



Minutes of the meeting of the **Cabinet** held in Committee Room 2 - East Pallant House on Tuesday 5 November 2019 at 9.30 am

Members Present Mrs E Lintill (Chairman), Mrs S Taylor (Vice-Chairman), Mr M Bell, Mr R Briscoe, Mrs N Graves and Mr P Wilding

Members Absent Mrs P Plant

In attendance by invitation

Officers Present Mrs H Belenger (Divisional Manager for Financial Services), Mr N Bennett (Divisional Manager for Democratic Services), Ms M Burgoyne (Economic Development Manager), Mr M Catlow (Group Accountant (Technical and Exchequer)), Mrs L Grange (Divisional Manager for Housing), Miss L Higenbottam (Democratic Services Manager), Mrs J Hotchkiss (Director of Growth and Place), Mrs V McKay (Divisional Manager for Growth), Mrs T Murphy (Divisional Manager for Place), Mrs K Neglia (Economic Development Planning Officer), Mr J Ward (Director of Corporate Services), Mrs E Reed (Environmental Housing Manager), Mrs M Rogers (Benefits Manager) and Mrs D Shepherd (Chief Executive)

58 **Chairman's Announcements**

Mrs Lintill greeted Chichester District Council (CDC) members and officers and the two press representatives who were present for this meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Plant.

59 **Approval of Minutes**

The Cabinet received the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2019 which had been circulated with the agenda.

There were no proposed changes to the minutes.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 1 October 2019 be approved.

60 **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

61 **Public Question Time**

No public questions had been submitted.

62 **Determination of Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020 - 2021**

Mr Wilding introduced the item. He explained that the Welfare Reform Act and Local Government Finance Acts of 2012 abolished the national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme and a framework for local authorities to create their own local Council Tax Reduction (CTR) schemes was put in place from 1 April 2013. The council has been operating a CTR scheme for the last seven years and it is proposed to keep the scheme unchanged for the eighth year with the exception of alterations that bring the scheme in line with changes to legislation which have already occurred within the Housing Benefit scheme. These changes include the uprating of premiums, personal allowances and deductions. Mr Wilding confirmed that the council's main aim remains to maintain levels of support to the least well off in its communities by maintaining levels of support which existed prior to April 2013 when localised CTR commenced. He explained that the council is one of a small number of councils that continues to provide a CTR scheme with up to a maximum award of 100%.

Mrs Lintill commented on the positive impact for local communities in maintaining the reduction scheme.

Decision

The Cabinet then voted unanimously to make the recommendation below.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

That the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020-2021 be approved.

63 **Financial Strategy and Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25**

Mr Wilding introduced the item. He explained that the report updates the Financial Strategy and Plan for 2020/21 and creates the framework for how the council's budget and council tax is set which will be considered by the Cabinet in February 2020. The 2020/21 financial strategy is set in the context of current political uncertainty and the continuing expectation of reduced central government funding for local government. The major changes that were expected to come in from the 2020-21 settlement have been delayed by a year, so now the 2020-21 settlement will be for one year only. Due to the delay the council will retain the business rates growth achieved so far for one year longer than anticipated. Much of the council's other income remains dependent on the local economy and is therefore less predictable.

Mr Wilding outlined Appendix 1 which describes the council's key priorities, one of which is to manage its finances prudently and effectively. He explained that the financial strategy is linked to this specific priority along with the council's key financial principles that underpin the Council's financial planning approach. Appendix 2 outlines the updated 5 Year Financial Model, reflecting the consolidated budget from the service areas, central government funding and the most up-to-date estimates for the wider council activities. There are a number of estimates contained within the Model including the assumption of a 2% increase in council tax each year. However, Mr Wilding explained that low taxing local authorities like Chichester District Council may be allowed to set a £5 increase in council tax. The final decision on the council tax rates will be made by Full Council in March 2020.

Mr Wilding then referred to the assumptions relating to pensions, West Sussex County Council cuts and the New Homes Bonus scheme and how it is likely that the Financial Model will continue to evolve. He then outlined Appendix 3 which sets out the anticipated resources position of reserves and assets in the medium term and confirmed that the capital programme remains affordable without the need to borrow.

It was also noted that the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee (CGAC) had recommended a minimum level of reserves at £6.3 million to provide flexibility in managing the council's financial risks.

Mrs Taylor commented that the report illustrates prudent management of the council's resources. Mr Briscoe added that it illustrates a good use of investments.

Mrs Lintill congratulated officers involved in the report. She emphasised that the 5 Year Model remains fluid. She requested clarification on the new cost pressures against benefit administration reduction referring to the figures £0 for 2019/20 and £400,000 for 2020/21. Mrs Belenger explained that the figures reflect the change in housing benefit repayment recovery as fewer claimants are overpaid due to various initiatives, which creates a smaller recovery base. Mr Ward added that if a claimant is overpaid the council receives subsidy payment for the claimant and in addition if the council is successful in recouping the overpayment that can also be retained. He explained that changes impacting the retained income were a one off. Mrs Belenger added that the introduction of Universal Credit had also resulted in a smaller caseload.

Decision

The Cabinet then voted unanimously to make the recommendations below.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

1. That the key financial principles and actions of the five year Financial Strategy set out in appendix 1 to the agenda report be approved.
2. That the current five year Financial Model detailed in appendix 2 and the Resources Statement in appendix 3 to the agenda report be noted.

3. That, having considered the recommendations from the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, the Minimum Level of the General Fund Reserves is set at £6.3 million.

64 **Disabled Facilities Grants Policy 2020 - 2024**

Mrs Graves introduced the item. She explained that the Disabled Facilities Grant is a mandatory grant which was introduced to enable disabled persons on low income to live independently. The funds can be used for wet rooms, stair lifts, ramps, kitchen adaptations and extensions to a maximum of £30,000. In 2015 the management of funds changed so funding was no longer provided by central government and instead comes from a larger pooled *Better Care* fund managed by West Sussex County Council. In September 2017 the Cabinet agreed a more flexible way of using the funds in order to reach the greatest number of residents. Subsequently the local district and borough councils have collaborated to produce the new *Disabled Facilities Grants Policy*. The new Policy provides a more consistent approach across the county and offers disabled residents a package of grants to reduce hospital stays, provide a safe, warm home and help to move to a more suitable property. Mrs Graves explained that the Policy is pioneering based on the research carried out which indicates that there are no other policies of this type.

Mrs Taylor supported the Policy and indicated the positive impact of assisting more residents to recover from hospital in their own home.

Mr Briscoe and Mrs Lintill requested clarification relating to recommendation two and how amendments will be agreed my multi agencies. Mrs Reed confirmed that the County Adaptations Manager would be responsible for negotiating amendments with all parties. Mrs Shepherd added that if in the unlikely event that one authority fundamentally disagreed with a proposal it would be their choice whether to continue with the partnership or work independently. Mrs Shepherd then confirmed that all the local authorities involved would need to seek Cabinet approval in order for the Policy to commence from 1 April 2020.

Decision

The Cabinet then voted unanimously to make the resolutions below.

RESOLVED

1. That the proposed West Sussex Disabled Facilities Grant Policy 2020 to 2024 contained in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
2. That delegated powers be approved to the Divisional Manager for Housing Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make amendments and updates to the policy.

65 **Appointment to Panels and Outside Bodies**

Mr Bennett was invited to introduce the item. He explained that the recommendations follow the recent changes to the Cabinet Portfolio holders responsibilities.

Decision

The Cabinet then voted unanimously to make the resolutions below.

RESOLVED

1. That Cllr Peter Wilding replaces Cllr Norma Graves as Chairman of the Joint Employee Consultative Panel.
2. That Cllr Martyn Bell replaces Cllr Tony Dignum on the Chichester Vision Steering Group.

66 2019-2020 Treasury Management half yearly update

Mr Wilding introduced the item. He explained that the 2019-2020 Treasury Management half yearly update represents a summary of the council's treasury activity for the six months ending 30 September 2019. The update includes a summary of the council's investment portfolio at 30 September 2019 including the split between short term and long term investments and the increase in treasury funds under management over the first half of the year to £82 million. He explained that the position reversed in December due to the fall in the number of local taxation receipts in February and March.

Mr Wilding then referred to how a number of significant short term investments have yielded a low rate of interest. He drew attention to Table 2 which details the external pooled funds with further details highlighted in Appendix A. Although there was a fall of £377,000 in fair value of the investments to the end of September due to initial transaction costs related to the local authority property fund, the income generated from the investments over the same period totalled approximately £2 million. Mr Wilding clarified that the £377,000 therefore remains a notional figure unless the council chooses to dispose of any of the investments. It is anticipated that there will be further investment in external pool funds of up to £17 million following careful consideration by officers and financial guidance from the council's advisors Arlingclose. The investments will include:

- Increasing the Multi Asset Funds from £3.65 million to a maximum £10 million
- £5 million in the UK Equity Fund
- Increasing the Corporate Bond Fund from £4.3 million to £10 million
- Maintaining the £10 million in the Local Authority Property Fund

Mr Wilding emphasised that the investments offer an opportunity to generate a significant additional income to support front line services. He then drew attention to Section 9 which outlines the latest economic forecast which remains dependent on the wider global economy.

Mrs Lintill gave her support to further investment.

It was noted that no concerns or recommendations had been raised by the CGAC.

Decision

The Cabinet then voted unanimously to make the resolution below.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet reviews and notes the summary of treasury management activities and performance for the six months to 30 September 2019.

67 **Economic Development Strategy and Inward Investment & Growth Strategy**

Mr Bell introduced the item. He explained the two strategies for consideration; the Economic Development Strategy and the Inward Investment & Growth Strategy. A number of aspects of the current strategy remain relevant and have therefore been included in addition to some new aims. The strategies also outline the council's links with Coast to Capital and West Sussex County Council. Within the Economic Development Strategy key priority areas such as supporting the high street, supporting growth orientated businesses and making the most of the districts natural assets are included. Mr Bell emphasised that the strategies are high level documents and further detailed action plans would follow.

Ms Burgoyne confirmed that the Economic Development Annual Service Plan will consider the action points raised.

Mrs Lintill invited Mr Plowman to the table following a request to speak on the item. Mr Plowman noted the impact of Brexit on the district and requested consideration be given to a flexible approach for the future. He also referenced car parking but acknowledged that he would discuss that further in the next item.

Mr Briscoe and Mrs Graves gave their support to the strategies.

With reference to page 85 Mrs Taylor requested clarification of the abbreviation SEP. Ms Burgoyne confirmed that it stands for Strategic Economic Plan.

Mr Bell clarified that Chichester, Midhurst, Petworth and Selsey high streets were all included in the Strategy. He also supported the inclusion of references to horticulture.

Mrs Lintill noted the opportunity to work positively in partnership with other organisations and local authorities.

Mr Briscoe emphasised the importance of acknowledging the districts heritage.

Mrs Lintill requested clarification of the timescale for the action plans. Ms Burgoyne confirmed that work will start on the Service Action plans in January.

Decision

The Cabinet then voted unanimously to make the resolution below.

RESOLVED

That the adoption of the Economic Development Strategy (appendix 1) and Inward Investment & Growth Strategy (appendix 2) in accordance with the proposal set out in section 5 of this report.

68 **Parking Proposals and Off-street Parking Charges**

Mrs Lintill explained that she would allow Mr Moss, Mr Plowman and Mrs Sharp to speak but reminded members that the report requests agreement to go out to consultation on car parking charges rather than agreement to make the changes to car parking charges.

Mr Bell then introduced the item. He drew attention to the first recommendation which should refer to section 5.1 of the report rather than section 6.1 of the report. He explained that changes are being proposed to some of the council's car parks from 1 April 2020 in order to help balance demand for parking across the districts car parks. The proposals have been discussed by the Chichester District Council Parking Forum. Following a two year freeze on pay and display prices it is proposed that some charges will remain the same for a further two years whilst others would change as follows:

- Free of charge evening charges to remain the same.
- Parking to remain free all days and hours in Crossfield, Fernhurst, Sylvia Beaufoy in Petworth, Florence Park in Chichester and Selsey Marine and East Beach Selsey from 1 November and 31 March each year.
- Free of charge periods in the rural car parks in Midhurst, Petworth, Selsey and East Wittering to remain in place.
- A 3% increase to pay and display tariffs in line with inflation.
- Little London and Baffins Lane car parks in Chichester subject to a greater increase.
- Discounted season tickets to be frozen for two years in the city.
- Rural season tickets to be increased; £17.50 to £20 per month in Bosham and £15 to £17.50 per month for other rural car parks.

Mr Bell then proposed an amendment to the first recommendation to add the suggestion of a £2 per hour rate for both Little London and Baffins Lane car parks in Chichester to the consultation. By example an hour in Little London would cost £2 and three hours would cost £6. Mrs Taylor seconded the proposal.

Mrs Murphy explained that the consultation process would involve notices in all car parks, notices in the press and information on the council's website. In addition officers will write to all key stakeholders. She explained that a two year period would be most effective for the facilitation and operation of the car parks. She drew attention to the agenda pack which details the options considered by the Chichester District Parking Forum as well as comparisons from other local authorities.

Mrs Murphy then explained the request to consolidate all the current Parking Orders in to one document as all changes since 2012 have been added to the Order as amendments. She confirmed that it is a legal requirement for the council to have a

Parking Order. The Parking Order provides clarity to customers and is also used when considering appeals against Penalty Charge Notices.

Mrs Lintill then invited Mr Moss to the table following a request to speak on the item. Mr Moss raised concerns relating to the Chichester District Parking Forum meeting and the number of people missing from that meeting. He also explained that he felt that not all new members had been fully consulted in the process. He further explained reservations about the proposals and whether they provide enough of a progressive approach. He referenced the idea of incentive parking to encourage visitors to stay for longer. He confirmed that he supported the changes to car parks such as Little London but felt it could go further. He then suggested taking the proposals back for further work.

Mrs Lintill then invited Mr Plowman to the table following a request to speak on the item. Mr Plowman referred to competition of other local shopping areas and the Chichester out of town shopping area which has free parking. He then explained the figures for footfall in Chichester high street and confirmed that compared with the UK average decrease 3% year on year Chichester has a year on year decrease of 19%. He asked the Cabinet to consider maintaining the prices for Chichester car parks in order not to discourage visitors. With regard to the evening economy he confirmed that the footfall in Chichester had increased by 24%. He then requested removing the evening charges for Chichester Festival Theatre and New Park car parks.

Mrs Lintill then invited Mrs Sharp to the table following a request to speak on the item. Mrs Sharp asked whether the Cabinet felt that the changes to car parking charges were enough to encourage people onto sustainable transport such as buses. She then asked whether a workplace parking levy could be considered.

With regard to the consultation Mrs Murphy clarified the timescales and explained that they currently enable officers to go out to consultation, bring back results to the Cabinet and then facilitate any amendments to signage and machines within the car parks. She emphasised that the timescales had been thought through to allow all required tasks to take place.

With regard to evening charges Mrs Murphy confirmed that two car parks charge Monday to Saturday for two hours between 6pm and 8pm. The proposal is not to extend the charges to other car parks. Mrs Murphy then explained that the principal is that the user pays for parking and the car park should therefore be able to cover its cost.

With regard to setting the charges Mrs Murphy confirmed that user patterns and behaviours are analysed.

In response to the suggestion of a workplace parking levy Mrs Murphy outlined how a number of reduced price parking season tickets are available which respond to feedback from local businesses. A park and ride scheme has been considered and continues to be run over the Christmas period. In the longer term the Parking Strategy is being reviewed.

With regard to the wider economic impact of parking charges Mrs Hotchkiss explained that the dwell time of visitors in the city's car parks is on the increase. With regard to reducing car use in the city she outlined how there are opportunities around events where visitors could be encouraged via incentives to park in car parks further out of the city. This would not only reduce the congestion caused by the queues to get into the central car parks but could also mitigate against some of the environmental impact of queuing cars.

With regard to the attendance at the Chichester District Parking Forum Mrs Hotchkiss confirmed that there were business representatives from Chichester BID, Petworth and Selsey in addition to a number of representatives from local community groups, members and officers.

Mrs Hotchkiss explained that there are a number of initiatives to target the reduction in footfall in the city centre and to generally encourage more visitors to the high street.

Mrs Hotchkiss then reminded members that if there were to be significant changes to the proposals the council's 5 Year Financial Strategy would be impacted.

Mr Bell then referred to the roadworks across the city centre over the last few weeks and whether that had any impact on visitor numbers.

Mrs Shepherd suggested that the appropriate forums for a number of the ideas raised would be as part of the upcoming review and setting of the council's priorities and the upcoming review of the Parking Strategy.

Mr Briscoe noted the cost of running and maintaining car parks as there has already been a two year price freeze.

Mrs Graves noted her support of the consultation.

Mr Wilding requested clarification on whether the free period of parking would remain in Midhurst and Petworth. He suggested considering the impact on the Grange, Midhurst if it was not.

Mrs Lintill then invited Mr Oakley to the table. Mr Oakley as a West Sussex County (WSSCC) Councillor confirmed that the roadworks on Spitafeld Lane had commenced after the Goodwood events and would be finished prior to the main Christmas build up. With regards to the WSSCC city wide parking management plan Mr Oakley confirmed that it would be out to consultation in the new year.

Mr Briscoe with reference to agenda item 10 drew attention to the fact that businesses had not included parking charges in their list of concerns.

Decision

The Cabinet then voted unanimously to make the resolutions below.

RESOLVED

1. That the proposal be approved as set out in 5.1 of this report to increase car parking charges with the additional amendment of a £2 per hour rate for both Little London and Baffins Lane car parks, which subject to consultation responses be implemented from 1 April 2020 for a two year period.
2. That the Director of Growth and Place be authorised to give appropriate notice of any revised charges or changes as set out within this report pursuant to the Off-street Parking Places (Consolidation) Order 2018 and Road Traffic Act 1984.
3. That the consolidation of all Parking Orders since 2012 into one document be approved. This document will further clarify the provision for electric payments and the exemption from daily charges for Blue Badge holders (with the exception of Pay on Foot parking) which subject to consultation be implemented from 1 April 2020.

69 Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no requirement to exclude the press or public.

70 Late Items

There were no late items.

The meeting ended at 10.51 am

CHAIRMAN

Date: