

Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 12 September 2018 at 6.00 pm

Present:

Councillor David Tutt (Chair)

Councillors Alan Shuttleworth (Deputy-Chair), Margaret Bannister, Jonathan Dow, Stephen Holt and Colin Swansborough

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Alan Osborne (Deputy Chief Executive), Philip Evans (Director of Tourism & Enterprise), Ian Fitzpatrick (Director of Regeneration and Planning), Becky Cooke (Assistant Director for Human Resources and Transformation), Peter Finnis (Assistant Director for Corporate Governance) and Simon Russell (Committee Services Lead)

25 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2018.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2018 were submitted and approved and the chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

26 Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was reported from Councillor Ungar.

27 Alan Osborne

As this would be their last Cabinet meeting, a vote of thanks was extended to Alan Osborne, Deputy Chief Executive. The Cabinet expressed their sincere appreciation for all his work for Eastbourne and wished him a long and happy retirement. The Deputy Chief Executive expressed thanks to the Council for an amazing nine and a half years.

28 Declaration of members' interests

Councillor Holt declared a personal interest in minute 29 (Questions by members of the public) as a leaseholder. He remained in the room and did not take part in the response to Mr Hanlon.

29 Questions by members of the public

Mr Mike Hanlon asked the following questions to Councillor Tutt in relation to the Leasehold Panel:

Can the Cabinet ensure that the agenda and minutes of the proposed meetings, laid out in the letter dated the 20 August 2018 be published on the Lewes and Eastbourne website?

Could any proposals emanating from those meetings be put before the leaseholders for consideration and approval?

The Director of Regeneration and Planning responded that the letter, dated 20 August 2018, referred to a review conducted by the Housing Policy Network and this would be shared with Mr Hanlon and where appropriate published on the website.

In relation to the Leasehold Panel, a letter was scheduled to be dispatched next week asking leaseholders about the current panel and whether an independent alternative should be pursued.

Councillor Holt declared a personal interest as a leaseholder and remained in the room and did not take part in the response.

30 Corporate performance - quarter 1 2018/19

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Planning and Deputy Chief Executive, updating them on the Council's performance against Corporate Plan priority actions, performance indicators and targets for the first quarter of 2018/19.

Visiting member, Councillor Freebody, addressed the Cabinet on the performance indicators and praised the decision to reduce the staff absence days due to sickness target to 8 days. Councillor Freebody further commented on the performance indicator for calls answered within 60 seconds and abandoned calls that had fallen below its quarter one target.

The Cabinet shared the concerns raised by Councillor Freebody and attributed multiple factors to the performance for call response. This included the vacancy rate within the Customer First team, training of new staff and implementation of new ways of working, a large increase in calls due to the changes in central government policies around benefits and implementation of the council's new garden waste system. In comparison to quarter one of last year, there had been a 49% increase in the number of calls. Queue busting continued to assist with the answering times and a recruitment drive has been completed with 8 preferred candidates being offered roles. The Cabinet advised that call response would continue to be monitored on a regular basis.

Councillor Tutt referenced that Councillor Jenkins had enquired about why the Sovereign Harbour Community Centre had been flagged as green when work had not been completed. Although the construction of the building had been completed, the Centre was not yet open to the public. The Chief Executive responded that this was due to snagging and gas connection work being carried out and an administrative matter of the deed of variation being formally signed by relevant parties after agreement. Once a definitive date for delivery of gas connection works was provided by Southern Gas Network, this would be communicated to Sovereign Councillors to inform their constituents.

The Cabinet discussed the key performance indicators for those at risk of homelessness and households living in emergency accommodation. The Council had re-prioritised resources across the organisation to a new Homelessness Pressures Project to help address what was a national issue. Other multi-agency initiatives had been carried out including the launch of the Street Community Partnership Initiative and thanks were conveyed to council officers and the other agencies associated with the work taking place.

The Cabinet praised the notable achievements for the quarter, detailed in the report and confirmed that key priorities over the next quarter would include improving the call response time at the Customer Contact Centre, reducing the number of abandoned calls, housing issues and disabled facilities grants.

Part B of the report detailed the Council's financial performance for the first quarter of the year 2018/19. The Cabinet expressed their thanks to the Deputy Chief Executive and the finance team for continuing to ensure the Council had strong financial resilience, in comparison to other authorities across the country.

Resolved (key decision):

- (1) To note the achievements and progress against Corporate Plan priorities for 2018/19, as set out in part A of the report.
- (2) To agree the General Fund, HRA and Collection Fund financial performance for the quarter ended June 2018 as set out in part B of the report
- (3) To agree the amended capital programme as set out at appendix 4 to the report.
- (4) To agree the Treasury Management performance as set out in section 5 in part B of the report

Reason for decision:

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

31 Environmental initiatives

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Planning, seeking their approval for a series of environmental initiatives. This included the formulation of a sustainability policy, drinking water provision, single use plastics project and an electric vehicle charge point feasibility study, given the current issues and proposal to ban combustion vehicles from sale by 2040.

Visiting member, Councillor Freebody addressed the Cabinet and welcomed the initiatives outlined in the report and offered the support of his group to assist in any way.

In response to a question about the overall budget of the initiatives, the Cabinet advised that the figure of £3,000 signified an initial likely spend and the budget may increase over time. It was also advised that funding towards the installation of water fountains around parks could be provided by the council's devolved ward budget scheme.

Thanks were conveyed to Jane Goodall (Strategy and Partnership Lead, Quality Environment), Kate Tradewell (Strategy and Corporate Projects Officer, Quality Environment) and Devan Briggs (Policy and Engagement Co-ordinator) for their work on the initiatives outlined in the report.

Resolved (key decision):

(1) To authorise the Strategy & Partnership Lead, Quality Environment, to conduct a desk-based feasibility study for the potential of free drinking water provision within council-owned parks and in other public places within Eastbourne borough, working with partners and stakeholders.

(2) To agree to support the national 'Refill' campaign through social media and as appropriate.

(3) To delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Place Services, to bid for funding, supported by an appropriate business case, to invest in electric vehicle (EV) charging technology and infrastructure, working with partners and other local authorities.

(4) To authorise the Strategy & Partnership Lead, Quality Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Place Services to prepare a Sustainability Policy to provide a framework for council activities for consideration and approval at Cabinet later in the year.

(5) To note the launch and progress to date of the 'Single-Use Plastics' project.

Reasons for decisions:

(1) Drinking water provision could be made available to the general public in areas of high foot traffic and where other access to water may be limited, for example parks. This would support various initiatives currently prominent in the political and public arena including the reduction of single use plastics and promoting healthy and active lifestyles

(2) The 'Refill' campaign, described in paragraph 1.2, had arrived in the area through community activism.

(3) A charging point feasibility study would provide an evaluation of the opportunities available to Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC) with regards to EV charging on its own estate in light of the national move towards the provision of this infrastructure.

(4) The adoption of a set of guiding principles in the form of an overarching Sustainability Policy would bring EBC into line with many other councils nationally. The policy would support planning policy and guidance, guide procurement decisions, potentially reduce costs with regards to energy and waste (through staff education and project initiatives) and generally work to ensure the council had 'its own house in order' before guiding others.

(5) The Single-Use Plastic (SUP) project started in May as a result of the Council's aim to become SUP free where it was reasonable to do so by 31 December 2018.

32 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 was shown below. (The requisite notice having been given under regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.)

33 Brokerage services to other public sector organisations

The Cabinet considered the exempt report of the Chief Executive regarding the establishment of a joint venture for brokerage and development services.

Resolved (key decision):

(1) To delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, the Chief Finance Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Finance to undertake further work and

detailed due diligence to establish a suitable vehicle to provide investment brokerage for public sector schemes.

(2) To approve General Fund budget allocation of up to £40k for external finance and legal costs associated with the detailed due diligence work.

Reason for decision:

To enable the Council, to generate commercial revenues by brokering funding alongside development services to public sector agencies in line with section 2 of the exempt report.

Notes: (1) The report remains exempt. (2) Exempt information reason 3 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The meeting ended at 6.40 pm

Councillor David Tutt (Chair)