

## **Cabinet**

### **Minutes of meeting held remotely on 10 February 2021 at 6.00 pm.**

#### **Present:**

Councillor David Tutt (Chair).

Councillors Stephen Holt (Deputy-Chair), Margaret Bannister, Jonathan Dow, Alan Shuttleworth, Colin Swansborough and Rebecca Whippy.

#### **Officers in attendance:**

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Homira Javadi (Chief Finance Officer), Philip Evans (Director of Tourism & Enterprise), Ian Fitzpatrick (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning), Tim Whelan (Director of Service Delivery), Becky Cooke (Assistant Director for Human Resources and Transformation), Andrew Clarke (Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Financial Planning)), Oliver Dixon (Head of Legal Services), Jane Goodall (Strategy and Partnership Lead, Quality Environment), Nathan Haffenden (Head of Commercial Business Development), Jo Harper (Head of Business Planning and Performance), Oliver Jones (Strategy and Partnership Lead), Millie McDevitt (Performance and Programmes Lead), Ola Owolabi (Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Corporate Finance)), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services) and Sean Towey (Head of Environment First).

#### **Also in attendance:**

Councillor Robert Smart (Opposition Leader).

### **33 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2020 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

### **34 Apologies for absence**

None were reported.

### **35 Declaration of members' interests**

Councillors Tutt and Shuttleworth declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the sixth officer recommendation for agenda item 9 (General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Capital Programme) as members of the AHLLP Executive Committee. They withdrew from the meeting whilst this section of the item was discussed and determined. Councillor Holt chaired the meeting for the duration of this section.

Councillor Bannister declared a personal interest in agenda item 13

(Adaptations to the waste collection service) as she resided in the area that would continue to receive a weekly collection service. She remained on the meeting and voted on the item.

### **36 Recovery and Reset**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive, updating them on progress of the Recovery and Reset Programme.

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

To note the progress made within the Recovery and Reset Programme

#### **Reason for decision:**

The Recovery and Reset Programme provides a structured and accountable approach for delivering the level of significant organisational change needed to respond to current and future challenges.

### **37 Corporate performance - quarter 3 - 2020/21**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Regeneration of Planning, updating members on the Council's performance against Corporate Plan priority actions, performance indicators and targets for the second quarter of the year 2020-21.

Performance highlights for the quarter included average days to process housing and council tax benefit claims, number of people registering for the Council's email service, waste collection, staff attendance and reducing the number of households in emergency accommodation. Thanks were conveyed to officers for their continued high performance.

Councillor Dow reported that work was ongoing to reduce the number of reported fly-tipping incidents.

Part B of the report detailed the Council's financial performance for the same quarter. Councillor Holt highlighted section 1.2 of the report, that detailed the additional costs and reduced income because of Covid-19.

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

(1) To note the achievements and progress against Corporate Plan priorities for 2020-21, as set out in part A of the report.

(2) To note the General Fund, HRA and Collection Fund financial performance for the quarter, as set out in part B of the report.

#### **Reason for decisions:**

To enable Cabinet members to consider specific aspects of the Council's

progress and performance.

### **38 General Fund Budget 2021/22 and Capital Programme**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer, regarding the updated General Fund budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy, together with updated Capital Programme position.

Councillor Holt presented the proposed budget and referred to section 2.1 of the report, that detailed the financial impact of Covid-19, including additional costs to the Council of £3.7 million and projected loss of £10 million. Thanks were conveyed to the Chief Finance Officer and the finance team for their work in preparing the reports during an extremely challenging period.

During August 2020, the Chief Finance Officer initiated a formal notification process with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), asking for financial support or capitalisation directive.

On 2nd February 2021, Luke Hall, MP and Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government in a letter addressed to Cllr Tutt, Leader of the Council, approved a total capitalisation direction to fund revenue expenditure not exceeding £6.8m, for the financial year 2020/21 and up to £6m for 2021/22. Councillor Holt added that there were significant costs associated with MHCLG's capitalisation offer and wanted the Secretary of State to reconsider some of the conditions laid out to ensure best value for all. Thanks were conveyed to Caroline Ansell, MP for Eastbourne for her continued support on behalf of the Council.

The Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 8 February 2021 recommended that the Cabinet accept the offer of support from MHCLG. Councillor Tutt confirmed that MHCLG had set a deadline of 9 February 2021 for a response to the offer. Councillor Tutt confirmed that he had accepted the offer, on behalf of the Council.

The budget proposed a rise in council tax of just under 10p a week, despite the pandemic leaving the council with a significant shortfall in funding. The proposed increase would ensure the council could continue to deliver essential services to residents and support businesses.

The Chief Executive gave an overview of the programme of activities as part of the Council's Recovery and Reset programme to revise service delivery and achieve the required savings.

Councillors Tutt and Shuttleworth declared a prejudicial interest in the sixth officer recommendation as members of the AHLLP Executive Committee. They withdrew from the meeting whilst this section of the item was discussed and determined. Councillor Holt chaired the meeting for the duration of this section.

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

- (1) The General Fund budget for 2020/21 (Revised) and 2021/22 (Original).
- (2) The Capital Programme and Financing for 2020/21 (Revised) and 2021/22 (Original).
- (3) An increase in the Council Tax for Eastbourne Borough Council of 2% resulting in a Band D charge of £256.74 for 2021/22.
- (4) The revised General Fund capital programme 2021/22 as set out at appendix 3 to the report.
- (5) To note the section 151 Officer's sign off as outlined in the report.

**Resolved (Key decision):**

(6) To delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance to:

- approve the making of all future loans to Aspiration Homes LLP and all drawdowns under both future and existing facilities.
- approve the loans as a Restricted Matter under the LLP Agreement with Lewes District Council.
- approve all documentation required to ensure compliance with the UK's new subsidy control regime and so that Right to Buy receipts are appropriated in accordance with all relevant requirements; and
- determine the terms of all agreements and associated documentation required to put into effect these delegations and to authorise the execution of all such documentation on behalf of the Council.

**Reason for decisions:**

The Cabinet must recommend to Full Council the setting of a revenue budget and associated council tax for the forthcoming financial year by law.

**39 Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators 2021/22, Capital Strategy & Investment Strategy**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer, seeking a recommendation to Full Council for the Council's Annual Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Strategy and Investment Strategy, together with the Treasury and Prudential Indicators for the next financial year.

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

- (1) To approve the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22 as set out at appendix A to the report.
- (2) To approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2021/22 as set out at paragraph 8 in the report.
- (3) To approve the Prudential and Treasury Indicators 2021/22 to 2023/24, as set out at paragraph 6 in the report.
- (4) To approve the Capital Strategy set out at appendix E to the report.

**Reason for decisions:**

It is a requirement of the budget setting process for the Council to review and approve the Prudential and Treasury indicators, Treasury Strategy, Capital Strategy and Investment Strategy.

**40 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget and Rent Setting 2021/22 and HRA Capital Programme 2020-24**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer, asking them to agree the detailed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals, rent levels, service charges and heating costs for 2021/22, and the HRA Capital Programme 2020/24.

**Recommend to Full Council (Budget and policy framework)**

- (1) The HRA budget for 2021/22 and revised 2020/21 budget as set out at appendix 1 to the report.
- (2) That social and affordable rents (including Shared Ownership) are increased by 1.5% in line with government policy.
- (3) That service charges for general needs properties are increased by 1.5% (CPI +1%).
- (4) That the service charge for the Older Persons' Sheltered Accommodations increases by an average of 1.5%.
- (5) That the Support charges for Sheltered Housing Residents are set at £7.82 per unit, per week, an increase of 1.5%.
- (6) That heating costs are increased by 1.5% (CPI+1%) in line with estimated costs set at a level designed to recover the actual cost.
- (7) That water charges are increased by 1.5% (CPI+1%) designed to recover the estimated cost of metered consumption.

(8) Garage rents are increased by 2.1% (September RPI+1%).

(9) To give delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio holders for Financial Services and Direct Assistance Services and the Chief Finance Officer to finalise Eastbourne Homes' Management Fee and Delivery Plan.

(10) The HRA Capital Programme as set out at appendix 2 to the report.

**Reason for decisions:**

The Cabinet has to recommend to Full Council the setting of the HRA revenue and capital budget and the level of social and affordable housing rents for the forthcoming year.

**41 Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership - Annual report (Eastbourne)**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, considering the 2020/21 performance of the Eastbourne and Lewes Community Safety Partnership.

Priorities of the partnership had been adapted to tackle the Covid-19 impact on crime trends, such as the increase in anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse. Thanks were conveyed to Oliver Jones, Strategy and Partnership Lead (Housing and Communities), and the Partnership for their work in tackling acquisitive crimes, detailed in section 4 of the report.

The Cabinet commented on the additional strain put on the Council, because of Brighton and Hove City Council's policy of placing many homeless people into emergency accommodation in Eastbourne over the recent months. A notice of motion on the topic was scheduled to be submitted for the Full Council meeting on 24 February 2021, calling on a change to the policy.

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

To note the achievements and activities of the Eastbourne and Lewes Community Safety Partnership in 2020/21.

**Reason for decision:**

For Cabinet to consider progress on delivery of the current Community Safety Plan.

**42 Adaptations to the waste collection service**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery, regarding proposed adaptations to the waste collection service. The adaptations were proposed to improve the town's recycling rate and to contribute to meeting the council's carbon reduction and financial objectives.

Eastbourne's current recycling rate was 35%, with the government recycling target for local authorities in 2020 set at 50%. Evidence had shown that in many towns where councils collected on an alternate weekly basis, residents recycled more of their household waste.

The council undertook an extensive consultation exercise, asking residents for their views about waste and recycling and that feedback had been invaluable in shaping the new plans for refuse and recycling.

The Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 8 February 2021 recommended that the Council's communications, including changes to the Waste Service, be made publicly accessible and be provided in an 'easy read' format. The Cabinet confirmed that this had already been actioned.

Thanks, were conveyed to officers for their work in producing the report.

**Resolved (Key decision):**

(1) To approve an alternate weekly refuse and recycling collection service as standard across the borough.

(2) To agree to certain areas and dwellings remaining on a weekly refuse collection with operational flexibility to adjust rounds as required.

(3) To authorise the Director of Service Delivery, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place Services and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, to develop and progress operational plans to ensure new service arrangements are in place for April 2021.

(4) To approve the business case as set out in section 6 and exempt appendix 4 of the report.

**Reason for decisions:**

Eastbourne Borough Council's ambitions for higher recycling rates and increased resource efficiency, alongside helping to meet challenging financial and carbon reduction objectives.

**43 Exclusion of the public**

**Resolved:**

That the public be excluded from the remainder of the remote 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 paragraph of schedule 12A and a description of the exempt information was shown below. (The requisite notice having been given under regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.)

**44 Adaptations to the waste collection service - Exempt Appendix 4**

The Cabinet considered the exempt appendix in relation to agenda item 13 (Adaptations to the waste collection service).

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

That the exempt appendix be noted.

**Reason for decisions:**

As detailed in minute 42.

Notes: (1) The appendix remained exempt. (2) Exempt information reasons 1 - Information relating to an individual.

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm

Councillor David Tutt (Chair)