

## Cabinet

**Minutes of meeting held in Room 209/210 on the Second Floor, The Marine Workshops, Railway Quay, Newhaven, East Sussex, BN9 0ER. on 14 September 2023 at 2.30 pm.**

**Present:**

Councillor Zoe Nicholson (Chair).  
Councillors Christine Robinson (Deputy-Chair), Chris Collier, Johnny Denis, 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), Jo Harper (Head of Business Planning and Performance), Steven Houchin (Interim Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Corporate Finance)), Lynn Ingram (Interim Head of Financial Planning), Peter Jenion (Project Manager - Community Wealth Building), Guy McQueen (Regeneration Project Manager), Lisa Rawlinson (Head of Regeneration) and Seanne Sweeney (Community Services Lead).

**Also in attendance:**

Councillor Christine Brett (Chair of Policy and Performance Advisory Committee) and Councillor Stephen Gauntlett (Chair of Audit and Governance Committee).

**13 Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

**14 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were reported from Cabinet member, Councillor Maples and visiting member Councillor MacCleary.

**15 Declarations of interest**

None were declared.

**16 Public question time**

The Cabinet received three written questions from Mary Campbell, in relation to the publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and

its impact on Lewes District Council.

In accordance with procedure rules, written answers would be sent to the questioner for those questions not verbally answered at the meeting.

## **17 Appointment as Council Champion**

In accordance with Council procedure rules, the Cabinet formally approved the following appointment:

- Councillor Emily O'Brien to be appointed as the Council's Water Champion.

## **18 Cost of Living Update**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, updating Cabinet on work delivered by the Council in supporting residents through the Cost-of-Living crisis, with proposals to continue and build on key work-streams and partnerships.

Thanks were expressed to the Cost-of-Living Project Officer, for their work undertaken in the role thus far. Section 4.1 of the report detailed several imminent areas of work that had already been identified.

Cabinet welcomed the imminent implementation of the Policy and Practice dashboard (also referred to as LIFT). The software enabled local authorities to identify households at risk of debt and mounting payments, as well as maximising their income and preventing arrears.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 7 September 2023 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.

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

- (1) To note the initiatives undertaken to date in response to the cost-of-living crisis.
- (2) To agree that the coordination of cost-of-living responses and dedicated role continue for a further year.
- (3) To agree a one-off grant of £20,000 for Lewes District Citizens Advice to support the continuation of specialist UC advice.

### **Reason for decisions:**

To enable the Council, in partnership with local organisations, to continue an effective and holistic cost-of-living response, helping residents as the crisis continues to impact negatively on households.

**19 Revenue & Capital Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2023-24**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Finance and Performance, providing an assessment of the Council's financial performance against the approved 2023-24 budget, incorporating key financial risks, issues and opportunities identified since 1 April 2023 for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Section 1.3 of the report detailed the several cost pressures on the authority as a result of external factors beyond its control. The forecast outturn position as at the 30 June 2023 was an overspend of £651k, as detailed at Table 1.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 7 September 2023 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.

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

- (1) To note the forecast outturn position for 2023-24 and associated risks.
- (2) To delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Performance and the portfolio holder for finance to apply any budget virements required to effectively manage the overall budget.
- (3) To note appendices 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.

**20 Portfolio progress and performance report quarter 1 - 2023-2024**

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 2023), as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

The commentary in the appendix for the key performance indicators had now been expanded to include what had occurred during the quarter and what was learned and changed as a result.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 7 September 2023 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.

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

To note progress and performance for quarter 1 2023/24.

**Reason for decision:**

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

**21 Community Wealth Building Action Plan 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 Community Wealth Building Delivery plan.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 7 September 2023 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.

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

(1) To note the progress made in delivering Community Wealth Building and to agree the new Delivery Plan set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

(2) To note Lewes District Council's application to join the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network.

**Reasons for decisions:**

(1) The Council is committed to developing a Community Wealth Building approach as part of the Corporate Plan adopted in February 2020. This report is the annual update on this work to the Cabinet.

(2) Joining the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network would enable sharing of best practice on issues relevant to our community wealth building delivery plan.

**22 Business support for Lewes District**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, providing an update on the achievements of the Local Enterprise and Apprenticeship Platform (LEAP) business start-up and the general business support programmes funded by Lewes District Council. The report also sought further funding for the Council's continuing contribution to the business support landscape.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 7 September 2023 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.

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

(1) To continue to fund a business start-up programme to support local pre-start and early-stage enterprises with specialist provision built-in to a) help entrepreneurs understand what a socially productive business is, and b) support those wanting to pursue a social enterprise model.

(2) To approve a new budget of up to £105,000 for a 3-year period from April 2024, and invite suppliers to tender for the contract. The award will be subject to adoption of the final 24/25 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

(3) To approve the renaming of the 'LEAP business start-up programme' to 'Lewes District start-up programme'.

**Reasons for decisions:**

(1) There is continued demand for specialist and intensive start-up support.

(2) With the current contract coming to an end, it is an opportunity to revisit the design and frequency of the start-up programme to ensure it aligns with local Community Wealth Building (CWB) plural ownership priorities and to maximise value for money for the Council and outcomes.

(3) Renaming the programme will reduce associated marketing resources and risks with the LEAP brand and confusion on the omission of apprenticeship support.

**23 Funding Simplification Pathfinder Pilot**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, providing information on the Funding Simplification Pathfinder Pilot that Lewes District Council had been invited to participate in.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 7 September 2023 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.

**Resolved (Key decision):**

(1) To approve the content of the Council's Investment Plan (copy attached to the report) and authorise submission of the document to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) by 15th September deadline.

(2) To delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Performance (S151 Officer) and

the Lead Member for Finance, Assets and Community Wealth Building to take all necessary actions to progress the Pathfinder Pilot and to implement the Investment Plan, including determining the terms of, and authorising the execution of, all necessary documentation.

**Reason for decisions:**

The Pilot will provide the Council with the flexibilities to deliver effectively in line with local priorities and reduce the administrative burdens of agreeing any minor changes.

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).

**24 Robinson Road Depot - Capital Development Project 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 plans to redevelop the waste and recycling depot in Robinson Road, Newhaven to meet the future needs of the service.

Thanks were conveyed to officers for their work in incorporating sustainability into proposals and also to the Head of Environment First for their prior work on progressing the matter.

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee (PPAC), held on 7 September 2023 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.

**Resolved (Key decision):**

(1) To note the progress of the Robinson Road waste and recycling depot capital development project, including the proposed Preferred Option showing at Appendix 1 to the report.

(2) To delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Performance (S151 Officer), Lead Member for Finance, Assets and Community Wealth Building, and Lead Member for Neighbourhood Wellbeing, to carry out all necessary actions to facilitate the project within the capacity of the existing General Fund capital budget allocation of £5m including finalising the Preferred Option, financing, feasibility, planning, development, award of contract(s), and determining the terms of, and authorising the execution of, all necessary documentation.

(3) To approve the lease of land at Lewes Road, Newhaven as part of the project proposals in line with the key terms outlined at Appendix 2 (Exempt), subject to such variations that may be agreed in the course of negotiations and to delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and

Planning, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Performance (S151 Officer) and Lead Member for Finance, Assets and Community Wealth Building, to carry out all necessary actions to conclude that lease and any ancillary documentation including determining the terms of, and authorising the execution of, all necessary documentation.

**Reason for decisions:**

(1) To provide Cabinet with an update on the Robinson Road waste and recycling depot capital development project.

(2) To enable key decisions to be taken in relation to land / assets required to support the scheme proposals and to meet the future needs of the waste and recycling service.

Notes: (1) Appendix 2 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 3.31 pm

Councillor Zoe Nicholson (Chair)