Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held in Ditchling and Telscombe Rooms at Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1AB on 11 November 2021 at 2.30 pm.

Present:
Councillor Zoe Nicholson (Chair).
Councillors James MacCleary (Vice-Chair), Matthew Bird, Julie Carr, Chris Collier, Johnny Denis, Stephen Gauntlett and William Meyer.

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), Becky Cooke (Assistant Director for Human Resources and Transformation), Oliver Dixon (Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services) and Peter Sharp (Head of Regeneration).

Also in attendance:
Councillor Isabelle Linington (Leader of the Opposition).

31 Welcome

The Chair welcomed Councillor Stephen Gauntlett to his first Cabinet meeting, following his appointment at the end of September 2021.

32 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2021 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

33 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were reported from Councillor O'Keeffe and visiting members, Councillors Miller and Peterson.

34 Declarations of interest

None were declared.

35 Recovery and Reset

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive, updating them on the progress of the Recovery and Reset (R&R) Programme. Details on the programme savings were set out at Appendix A to the report.

As set out in further detail within the report, good progress had been made in delivering the R&R plans which were agreed by Cabinet in the autumn of 2020.

The Chief Executive reported that as agreed at the R&R Board, future reports on R&R would likely be integrated into the standard quarterly performance report.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 3 November 2021, considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendation in full. Councillor Linington, Leader of the Conservative Group, was in attendance and commented on whether next year's savings could be achieved due to inflation, however acknowledged that this would be considered as part of the budget setting process.

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.

36   Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy- Annual update 2021

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, noting progress to date and approve publication of the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy Annual Update, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Analysis had shown that the council's emissions had reduced by 15% on the 2018/19 baseline, while the district's carbon footprint had reduced by 5.2% for the two years from 2019 to 2021. An 11.4% reduction in carbon emission had also been recorded from the Council's vehicles.

The Council had continued to progress regional and local projects, working with partners as set out in section 1.5 of the report.

The Cabinet commented on the influence that the Strategy was having on other councils, organisations and the wider community.

Councillor Nicholson commented on those actions contained in the plan within the Council's control that were marked as red or amber. It was requested that if those actions had resource constraints, that this be built into the budget setting process.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 3 November 2021, supported the officer recommendations in full. Councillor Linington, Leader of the Conservative Group, was in attendance and commented on the

positive potential of the various initiatives set out in the report.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To approve the Climate Change and Sustainability Annual Update as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, for publication on the Council's website

(2) To note progress to date on the strategy action plan as contained within Appendix 1 to the report.

Reason for decisions:

To progress the aims of the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration (2019) to make the Council Net Zero Carbon by 2030 and to assist the same aim to be achieved within the wider district.

37   Newhaven Town Deal - Update

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, providing an update on the Newhaven Town Deal, following its successful £19.3 million bid from government and to seek delegated authority to sign off business cases to unlock grant funding.

Officers had prepared detailed business cases for the each of the Town Deal's seven strategic programmes and would be scrutinised by government before funds were released.

The government had offered all towns an advance of up to 5% of funds, equating of £965,000 for Newhaven, which would be taken out of the £19.3 million offer, with the objective of commencing projects quicker. The first investment would likely be a new pedestrian crossing and a boat slipway.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 3 November 2021, considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendation in full. Councillor Linington, Leader of the Conservative Group, was in attendance and commented that whilst Newhaven was a priority, in future the Council should also look at funding for other areas of the District. It was added that it was important that costs associated with maintaining projects, following completion, did not have a significant impact on the Council's finances. The Cabinet urged Cllr Linington to make these points directly to government ministers, given the current process for acquiring funding.

Following discussion, Cabinet unanimously agreed to a minor amendment to resolution 2, replacing Leader with Lead Member for Finance and Assets and this was set out below.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To note the Newhaven Town Deal offer of £19.3 million from Government.

(2) To delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, Lead Member for Finance and Assets and Lead Member for Regeneration and Prosperity to:

(a) Review and sign-off completed business cases for each of the 7 Strategic Programmes within the Newhaven Town Deal, to unlock funding from Government.

(b) Enter, or authorise entry into, all necessary documentation with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to receive the advanced funding (as specified in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3 of the report) and the subsequent Town Deal funding.

(c) Enter, or authorise entry into, all necessary documentation with Delivery Partners, to ensure that appropriate monitoring and evaluation of target outcomes is undertaken in line with the Council's procedures and processes.

Reasons for decisions:

(1) The Council received an offer of £19.3million for the Newhaven Town Deal on 15 July 2021. Following this offer, Heads of Terms for the Newhaven Town Deal were signed by the Chief Executive, as well as the Chair of the Newhaven Town Deal Board.

(2) To unlock funding, detailed business cases in line with the HM Treasury Green Book must be provided for each of the 7 Strategic Programmes outlined in the Town Investment Plan.

(3) DLUHC requires the Council – as the Accountable Body for the funding – to follow its usual assurance processes to sign-off all business cases and allow the funding to be unlocked.

(4) DLUHC has offered the Council an advance of 5% of the total funding offer to be spent before the end of the 21/22 financial year.

(5) Newhaven remains a regeneration priority for the Council, building upon the Enterprise Zone, FHSF and other funding secured. The regeneration programme fits strongly with the Council's Community Wealth Building focus.

The meeting ended at 2.51 pm

Councillor Zoe Nicholson (Chair)