved (Non-key decision):**

That Cabinet agree in principle to an access audit being undertaken, subject to a detailed scope being developed including resourcing requirements.

**Reason for decision:**

An access audit would enable the council to determine the current levels of accessibility for disabled people of public buildings and services in the Borough. As well as raising the profile of access issues the audit could also act as a catalyst for driving improvements in accessibility. It would also help

ensure that the council is fulfilling its duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## **20 Enabling the supply of homes for homeless families**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Planning presenting an outline of the plans to put in place a new cost-effective supply of temporary accommodation. This would provide homes for families to whom the council has accepted a duty under homelessness legislation.

The Cabinet commended the proposal as another example of improving people's lives whilst saving money for the authority.

Councillors Tutt and Holt declared a prejudicial interest in this item as Directors on Eastbourne Housing Investment Company. They both withdrew from the room whilst the item was considered. Councillor Bannister chaired the meeting for the duration of the item.

### **Resolved (Key decision):**

(1) To note the plan set out in the report, as to how the Council proposes to reduce the increased cost of temporary accommodation.

(2) To agree delegated authority for the Director of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet member for housing, to enter into Head & Underleases with Eastbourne Homes Investment Company Limited.

### **Reason for decisions:**

To provide Cabinet with assurance that the project meets the Council's strategic objectives, by reducing the high costs of using emergency accommodation.

The meeting ended at 7.29 pm

Councillor David Tutt (Chair)