

Cabinet



Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday, 22 March 2017 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Councillors **David Tutt** (chairman and leader of the council), **Gill Mattock** (deputy chairman and deputy leader of the council), **Margaret Bannister**, **Alan Shuttleworth**, **Troy Tester**, **John Ungar** and **Steve Wallis**.

Terrorist attack near Parliament: All present stood in silence in memory of those killed in today's terrorist attack on Westminster Bridge and the precincts of Parliament.

79 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2017.

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2017 were submitted and approved and the chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

80 Councillor John Ungar.

The chairman welcomed Councillor John Ungar to membership of the cabinet. He had appointed Councillor Ungar on 10 March 2017 with responsibility for community safety. The appointment had been made in the light of the recent report on Sussex Police and concerns relating to their performance in dealing with domestic violence and anti-social behaviour and his wish that Councillor Ungar perform a 'watchdog' role on behalf of the council. He emphasised the council's continuing support for and partnership working with the police but highlighted concerns that reductions in government funding would have upon the ability of the police to effectively carry out their duties.

81 Declarations of interests by members.

Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) by members as required under section 31 of the Localism Act and other interests as required by the council's code of conduct and regulation 12(2)(d) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Councillors Tutt and Ungar both declared personal (and non-prejudicial interest) in matters relating to minute 85 (establishment of a joint housing investment partnership with Lewes District Council) as they were council appointed non-executive directors of Eastbourne Housing Investment Co. Ltd. They withdrew from the meeting for this item.

82 Corporate performance - Quarter 3 2016/17 [KD].

82.1 Councillor Di Cara addressed the cabinet and asked how confident were they that performance relating to call answering (indicators CS_010

and 011) would meet the predicted forecasts for quarter 4. The director of service delivery responded saying that monitoring over the last 6 weeks showed performance within target ('green') and he expected this improved position to be maintained to quarter end.

82.2 Cabinet considered the report of the chief executive reviewing the council's performance against corporate plan priority indicators and action targets; financial performance of general fund revenue expenditure, housing revenue account and capital programme and treasury management activities for the third quarter of 2016/17.

82.3 Appendix 1 gave detailed information on non-financial performance indicators and highlighted those giving cause for concern as well as the best performing indicators in section 2 of the report. Members were advised that the devolved budget scheme should be fully spent by year-end. The chairman noted that it was a feature of this annual scheme that spending tended to be concentrated towards year-end given the time needed to develop and approve projects. Members asked that their appreciation be recorded for the efforts of Customer First staff for their improved call answering performance and also for the continued fast response to fly-tipping incidents.

82.4 The position of the general fund at the end of December was a variance of £257,000 on net expenditure, representing 1.7% of the net budget. Total service expenditure showed a variance of £83,000, including:-

Item	£,000s
Solarbourne - income above target	(76)
Summons - income above target	(74)
Catering - increase in net income	(73)
Street Cleansing contract savings	(55)
Car Parking income above target	(50)
Airbourne	74
IT staffing	69
Customer First - net staff costs	50
Corporate landlord - repairs and maintenance overspends	50
MMI scheme of arrangement levy	47
Business RV - finder software	40
PR contract additional work	38
Bed and breakfast accommodation	30

82.5 The contingency fund currently stood at £116,000 and this would be required to fund the re-profiling of the joint transformation programme savings target for the year. The overall projected outturn for the year showed a variance of £92,000. This was within an acceptable tolerance level, however, management continued to monitor this position, to ensure that this final outturn position was maintained or improved. Members' approval was also sought for transfers from reserves and virements as set out in appendix 3. These transfers were in line with the approved financial strategy.

82.6 Housing revenue account performance was currently above target by £180,000; mainly due to the new properties let at affordable rents not included in the budget (£48,000), a reduction required for the provision for bad debts (£76,000) and the slow take up of the under occupation scheme (£48,000).

82.7 The detailed capital programme was shown in appendix 4. Actual expenditure was low compared to the programme. This was mainly due to expected spend in quarter 4 for major purchases and the commencement of construction phase of the Devonshire Park project. The chairman announced that following the outcome of recent public consultation he had asked that no further work be undertaken in respect of the proposed sale of the downland farms. He asked cabinet to agree to this item being removed from the capital programme.

82.8 The collection fund forecast for council tax was indicating a surplus of £973,000 and a deficit for business rates of £854,000. This would be allocated to/collected from preceptors during 2017/18. The council tax surplus (1.65% of the gross debit) was due to a combination of factors including better performance against the collection allowance within the council tax base and a reduction in the council tax reduction scheme caseload. The business rates deficit was as a result of the ongoing risk from the number of backdated appeals outstanding. The total number of appeals outstanding as at 31 December 2016 was 313 with a total rateable value of £23.8m. The deficit represented 2.48% of the total debit for the year.

82.9 The annual treasury management and prudential indicators for 2017/18 had been approved by cabinet and council in February. During the quarter to 31 December 2016 the council had operated within all the treasury limits and prudential indicators set out in the council's treasury management strategy statement and in compliance with the council's treasury management practices.

82.10 The report sought cabinet approval for the write off of irrecoverable debts totalling £63,885.78 where all other methods of recovery had been unsuccessful and it was not deemed appropriate to pursue the debts further. Details of the write offs were listed in a confidential appendix, together with brief explanations of the circumstances (exempt information reason: 3 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

82.11 Resolved (key decision): (1) That performance against national and local performance indicators and actions from the 2016/20 corporate plan be agreed.

(2) That the general fund, housing revenue account and collection fund financial performance for the quarter ended December 2016, as set out in sections 3,4 and 6 of the report, be agreed.

- (3) That the transfers from reserves and virements as set out in appendix 3 of the report be agreed.
- (4) That the capital programme as set out in appendix 4 of the report be agreed.
- (5) That the treasury management performance as set out in section 7 of the report be agreed.
- (6) That the write offs as set out in the exempt appendix be approved.
- (7) That cabinet agree to formally remove the sale of freehold of the downland farms from the capital programme following the recent public consultation and poll.

83 Statement of community involvement (KD).

83.1 Cabinet considered the report of the director of regeneration and planning seeking approval for a public consultation on an updated statement of community involvement. The statement set out the council's approach to consulting the local community and other stakeholders on planning matters within the local planning authority boundary. The existing statement was now considered to be out of date as a result of changes in legislation and national policy since it was adopted in 2006.

83.2 A new statement was being prepared to guide public consultation in the preparation of a new local plan for the town. The draft statement was appended to the report. Past experience, best practice, the geo-demographic profile of the town and results from the Resident Consultation Survey (2015) and Community Survey on Participation in Planning Consultation (2016) had identified issues that had been addressed within the SCI.

83.3 It was proposed that public consultation on the draft statement should take place for an 8-week period between 24 March and 19 May 2017. Following consultation, comments would be considered and adoption was anticipated for July 2017.

83.4 Resolved (key decision): (1) That the statement of community involvement be approved for publication for an 8-week consultation period to receive representations and comments.

(2) That the director of regeneration and planning be given delegated authority, in consultation with the lead cabinet member, to make minor amendments before the commencement of the consultation period.

84 Eastbourne business improvement district (BID) (KD).

84.1 Cabinet considered the report of the director of service delivery detailing proposals submitted to the council for the establishment of a business improvement district (BID) covering Eastbourne's town centre. BIDs were business led partnerships which are created through a ballot

process to deliver additional services to local businesses. The statutory framework for establishing and operating a BID was provided for in Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2003 and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004.

84.2 A BID was a defined area in which a levy was charged on all business rate payers in addition to the business rates bill. This levy would be used to develop projects which would benefit businesses in the local area. There was no limit on what projects or services could be provided through a BID. The only requirement was that it should be something that was in addition to services provided by local authorities. The BID proposer was required to develop a proposal and submit this to the local authority, along with a business plan. Businesses that were subject to the levy, as set out in the proposals, vote in a ballot. This determined whether the scheme went ahead. A successful vote was one that has a simple majority both in votes cast and in rateable value of votes cast. The maximum period that a BID levy could be charged was for 5 years. Once the term was completed the BID would automatically cease. If the BID company wanted to continue its activities it must hold a new ballot. Changes could be made to the arrangements without a ballot, but only where the original arrangements contain provision to this effect and only where the change would not alter the geographical boundary of the BID, increase the levy or cause anyone to pay the levy who had not previously been liable.

84.3 A BID steering group had been established with representation from a wide range of businesses in the town centre. Since 2015 they had been developing a BID proposal with a view to a ballot being held this coming May and for the BID levy to apply for 2017/18 and future years. The proposal was for a levy of 1.5% on each business in the defined area with an annual rateable value of £6,000 or more. This was expected to raise £300,000 a year. A copy of the BID business plan was appended to the report. The plan, as well as describing the BID proposals, included a map of the BID area and spending plans.

84.4 The stated priorities and goals of the proposed BID were:

- 1. Bringing more customers to Eastbourne.*
- 2. Attracting more businesses and jobs to Eastbourne.*
- 3. Creating a lively and attractive alternative to on-line shopping.*
- 4. Promoting Eastbourne as a place that residents and visitors will want to come back to time and again.*
- 5. Delivering all of these ambitions, whilst at the same time reducing your business costs.*

The BID promoters had promised that in the next 5 years they would deliver various initiatives around four themes. The themes were:

- 1. Dressing our town – for example, invest in winter and Christmas lighting to brighten up the town between October and March.*
- 2. Footfall, Marketing and Promotion – for example, employ street ambassadors to meet and greet visitors to the town during peak periods.*

3. *Safe and Secure – for example, establish a business led night time economy working group to take advantage of this great opportunity*
4. *Stronger Together – for example, lobby for better parking controls and restrictions.*

84.5 The BID would be managed entirely by business people from within the BID area and they would oversee the delivery of projects detailed in the business plan. Anyone from the BID area could stand to join the BID steering group at the AGM in 2018. After the first year of operation, a not for profit company, limited by guarantee, would be set up. In the meantime, the steering group would manage the BID.

84.6 The ballot of business ratepayers would to be held in the period 4 May and ending 5pm 31 May 2017. The 'ballot holder' was the council's returning officer. Given the novelty and complexity of the BID ballot and the overlap of the ballot period with the county council elections this May, and also to ensure independent scrutiny and secrecy of the ballot process, Electoral Reform Services would be engaged to undertake all aspects of the ballot process.

84.7 The BID proposers had invited some 800 businesses from the proposed BID area to take part in an initial online survey in 2015, designed to assess support and determine priorities for town centre initiatives. Of those who responded, 68% were wholeheartedly in favour and 29% stated they were not yet sure. Since then, some 250 one-to-one consultation meetings have been held. Further individual consultations would continue in the weeks and months leading up to the ballot. Consultation had also included talks and presentations with interested local businesses and organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Business and the local town centre crime reduction partnership.

84.8 The council was expected to satisfy itself that the BID proposal did not conflict with any existing local authority policy nor propose a disproportionate burden on particular businesses by way of an unfair levy charge on a certain 'class' of levy payers, for example by an inappropriate manipulation of the BID boundary. Review of the BID proposals had not indicated that there were any reasons to believe that the levy proposals and charges were unreasonable or would impose disproportionate charges on any ratepayers. The BID proposals were broadly in line with planning policy and there was nothing in the proposals that would clash with the council's corporate plan. The BID proposals were consistent with these aspirations and would help to ensure that the town centre continued to be a place that businesses would want to invest and develop in.

84.9 It was a requirement of the BID regulations that the BID proposals included a statement of the existing baseline services provided by the local authority or any other public authority in the proposed BID area. The baseline statement was currently being prepared drawing together information being provided by public bodies including East Sussex

County Council and Sussex Police as well as the borough council. As this work was ongoing it was recommended that final approval of the statement was delegated to the chief finance officer.

84.10 The council was required to manage the collection and enforcement of BID levy charges. In practice the BID body and the local authority establish a levy collection agreement known as an 'operating agreement'. The principle of this agreement is to define the principles and processes for collecting the levy; enforcing the payment of the levy; reporting on collection and bad debt; monitoring provisions between the BID and the local authority; and providing regular detailed and summary information on the service to the BID as the client. The terms of the operating agreement were currently being drafted in liaison with the BID promoter and it was recommended that formal approval be delegated to the director of service delivery.

84.11 The council was permitted to charge a reasonable fee for this service. The Industry Criteria and Guidance Notes (published by British BIDs annually on behalf of the British Retail Consortium, the British Council of Shopping Centres, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Inter Bank Rating Forum) recommend an industry standard of a maximum charge of £35/hereditament or 3% of annual levy income, whichever was the lower.

84.12 There were one-off software acquisition costs relating to the calculations required for billing the additional levy and the mechanisms relating to collecting the funds. These could be in the region of £20,000. Provision had been made in the council's 2017/18 revenue budget. In addition the council was obliged to meet the costs of the ballot (c.£3,500), other than in the unlikely event that the proportion of 'yes' votes was less than 20%, in which case the ballot promoter could be requested to pay. It was proposed that the council recover their reasonable costs of collecting the levy and account management costs and to limit this to the annual cost comprising the software licence (c.£1,500) plus a sum of no more than 3% of the levy income (based on an estimated annual income of £300,000 this would amount to no more than £9,000). Any costs incurred over and above these sums would be met by the council.

84.13 The council, being satisfied that the BID proposal was in conformity with borough policies and did not impose an unfair charge on any business ratepayers, was obliged to move forward with the conduct of the ballot.

84.14 Resolved (key decision): (1) That the BID proposal be approved and conformity with relevant council plans and policies confirmed.

(2) That the director of service delivery be given delegated authority, in consultation with the lead cabinet member for community, to approve formal BID proposal (including business plan and operating agreement) when received subject to it being in line with the draft submitted and to

then instruct the council's returning officer (as 'ballot holder) to proceed with the ballot and require the lead officer for revenues, benefits and service support to supply up to date rating list information in suitable format to the ballot contractor.

(3) That the chief finance officer be given delegated authority –
 (i) to determine the statement of baseline services and baseline agreement and to review the agreement annually; and
 (ii) if the ballot is successful, to operate a BID revenue account and pass over monies to the BID company.

(4) To confirm that the expected costs of the ballot (c.£3,500) will be met by the council.

(5) That the director of service delivery be given delegated authority –
 (i) to vote in favour of the BID in respect of business heriditaments held by the council within the BID area; and
 (ii) if the ballot is successful, to administer, bill, collect and enforce levies under the BID scheme .

(6) To note that the council's returning officer is permitted to delegate his responsibilities to others and that he has engaged the services of Electoral Reform Services Ltd to undertake the ballot on his behalf.

(7) To agree that the initial 'one-off' software costs required to collect the levy (c.£20,000) will be met by the council.

(8) To note that the council's reasonable costs of collecting the levy and the associated financial management costs will be recoverable from the BID levy monies as outlined in paragraph 8.4 of the report.

85 Establishment of a joint housing investment partnership with Lewes District Council (KD).

85.1 Cabinet considered the report of the director of service delivery updating members on progress with the establishment of a joint housing and regeneration investment vehicle with Lewes District Council as previously approved by cabinet at their meeting on 13 December 2016. Work to set up the new joint vehicle had been ongoing with a target incorporation date of 1 April 2017. In parallel Lewes District Council had also been taking steps to establish their own housing investment company – Lewes Housing Investment Company (LHICL). With EHICL this meant that, across the two authorities, there would be three similar wholly owned subsidiaries working in association to each other:-

- Eastbourne Housing Investment Company (EHICL)
- Lewes Housing Investment Company (LHICL)
- Joint Housing Investment Partnership (JHIP)

85.2 The relationship between the three new housing investment vehicles had been further explored and external legal advice obtained to ensure that the potential benefits of the new vehicles could be best realised. The report provided:-

- The business case to support the proposal for the two new vehicles.
- Detail on how the joint partnership and EHICL would operate.
- An explanation of their respective primary focus and inter-relationship.
- For approval an associated set of governance arrangements and financial delegations so that first phase delivery could be progressed.

The initial cost of setting up the proposed JHIP, developing the business case and investment proposals were expected to be £30,000 per authority.

85.3 The scale of potential new housing development required new vehicles, and a new structure, if the council wanted to maximise housing delivery and associated regeneration beyond the constraints of the housing revenue account (HRA). Over the last 3 years the council had brought forward and largely completed a 97 unit mainly affordable programme of new housing via the HRA which had utilised available headroom capacity. This had placed the council ahead of many other local authorities in terms of experience and associated resources. The potential for a much more ambitious programme of new housing delivery in Eastbourne had been assessed by the EHIC board and comprised:-

- An EHICL 5-year development pipeline to incorporate approved schemes such as Bedfordwell Road and potential future developments of 265 new homes with a projected gross development cost of £51m and a net borrowing requirement of £18.7m.
- Transfer to JHIP of the affordable housing elements of EHICL delivery required under planning policy, Section 106 and delivery of affordable schemes beyond the capacity of the HRA where the council wanted to take a direct enabling and place shaping role. 70 new homes with a projected gross development cost of £13m and a net borrowing requirement of £5.5m.

The scale and focus of overall investment, and decisions on larger individual schemes, would remain matters for cabinet approval.

85.4 Previous delegations gave authority to deliver different elements of the new housing as follows:-

- Feb 2013 Cabinet delegation of £20m of borrowing within the 5 year capital programme for the delivery of the new HRA housing – the new HRA housing has been delivered for around £10m because of higher than anticipated grant, sales receipts and internal funding.
- March 2016 Cabinet approval to purchase the Bedfordwell Road site for a maximum acquisition value of £2.45m – site acquired for £1.45m.
- November 2016 Cabinet delegation of £5m by way of loan to EHICL for the purchase and repair of street properties to alleviate temporary housing demand.
- December 2016 Cabinet, by way of the capital programme, a sum of £30m for the acquisition of commercial assets based on yield

targets some of which include an element of new housing and which may be held in EHICL.

85.5 Appendix 1 to the report provided a diagram to illustrate, in summary form, the relationship between the 3 housing investment vehicles and links back to cabinet via the proposed joint housing investment board (JHIB). The JHIB would have membership comprising elected members of both councils and directors who would operate at a strategic level to co-ordinate activities and have programme level oversight and make recommendations to ensure the most efficient placing of assets and utilisation of internal funding. The JHIB would also exercise delegated control on overall levels of development, individual loan tranches and larger transactions and would also decide which schemes would be brought back to respective cabinets for separate approval. The operational arrangements for delivery, programme development, financial and risk control were also set out to include a more formal role for the director led project review and sign-off group (PRSO) tasked with undertaking detailed risk appraisal and financial due diligence for all schemes.

85.6 The new structure provided a clearer and more robust framework for risk management and the exercise of various cabinet delegations. Delegations had been determined to date by the requirements of individual schemes or housing strategy priorities. They had not created programme level capacity or acted as a programme control mechanism. If the new structure of companies and governance was approved it was proposed that more general delegations were made to enable the relevant programmes of housing to be brought forward most effectively:-

- EHICL: £ 20m by way of loan for the delivery of new mixed tenure homes and associated activities.
- JHIP: £10m by way of loan for the delivery of new mixed tenure homes and associated activities.

The lending to the companies and/ or partnerships would form part of the councils treasury management strategy and create a revenue income stream for the general fund. The JHIB would exercise delegated control on overall levels of development, individual loan tranches and larger transactions and would also determine which schemes were brought back to respective cabinets for separate approval.

85.7 The report also set out details of the legal powers under which the council was entitled to undertake the activities described above.

85.8 Resolved (key decision): (1) That the governance structure for the new Eastbourne and Lewes Joint Investment Partnership (JHIP) be incorporated and agreed in line with section 2 of the report and the director of service delivery and the assistant director of legal and democratic services be authorised to take all such step as are necessary to establish the same limited liability partnership (LLP).

(2) That up to £30m be allocated in the council's capital programme as described in section 4 of the report and delegated authority arrangements, as set out in the report and described at paragraph 85(5)

above, be approved to progress the first phase of delivery for both EHICL and the new JHIP.

(Note: Councillors Tutt and Ungar declared interests in the above matter and withdrew from the meeting (see minute 80 above). Councillor Mattock took the chair for this item.)

86 Temporary accommodation and housing revenue account (HRA) asset management strategy (KD).

86.1 Cabinet considered the report of the director of service delivery providing an update on a change in demand for emergency accommodation options in Eastbourne due to an increase in homelessness. To mitigate some of the impact the report sought cabinet approval to dispose of a number of assets held within the housing revenue account (HRA) to enable the council to meet its strategic priorities; providing more housing options and the right housing for residents of the town.

86.2 The number of people needing housing advice and options was increasing in Eastbourne. This trend was common across East Sussex and nationally with a significant rise in households making homeless applications to local councils. One of the council's key priorities was to consider the availability of existing accommodation options and how they could adapt to meet changes in demand.

86.3 The cost to the council of providing emergency accommodation was rising. The numbers of households in temporary accommodation currently stood at 71 as at 7 February 2017, as compared to an average in 2015/16 of 22. The cost to the council in housing benefit expenditure unable to be reclaimed through housing benefit subsidy had been rising. In 2014/15 it was £72,000, in 2015/16 it was £132,000 and was likely to be higher 2016/17. Furthermore, the reduction in the benefit cap from November, the pending removal of the £60 housing management fee and the rollout of the universal credit digital service in 2017 would lead to more pressure on the council's finances.

86.4 The report reviewed homelessness prevention activities currently undertaken or planned. These included partnerships with other Sussex councils utilising funding from government under their homelessness prevention programme targeting rough sleepers as well as local initiatives under the council's homelessness strategy (published January 2017).

86.5 It was proposed to 'appropriate' 3 Hartfield Road (block of 8, one-bedroom flats with a recent valuation of £545,000) from the housing revenue account to the general fund to provide emergency accommodation. An initial survey had estimated that repairs would cost approximately £250,000 for the building to be brought back to a lettable standard and provide white goods for each of the flats. Taking account of current costs of providing emergency accommodation to 8 households

who require self-contained accommodation the use of Hartfield Road would mitigate an overspend of £82,000 annually to the existing budget.

86.6 Cabinet had previously authorised the disposal of certain freeholds where the council no longer had a leasehold interest to residents of the block. Four such freeholds were currently in the process of being sold. It was now recommended that leaseholders of the following blocks, where the council only held a freehold interest, be consulted about the potential sale of their freeholds on the open market:-

- 14-16 Harebell Close
- 10 Hyde Gardens
- 28-30 Larkspur Drive
- 10-16 Mulberry Close
- 1-3 Pembury Road
- 29-35 Rye Street
- 10-16 Sumach Close

The sale of the freeholds should bring a capital receipt into the housing revenue account of £50,700.

86.7 Eastbourne Homes Ltd (EHL), on behalf of the council, had undertaken a full review of all garage sites held in the HRA to firstly gain a valuation of the stock and secondly to explore any housing development opportunities. There were a number of garage blocks (comprising 99 garage units as listed in appendix 1 to the report) which had no to very limited housing development potential and were not considered future strategic sites for wider regeneration. However, on the basis of valuation, it was considered that sale of the listed sites on the open market should be considered. The capital receipt estimated should the proposed garage sites be sold was £735,000. Before garage sites were sold at auction, EHL would contact all existing licence holders of garages to forewarn them of the sale. Should the existing licence holders of garages wish to continue their contract with the new owner of the garage, EHL would facilitate the communication between both parties until the sale was completed.

86.8 In the case of both the sale of freeholds and garage blocks it was considered that the sales would reduce future capital costs to the HRA, and should the high value assets levy come to fruition, would mean the HRA had additional funds to contribute to lowering the impact of the levy without selling homes and otherwise meeting housing need.

86.9 The cabinet noted the legal provisions set out in the report under which the council was permitted to undertake the foregoing property transactions.

86.10 Resolved (key decision): That the director of service delivery be granted delegated authority to:-

(1) Subject to the obtaining of the necessary consent of the Secretary of State pursuant to s.19 of the Housing Act 1985, to appropriate the 8, one-bedroom flats at 3 Hartfield Road, currently held in the housing revenue account, to the general fund for the provision (pursuant to s.120

of the Local Government Act 1972) of emergency accommodation to meet the council's statutory homelessness duty under s.188 of the 1996 Housing Act.

(2) To add £250,000 to the council's capital program to bring Hartfield Road back into a lettable state for use as temporary accommodation.

(3) To further consult about sale of the freeholds with the freeholders of the properties listed and dispose of the garage blocks listed in appendix.

87 Bridgemere Centre.

87.1 Cabinet considered the report of the director of service delivery seeking approval for a variation in the terms of an allocation of a capital funding to the Bridgemere Centre. Cabinet, on 13 December 2016, had approved a contribution of £20,000 towards the purchase of the freehold by the trustees of the centre with the aim of ensuring the future financial viability of the centre and the community activities and services.

87.2 The trustees had now asked that the terms be changed to protect against the eventuality that they, or their successors as managers of the community centre, were unable to continue managing the centre or sell it and recoup the value of the council's investment. They also wished to allow for the possibility of alternative premises becoming available in the future which offered better facilities. They had therefore asked that the period within which they were required to repay the £20,000 was reduced from 40 to 20 years, and that the sum to be repaid was reduced by £1,000 each year.

87.3 The contribution would allow the Bridgemere Centre Ltd. to run the centre on a sustainable financial footing in the future and would remove the need for continued grants to support the centre, freeing up an average of £3,000 a year, thereby covering the costs of this investment within 7 years.

87.4 Resolved: That the proposed variation in the terms of the grant offered to the Bridgemere Centre, as set out in the report, be approved.

88 Exclusion of the public.

Resolved: That the public be excluded from the remainder of the 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 is shown at paragraph 82.10 above (re. debt write-offs - corporate performance - quarter 3 2016/17). (*The requisite notice having been given under regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.*)

The meeting closed at 6.40 pm

Councillor David Tutt
Chairman