

## Cabinet

**Minutes of meeting held in Ditchling and Telscombe Rooms at Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1AB on 22 September 2022 at 2.30 pm.**

**Present:**

Councillor James MacCleary (Chair).  
Councillors Zoe Nicholson (Vice-Chair), Matthew Bird, Julie Carr, Chris Collier, Johnny Denis and Ruth O'Keeffe.

**Officers in attendance:**

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Homira Javadi (Chief Finance Officer), Ian Fitzpatrick (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning), Becky Cooke (Assistant Director for Human Resources and Transformation), Jo Harper (Head of Business Planning and Performance), Bill McCafferty (Lead for Income Maximisation and Welfare), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services) and Kate Slattery (Solicitor).

**Also in attendance:**

Councillor Liz Boorman (Chair of Policy and Performance Advisory Committee) and Councillor Isabelle Linington (Leader of the Opposition).

**18 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2022 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

**19 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence was reported from Cabinet members, Councillors Gauntlett and Meyer and visiting member, Councillor Peterson.

**20 Declarations of interest**

None were declared.

**21 Portfolio progress and performance report quarter 1 - 2022-2023**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Regeneration and Planning, considering the council's progress and performance in respect of service areas for the first quarter of the year (April-June 2022), as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 21 September 2022 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendation

in full. Councillor Boorman, Chair of Policy and Performance Advisory Committee, was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion.

Visiting member and Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Linington addressed the Cabinet, echoing comments made at PPAC. In response to comments around structure charts and officer contacts, the Chief Executive committed to providing an up-to-date contact list and make it available to Councillors, to assist them in response to enquiries from constituents.

Detailed commentary on those performance indicators that were currently below target was detailed in the report and expanded on by the Chief Executive and relevant portfolio holder at the meeting including customer contact and waste and recycling.

The Chief Executive added that the Council had recruited 10 new starters during the Quarter, in addition to training of other members of staff. It was anticipated that this would result in an improvement in customer contact performance statistics for future quarters. Staff were commended for their assistance in helping those residents with complex needs, assisting customers in making council tax and business rate payments, resulting in comparable reminder and final notices being issued to last year and administering the various active grant schemes.

Progress against corporate plan objectives were set out at Appendix 2 of the report and reported on by the relevant portfolio holder at the meeting.

**Resolved (Non-key decision):**

To note progress and performance for Quarter 1 2022/23.

**Reason for decision:**

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

**22 Finance update - performance quarter 1 - 2022-2023**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer, updating members on the Council's financial performance in Quarter 1 2022/23.

A residual projected year end overspend of £108k was projected and this was due to the anticipated impact of price inflation for energy costs and goods and services.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 21 September 2022 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendations in full. Councillor Boorman, Chair of Policy and Performance Advisory Committee, was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion.

Visiting member and Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Linington addressed

the Cabinet, echoing comments made at PPAC, stating that judgement would be reserved until quarter 2 figures were published, factoring in inflationary pressures and its impact on reserves and the capital programme.

Debbie Twitchen, Tenants Representative addressed the Cabinet and advised that her questions around the capital programme would be addressed through Tenants of Lewes District (TOLD).

**Resolved (Non-key decision):**

(1) To note the General Fund, HRA and Collection Fund financial performance for the quarter ended June 2022.

(2) To note the capital programme as set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

**Reason for decisions:**

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

**23 Lewes District Council Cost of Living Emergency Fund**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery, to consider the proposed Lewes District Council Cost of Living Emergency Fund Scheme.

The eligibility criteria for the proposed scheme were set out at Appendix 1 to the report. Thanks were conveyed to the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Linington for her views that contributed towards the finalisation of the scheme's criteria.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 21 September 2022 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendations in full. Councillor Boorman, Chair of Policy and Performance Advisory Committee, was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion. An update on how the scheme was progressing would be presented to PPAC's meeting in December 2022.

Visiting member and Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Linington addressed the Cabinet. The Lead for Income Maximisation and Welfare was present remotely to respond to questions from the Cabinet and visiting members. Cabinet was advised that the Council was awaiting final government guidance on the latest national Household Support Fund. It was envisaged that the criteria would mirror that for the Council's Cost of Living Emergency Fund Scheme and if there was an alignment of the two support funds, that would only require one application to be submitted by an applicant.

Debbie Twitchen, Tenants Representative addressed the Cabinet in support of the proposal and welcomed any proposals to simplify the process for

applicants. She also added that as one of the grateful recipients of the £50,000 awarded to foodbanks earlier in the year, this amounted to £3,000 for her foodbank and lasted around 6 weeks. She advised that foodbanks would require additional support, if possible, from the Council, leading into the winter period.

**Resolved (Key decision):**

(1) To approve the Lewes District Council Cost of Living Emergency Fund Scheme, as specified in the proposal at paragraph 2 of the report.

(2) To authorise the Director of Service Delivery in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assistant Director of Finance to finalise the scheme criteria and take necessary steps to implement the Lewes District Council Cost of Living Emergency Fund Scheme.

**Reason for decision:**

Cabinet approval is required for the scheme to be implemented.

**24 Housing development 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 housing delivery programme.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 21 September 2022 considered the report and were supportive of the officer recommendations in full. Councillor Boorman, Chair of Policy and Performance Advisory Committee, was in attendance to present PPAC's discussion.

Visiting member and Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Linington addressed the Cabinet, echoing comments made at PPAC. Following a question around rent income, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning advised that the work set out in 3.4 of the report had led to rent levels being set at approximately 67% of the 22/23 Local Housing Allowance levels. Despite the changes to market rents nationally, the Council continued to maintain rent levels at circa 60% of the market.

**Resolved (Key decision):**

(1) To approve the updated business case, as set out at the exempt appendix to the report and Capital Budget Allocation (up to £7.1m) for the project known as the Former Newhaven Police Station within the capacity of the HRA Capital Programme.

(2) To authorise the Director of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Chief Finance Officer, to carry out all necessary actions to facilitate the project including financing, feasibility, development and determining the terms of, and authorising the execution of, all

necessary documentation.

**Reason for decisions:**

To provide progress updates and secure the necessary approvals to bring forward on going key housing development projects within the district.

*Notes: (1) Appendix 1 remained 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 3.06 pm

Councillor James MacCleary (Chair)