

Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held in Ditchling and Telscombe Rooms - Southover House, Lewes on 10 June 2021 at 2.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor James MacCleary (Chair).
Councillors Zoe Nicholson (Vice-Chair), Matthew Bird, Julie Carr, Chris Collier, Johnny Denis, Emily O'Brien and Ruth O'Keeffe.

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Ian Fitzpatrick (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning), Tim Whelan (Director of Service Delivery), Oliver Dixon (Head of Legal Services) and Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services).

Also in attendance:

Councillor Isabelle Lington (Leader of the Opposition).

1 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2021 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were reported from Councillor Meyer. Apologies were also reported from visiting members Councillors Miller and Peterson.

3 Declarations of interest

None were declared.

4 Waiver of Contract Procedure Rules - Marshall Regen for Newhaven Towns Fund - 26 March 2021

The Cabinet noted the waiver of Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) for the appointment of Marshall Regen and Nairne Ltd for business case consultancy work for Stage 2 of the Newhaven Towns Fund bid, in accordance with section 2.4.1 (b) of the CPR.

NOTED.

5 Recovery and Reset

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive, updating them on

progress of the Recovery and Reset Programme.

Good progress had been made in delivering the savings targets set out in the Recovery and Reset Plans, which were agreed by Cabinet in autumn 2020. Key outcomes of the programme thus far were detailed at section 3.1 of the report.

Councillor Nicholson added that since publication of the report, the shortfall that had been identified for 21/22 had largely been met within the area of Service Delivery. The savings targets were based on assumptions that had been built into the Council's medium term financial strategy, such as no further financial support from central government. Councillor Nicholson stated that cross party partnership working was needed to lobby government further for the Fair Funding Review to be undertaken.

PPAC, held on 3 June 2021, considered the report and were supportive of the recommendation in full. Councillor Linington, Leader of the Opposition, was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion.

Resolved (Non-key decision):

To note the progress made with 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.

6 Community Wealth Building

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, providing them an update on progress with delivery of the Reimagining Lewes District Action Plan.

The recommendations set out in the report were part of Lewes District Council's community wealth building strategy which aimed to keep as much wealth as possible in the local economy through the creation of new local jobs and new locally owned enterprise, to ensure a sustainable future.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 3 June 2021, considered the report and were supportive of officer recommendation (a) in the report but did not support officer recommendations (b) and (c). Councillor Linington, Leader of the Opposition, was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion.

In response to the comments from PPAC, it was advised that the £100k additional cost would be funded from reserves already established as part of the 2021/22 budget to accelerate the capital programme delivery, of which Community Wealth Building formed a significant element.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To note the progress made in delivering the Reimagining Lewes District Action Plan and to agree the Re-imagining Lewes District Community Wealth Building Strategy set out at appendix A to the report.

(2) To agree £80k to fund a two-year fixed term post to oversee the implementation of the Strategy.

(3) To agree a one-off allocation of £20k to enable the development of initiatives to promote and enable social entrepreneurialism, with both additional cost items being funded from reserves.

Reason for decisions:

The Council is committed to developing a Community Wealth Building approach as part of the Corporate Plan adopted in February 2020.

7 Biodiversity Strategy

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery, introducing the Biodiversity Strategy and associated work plan.

The purpose of this strategy was to set out ambitious yet achievable aims and actions to better tackle biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation through nature-based solutions across the district and the wider inter-connected landscape.

As part of the strategy, the Council would work with its partners, including town and parish councils, to encourage them to adopt its policies on the land that they own and manage, as well as on land that the Council manage on their behalf.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 3 June 2021, considered the report and were supportive of the recommendations in full. Councillor Linington, Leader of the Opposition, was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion. Councillor Linington also added her support to the proposals, in particular Biodiversity Net Gain.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To approve the Lewes District Council Biodiversity Strategy 2021- 2025, set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

(2) To approve the associated Action Plan, set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

Reason for decisions:

To set out the principles and approach to supporting biodiversity and to provide

a framework and work plan for Lewes District Council in its collaborative approach to protecting and enhancing natural assets.

8 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23

The Cabinet considered the report of Director of Service Delivery, seeking their approval to commence the statutory consultation process that the Council would need to follow to make changes to the current Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR) scheme.

The proposals would increase support for low-income families and people in financial difficulty.

The Council would aim to consult on adopting a scheme for 2022/23 that:

- a) Calculates LCTR on 100% of claimant's council tax liability
- b) Does not apply the Minimum-Income Floor to self-employed claimants
- c) Does not have a minimum award value

Following the consultation process, the Cabinet could then make the relevant recommendations to Full Council in February 2022.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 3 June 2021, considered the report and were not supportive of the officer recommendations set out in the report. Councillor Linington, Leader of the Opposition, was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion.

Resolved (Key decision):

That Cabinet, with the objective of implementing a revised Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23:

(1) Authorise the Chief Finance Officer to enter into consultation with the major precepting authorities

(2) Authorise the drafting of a scheme that calculates a Council Tax Reduction of 100% of a person's council tax liability, removes the Minimum-Income Floor for the self-employed and removes the £5.00 minimum award

(3) On completion of the consultation and drafting authorised under (1) and (2) above, authorise the Director of Service Delivery to consult with other interested parties.

Reason for decisions:

Any billing authority wishing to revise its Council Tax Reduction scheme for the working-age must follow the statutory process as set out in this report.

9 Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, seeking their approval to undertake an 'Issues & Options' consultation as part of the preparation of the new Local Plan.

Thanks were conveyed to the Local Plan Steering Group for their input into the 'Issues and Options' document and officers for their extensive work.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 3 June 2021, considered the report and were supportive of the recommendations in full. Councillor Linington, Leader of the Opposition, was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion.

Resolved (Non-key decision):

(1) That Cabinet authorise the principle of undertaking public consultation on 'Issues & Options' for the Local Plan for an eight-week period between 9th July and 3rd September 2021.

(2) That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure, to approve and release the 'Issues and Options' document for consultation.

Reasons for decisions:

(1) To meet the requirements of Regulation 18 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) in the preparation of a Local Plan.

(2) To ensure that the Lewes Local Plan is progressed in accordance with the timetable set out in the Lewes Local Development Scheme.

10 Planning Local Validation List

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, seeking their approval for the adoption and publication of the Council Local Validation List that outlined the supporting and evidential requirements of planning applications.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 3 June 2021, considered the report and were supportive of the recommendations in full. Councillor Linington, Leader of the Opposition, was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To agree the publication and use of Planning Local Validation List contained at Appendix 1 and 2 to the report.

(2) To provide delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure, to make minor or technical amendments to the Planning Local Validation List to its publication or as otherwise required following publication.

Reasons for decisions:

(1) To publicise the Council's expectation for the delivery of a robust planning application validation process.

(2) To make minor amendments to address technical, drafting issues or to take account of changing legislative requirements.

The meeting ended at 3.20 pm

Councillor James MacCleary (Chair)