

Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held in Room 209/210 on the Second Floor, The Marine Workshops, Railway Quay, Newhaven, East Sussex, BN9 0ER. on 5 December 2024 at 2.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Christine Robinson (Chair).
Councillors Johnny Denis, Wendy Maples, Emily O'Brien, Laurence O'Connor and Mark Slater.

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Homira Javadi (Director of Finance and Performance (Section 151 Officer)), Ian Fitzpatrick (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning), 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), Nick Ducatel (Assistant Director, Revenues and Benefits), Luke Dreeling (Performance Lead), Steven Houchin (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Lynn Ingram (Interim Head of Financial Planning) and Lisa Rawlinson (Head of Regeneration).

Also in attendance:

Councillor Christine Brett (Chair of Policy and Performance Advisory Committee).

32 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2024 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 Cabinet members, Councillors Collier and Nicholson and visiting member, Councillor Gauntlett.

34 Declarations of interest

None were declared.

35 Public question time

The Cabinet received a written question from Tony Rowell, in relation to litter clearance at Landport Recreation Ground. Councillor Maples responded to the question verbally at the meeting.

36 Greater Brighton Economic Board - Admission of New Member to the Board

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, seeking its approval for the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB) to become a member of the Greater Brighton Economic Board.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 26 November 2024 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendations in full.

Resolved (Non-key decision):

(1) To ratify the appointment of NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB) to the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB) and Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee (GBEJC), subject to formal agreement of NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board.

(2) To note that NHS Sussex's Integrated Care Board appointment is dependent on all the local authorities represented on the Board approving its appointment.

Reason for decisions:

(1) The Greater Brighton Economic Board was founded in April 2014 as part of the Greater Brighton City Region's City Deal with Government.

(2) The Board comprises the Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee (GBEJC), on which the local authorities are represented; and the Greater Brighton Business Partnership (GBBP) on which business, university and further education sectors are situated.

37 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive, seeking its recommendation to Full Council that the 2024/25 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme is adopted as the 2025/26 scheme.

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) provided financial support to the most disadvantaged working-age residents by helping them meet their council tax liabilities and allows about 2,000 of those experiencing the greatest hardship to not pay any council tax at all.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 26 November 2024 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendations in full. Councillor Brett, Chair of PPAC, was in attendance to report on PPAC's discussion.

Recommended to Full Council (Budget and policy framework):

(1) Cabinet recommends to Full Council that the 2024/25 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme is adopted as the 2025/26 scheme. This is subject to any changes announced in the budget due on 30 October 2024 and annual DWP welfare benefit uprating due in January 2025.

Resolved (Key decision):

(2) Subject to Full Council adoption of the Scheme, Cabinet grants the Assistant Director for Revenues and Benefits delegated authority

(a) to implement the Scheme, such delegated authority to include any measures necessary for or incidental to its management and administration; and

(b) if necessary, and in accordance with paragraph 2.3, to amend the Scheme in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Assets and Community wellbeing

(3) That the Exceptional Hardship Scheme continues in 2025/26 subject to funds being available.

Reason for decisions:

The Council must review the scheme each year and adopt a scheme for the coming financial year.

38 Lewes District Local Plan - Update and plans for public consultation

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive, providing an update on the Local Plan and seeking its approval to commence the first of a two phased approach to the statutory public consultation on the Local Plan 'defining out policies and early site allocation proposals' under Regulation 18.

Local plans set out where future development will take place, such as new homes and locations for business growth, as well the local policy requirements against which future planning applications will be judged.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 26 November 2024 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendations in full. Councillor Brett, Chair of PPAC, was in attendance to report on PPAC's discussion.

During discussions it was agreed to the addition of minor wording in the consultation document (Draft Policy HW6: Healthy Local Food) that proposals that lead to the loss of local food infrastructure would be resisted. Thanks were expressed to officers, the cross-party Local Plan Steering Group and contributions from Town and Parish Councils as part of the process.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To agree that the Lewes District Council Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 'defining our policies and early site allocation proposals', attached as Annex 1 (and its annexes) to the report, be published for public consultation for an eight-week period. This will be the first phase to a two-phase approach to consultation on the local plan draft policies and site allocations. The second phase of consultation will take place later in 2025 following publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework, and the availability of further evidence, including transport modelling.

(2) To delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure, authority to make any necessary amendments (corrections or improving the presentation) to the consultation documents (including Annexes) prior to publication.

Reason for decisions:

To progress work on preparing the Local Plan in accordance with the relevant regulations. This includes consultation at Regulation 18 of the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

Work on the local plan commenced in 2020 and notwithstanding the government's proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework published earlier in the autumn, and alongside the delay in the availability of key supporting evidence, progress on the local plan is at a stage where it would benefit from public consultation before its content is further developed.

A nuanced two-phase approach is being taken to how we want to take forward public consultation. This first phase presents the draft policies and an initial set of sites which are considerations for allocation. These sites will be revisited, alongside others not included in this phase, as part of the second phase consultation later in 2025. The second phase will include the full final draft policies and all site allocations.

Through this first phase consultation, we want to invite comments on the draft policies and the included sites.

Following the second phase of consultation under Regulation 18, the final Plan will be prepared and consulted upon under Regulation 19 prior to it being submitted for Examination in Public.

39 Portfolio progress and performance report quarter 2 - 2024-2025

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Finance and Performance, considering the council's progress and performance in respect of service areas for the second quarter of the year (July-September 2024), as shown at Appendix 1 to the report.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 26 November

2024 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendations in full. Councillor Brett, Chair of PPAC, was in attendance to report on PPAC's discussion.

Cabinet commented on the key performance indications around waste and recycling, reduction in households living in emergency accommodation, call response times and quality of calls.

Resolved (Non-key decision):

To note progress and performance for Quarter 2 2024/25.

Reason for decision:

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

40 Revenue & Capital Financial Monitoring Report - Quarter 2 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.

The forecast outturn position for 2024/25 as at Q2 2024/25 was an overspend of £335k as shown in Table 1 of the report.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 26 November 2024 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendations in full.

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 to apply the required budget virements to support effective management of the overall budget.

(3) To delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Planning and Cabinet member for finance, assets and community wealth building to take all necessary steps to enter into and complete a sub-lease and grant agreement with Wave Active for Ringmer Swimming Pool, as set out within paragraph 5.5 of the report.

(4) 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.

41 Interim medium term financial strategy

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer delivered a presentation to the Cabinet on the interim medium term financial strategy position of the authority.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 26 November 2024 also received a presentation. Councillor Brett, Chair of PPAC, was in attendance to report on PPAC's discussion.

NOTED

42 Council tax base and non-domestic rates income for 2025/26

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Finance and Performance, approving the Council Tax Base and net yield from Business Rate Income for 2025/26 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 26 November 2024 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendations in full. Councillor Brett, Chair of PPAC, was in attendance to report on PPAC's discussion.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To agree the provisional Council Tax Base of 38,954.9 for 2025/26 for the whole area and that the Council Tax Base for each of the Town and Parish areas of the District shall be set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

(2) To agree that the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Financial Services, determine the final amounts for the Council Tax Base for 2025/26.

(3) To agree that the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, determine net yield from Business Rate income for 2025/26.

Reason for decisions:

Cabinet is required to approve the Tax Base which will be used for the purposes of calculating the 2025/26 Council Tax.

The meeting ended at 3.27 pm

Councillor Christine Robinson (Chair)