

Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held in Room 209/210 on the Second Floor, The Marine Workshops, Railway Quay, Newhaven, East Sussex, BN9 0ER. on 26 September 2024 at 2.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Zoe Nicholson (Chair).
Councillors Christine Robinson (Deputy-Chair), Chris Collier, Wendy Maples, Emily O'Brien and Mark Slater.

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Becky Cooke (Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer), Kate Slattery (Head of Legal Services), Nadeem Din (Planning Policy - Lead), Luke Dreeling (Performance Lead), Nathan Haffenden (Assistant Director, Property and Development), Jo Harper (Head of Business Planning and Performance), Steven Houchin (Deputy Chief Finance Officer) and Peter Jenion (Project Manager - Community Wealth Building).

Also in attendance:

Councillor Christine Brett (Chair of Policy and Performance Advisory Committee), Councillor Julie Carr and Councillor Stephen Gauntlett (Leader of Liberal Democrat Group; Chair of Audit and Governance Committee).

18 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2024 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

19 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were reported from Councillors Denis and O'Connor.

20 Declarations of interest

None were declared.

21 Portfolio progress and performance report quarter 1 - 2024-2025

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Finance and Performance, regarding the council's progress and performance in respect of service areas for the first quarter of the year (April-June 2024). Further details were detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 19 September 2024 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendation in full.

In referencing the key performance indicator in relation to average time taken to answer calls, Councillor Robinson advised that performance for quarter 2 was currently at 5 minutes, which indicated an improvement on quarter 1.

Cabinet also commended the work undertaken by officers in significantly reducing the number of households living in emergency accommodation.

Resolved (Non-key decision):

To note progress and performance for quarter 1 2024/25.

Reason for decision:

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

22 Revenue & Capital Financial Monitoring Report - Quarter 1 2024/25

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Finance and Performance, providing an assessment of the Council's financial performance against its approved 2024/25 budget, incorporating key financial risks, issues and opportunities for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The forecast outturn position for 2024/25 at quarter 1, was a balanced position, as detailed in Table 1 of the report. Since the last meeting of the Cabinet, a Joint Shared Services Board had been set up with Eastbourne Borough Council to ensure transparency, support and accountability between the two authorities, given the current financial challenges affecting Eastbourne Borough Council due to homelessness and emergency accommodation pressures.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 19 September 2024 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendations in full. Councillor Brett, Chair of PPAC was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion and questions raised at that meeting.

Councillor Gauntlett, Chair of Audit and Governance Committee and the Deputy Chief Finance Officer, updated the Cabinet on the latest position in relation to the outstanding external audits up to the financial year 2022/23, ahead of the government's deadline date of 13 December 2023.

Resolved (Non-key decision):

(1) To note the forecast outturn position for 2024/25 and associated risks.

(2) To delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Performance and the

portfolio holder for finance, assets and community wealth building, to apply the required budget virements to support effective management of the overall budget.

(3) To note Appendix 1 and 2 to the report.

Reason for decisions:

To update members on the financial position of the Council and ensure that the Authority complies with its financial regulations.

23 New Homes Principles (Building Better Council Housing)

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, regarding the implementation of New Homes Principles, underpinning the council's housing delivery programme.

The Cabinet thanked officers and commended the partnership work with Tenants of Lewes District (TOLD) in developing the principles.

It was suggested that the Local Government Association be approached over sharing the approach to other authorities through a case study.

The Chair commented that the Council would continue to engage in early discussions on section 106 agreements where possible, to influence and apply the proposed principles on developments.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 19 September 2024 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendation in full. Councillor Brett, Chair of PPAC was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion and questions raised at that meeting.

Councillor Gauntlett, Leader of the Opposition, spoke in support of the proposals, and commented on the need to pressure central government on unbuilt planning areas.

Resolved (Non-key decision):

To approve and adopt the New Homes Principles.

Reason for decision:

To create a framework that supports in the design and delivery of new council housing.

24 Community Wealth Building update

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, providing an update on the progress of the Council's Community Wealth Building programme.

The report detailed that the council's local spend over the 4 years had doubled, with 59% of its expenditure being within the boundaries of Sussex.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 19 September 2024 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendations in full. Councillor Brett, Chair of PPAC was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion and questions raised at that meeting.

As there had been a few minor changes to the Strategy since publication, it was proposed that officer recommendation (2) be amended to allow final sign off by the Leader of the Council. This was unanimously accepted by Cabinet and reflected in the resolution below.

Resolved (Key decision):

- (1) To note the progress made in delivering Community Wealth Building.
- (2) To note and adopt the Community Wealth Building Strategy, as set out at appendix 1 to the report, subject to final sign off by the Leader of the Council.
- (3) To agree to an approach being made to East Sussex Pension Fund seeking agreement to invest more in local projects to retain wealth and create jobs locally.

Reasons for decisions:

- (1) The Council is committed to developing a Community Wealth Building approach as part of the Corporate Plan 2024-28. This report is the annual update on this work to Cabinet.
- (2) The strategy document would provide a public facing overview of the Council's activities and future plans in relation to community wealth building.
- (3) East Sussex Pension Fund could provide a significant contribution to the local economy if it invested more in local projects, which could benefit residents, but also many members of the scheme who may live in the area.

25 Supporting Authority Approval for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) currently being prepared by the Responsible Authority, ESCC

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, addressing requirements of the Environment Act 2021 relating to the Council's Supporting Authority role in reviewing both the pre-consultation draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and the final pre-publication LNRS. East Sussex County Council is the Responsible Authority and would provide the draft and final pre-publication documentation.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 19 September 2024 considered the report and were supportive of the officer

recommendations in full.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To note and welcome the Council's role as a Supporting Authority in relation to Local Nature Recovery Strategies, under The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023;

(2) To delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant Lead member, to:

a) Approve and submit a response to the Responsible Authority, ESCC, on any pre-consultation draft of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy within 28 days as required by the Council's role as a Supporting Authority under The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023;

b) Consider the pre-publication draft of any Local Nature Recovery Strategy and, if the Chief Executive considers that the draft strategy cannot be justified based on the results of the consultation or that it is materially deficient, to submit a publication advisory notice to the Responsible Authority within 28 days, as set out in regulation 15 of The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023.

Reason for decisions:

The report addresses requirements of the Environment Act 2021 relating to the council's LNRS Supporting Authority role (to East Sussex County Council as Responsible Authority) and seeks delegated authority to approve and respond on any pre-consultation draft of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy within 28 days, as required, and consider the pre-publication draft strategy, also within 28 days. Delegated authority is sought as these timelines would not allow for the matter to be considered at Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 3.13 pm

Councillor Zoe Nicholson (Chair)