



Minutes of the meeting of the **Council** held in Committee Rooms, East Pallant House on Tuesday 7 March 2017 at 2.00 pm

**Members Present:** Mrs E Hamilton (Chairman), Mrs N Graves (Vice-Chairman), Mrs C Apel, Mr G Barrett, Mr J Brown, Mr P Budge, Mr J Connor, Mr M Cullen, Mr T Dempster, Mr A Dignum, Mrs P Dignum, Mrs J Duncton, Mr M Dunn, Mr J F Elliott, Mr N Galloway, Mr M Hall, Mrs P Hardwick, Mr R Hayes, Mr G Hicks, Mr L Hixson, Mr F Hobbs, Mrs G Keegan, Mrs J Kilby, Mrs E Lintill, Mr S Lloyd-Williams, Mr L Macey, Mr G McAra, Mr S Morley, Caroline Neville, Mr S Oakley, Mrs P Plant, Mr R Plowman, Mr H Potter, Mrs C Purnell, Mr J Ridd, Mr A Shaxson, Mrs J Tassell, Mrs S Taylor, Mr N Thomas, Mrs P Tull, Mr D Wakeham and Mrs S Westacott

**Members not present:** Mr R Barrow, Mr I Curbishley, Mr J W Elliott, Mr P Jarvis, Mrs D Knightley and Mr J Ransley

**Officers present all items:** Mrs D Shepherd (Chief Executive), Mr P E Over (Executive Director), Mr S Carvell (Executive Director), Mr J Ward (Head of Finance and Governance Services), Mr M Allgrove (Planning Policy Conservation and Design Service Manager), Mrs B Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer), Mrs K Dower (Principal Planning Officer (Infrastructure Planning)) and Mr A Frost (Head of Planning Services)

## 184 Minutes

The Chairman welcomed all councillors and members of the public and press to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Mr Jarvis, Mr J W Elliott, Mr J Ransley, Mr R Barrow and Mrs D Knightley.

## RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 January 2017 be signed as a correct record.

## 185 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items for discussion.

## 186      **Declarations of Interests**

Members were reminded that they did not need to declare an interest in respect of agenda item 6 as council tax payers in the district.

Mrs Apel, Mrs Taylor, Mrs Graves, Mr Dignum, Mrs Dignum, Mr Dunn and Mrs Tull declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 6 as 'friends' of Chichester Festival Theatre and/or Pallant House Gallery.

## 187      **Chairman's announcements**

The Chairman reminded members of the All Parishes Meeting which would be held on Wednesday 5 April 2017 and requested them to let Member Services know if they would be attending.

She had attended an event at the Minerva Theatre recently which involved a performance by young people with learning difficulties from Chichester College. They had formed a group called Theatre Inc. to write and perform a full show. She considered that the self-confidence and enjoyment the scheme had given them would go some way to them becoming employable adults in the future.

## 188      **Public Question Time**

*Question from Mrs Sandie Moore, Lynchemere Parish Council (LPC)*

LPC and residents local to this site have serious reservations about the transparency of the process in this consultation and quality of the consideration given to evidence put in to it by them and their independent experts. There is little confidence that their evidence and the responses of statutory consultees has been presented or considered fairly. What does the Council propose to do to restore our residents' faith in the planning authority?

*Response from Mrs S Taylor (Cabinet Member for Planning Services)*

The Council takes seriously all comments made in response to public consultation on the Site Allocation Development Plan Document. I would like to point out that all representations made during the initial consultation in early 2016 and the further consultation last summer were reported directly to the Cabinet and Council as they were appended to the reports. The Cabinet and Council were therefore aware of all comments made and I believe that they were both presented and considered fairly and in an open and transparent way. This included comments from the site promoter as well as the representations made by residents and the Parish Council.

With respect to the stage of consultation that has just taken place, all representations will be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate on submission of the Site Allocation DPD where they will be considered as part of the examination of the plan.

However, since these representations were submitted there has been further work undertaken which has given greater certainty that the site is capable of being developed in compliance with policies in the Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework and I will refer briefly to this in the context of the issues raised by the parish council.

Flood Risk - Fluvial and Groundwater:

Following a review of the flood risk assessment work carried out by the promoter of the site, the Environment Agency has confirmed that, although its flood zone remodelling is

incomplete, there is sufficient information to indicate that development can occur on the site outside of Flood Zone 3. Although there may be some design issues to be addressed in the construction of the access to the site, there is nothing to indicate from a fluvial flood risk point that the site cannot be developed in principle.

In addition, West Sussex County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority has confirmed that with an appropriate site layout the risk of groundwater flooding to the proposed development is considered low. On this basis, the Lead Local Flood Authority considers that there is sufficient evidence to satisfy the Exception test and to comply with paragraph 102 of the NPPF and that there is no impediment, solely on flood risk grounds, why the site cannot be allocated. Importantly, this includes not increasing flood risk elsewhere.

An officer from West Sussex County Council has visited the site and there is no change to its position.

#### Highways and Access:

Officers have consulted West Sussex County Council as highway authority, specifically requesting information on access in light of appeal decisions which residents have referred to. The County Council has confirmed that since 2003 there have been significant changes to both national planning policy and highway infrastructure design guidance. In summary the County Council as Local Highway Authority does not object to the principle of 10 dwellings at this location.

Thames Water has indicated that subject to some amendments to the wording of the policy (included within proposed modifications) it considers the plan to be sound.

#### Settlement Boundary:

The Settlement Boundary is proposed to be amended to take account of the proposed allocation. This is in accordance with the methodology and applies to all sites in the DPD, not just Sturt Avenue. At the time of the further consultation last summer none of the sites proposed to be allocated were within the settlement boundary. At the proposed submission consultation stage all sites proposed to be allocated were included within the amended settlement boundary. If the allocation is removed as part of the examination into the plan it would also be removed from the settlement boundary.

In summary all of the representations and consultation responses in relation to this site have been assessed carefully by officers at the different stages of the process and reported to members for consideration in accordance with the Council's usual procedures for preparing a development plan document. The site is considered suitable in principle for the development of 10 houses. I should stress that the process of allocating a site in a local plan or development plan document is to establish in principle that a suitable form of development can be located on a particular site, using a proportionate evidence base.

All relevant Local Plan policies will apply to detailed proposals for development.

Due to the issues raised as part of the previous consultation, more work has been undertaken to further investigate those issues and I have explained the position above. Members now have more information available to them with respect to fluvial and groundwater flood risk and highways and access. This additional information further confirms that the site is suitable in principle for development and can therefore be allocated within the Site Allocation DPD.

Mrs Moore stated that she had spoken to a Thames Water Planning Officer that morning who had advised that they were still in discussion with the developers and council officers and that there was nothing they had seen which would indicate that the site was safe on access and water pollution grounds and that their present stance remained that the site was unsound. She asked a supplementary question:

“In the light of all the evidence from Lynchmere Parish Council, local residents and Haslemere Town Council on their concerns and experiences about flooding, groundwater, environmental, highways and access issues and their collective view that the process has been unsound can the Council really be confident that housing on this particular site can safely delivered by any developer, if not shouldn't it be the responsible decision of the Council that it should remain unallocated.”

The Chairman advised that this question would be covered under agenda item 11.

## **189 Budget Spending Plans 2017-2018**

The Council received a report from Mr Ward (Head of Finance and Governance Services and the council's S151 Officer), circulated with the supplement to the agenda (copy attached to the official minutes).

Mrs Hardwick (Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance Services), seconded by Mr Dignum (Leader of the Council), moved the recommendations of the Cabinet.

Mrs Hardwick introduced the report. She advised that taking up the government's offer of allowing, without a referendum, a rise in Council tax by £5 (band D equivalent) to offset the continued withdrawal of government funding would generate an extra £260,000 and assist in closing the budget deficit that would otherwise emerge in the medium term. This measure would be taken alongside the continuing work on the deficit reduction plan which aimed to generate further income and savings amounting to £3.9m over the next 5 years so as to minimise future council tax increases.

The budget process identified the planned variances from the current year's budget. The Capital and Projects Programme detailed the projects, like Enterprise Gateway and Plot 21 Terminus Road, which had already been approved by the Cabinet and Council. The Statement of Reserves remained robust and healthy, highlighted the purpose of specific reserves and the respective authorisations for their use and demonstrated that the Capital Programme and Asset Replacement programmes were fully funded.

The budget and the supporting council tax resolutions incorporated spending plans that support the council's corporate plan objectives of looking after our community and the environment, facilitating the supply of affordable housing, and helping the local economy to prosper. At the same time this budget demonstrated the council's financial resilience by meeting all the tests of financial prudence.

Mrs Hardwick extended thanks to Mr Ward, and Group Accountants Mr Cooper and Mr Catlow and to all the finance team for their hard work and diligence on this year's budget.

Mr Hayes and Mrs Duncton commended this positive budget.

Mr Plowman queried the total amount of money, both revenue and capital, which was to be spent on the Novium alone. Mr Cooper (Group Accountant) responded that the total

costs for the Novium alone (i.e. excluding the tourist information centre and Guildhall) were £586,000 in cash terms in 2017/18 (£239,000 staffing, £481,000 running costs and £134,000 income) plus an additional £33,000 in the Asset Replacement Programme.

Mr Oakley supported the budget however he was concerned that an amount for the A27 road cleaning had not been included in the revenue budget. He was also concerned that a proportion of the cultural grant payments were being included in the revenue budget. Mr Ward advised that the current cultural grant payments had been funded from an earmarked reserve which would be depleted part way through 2017/18. This has arisen because interest earned on the balance had not been added to the reserve, but instead credited to general reserves. The new cultural grant payments had been built into the base budget in accordance with the financial strategy principles, and rather than top up the cultural grants reserve from general reserves he felt it was more transparent to fund the 2017/18 shortfall from the revenue budget.

Chichester Contract Services had been requested to carry out a review of street cleansing and bring a report back to Cabinet in September 2017 with an estimate of ongoing commitments. If the recommendation was that the 2017/18 revenue budget should be increased then this money would be allocated from existing budgets or as a one off from reserves. Any on-going requirement would then be built into the base budget for 2018/19 onwards.

In response to a question from Mr Cullen, Mr Ward advised that in 2017 the council would retain approximately 4% of the area's business rates.

Mr J F Elliot, referring to Mr Dignum's opening address, was concerned at the state of the parks and gardens on the outside of the city walls. Mr Dignum advised that the independent consultant had found this in fair order. Mr Carvell (Executive Director) undertook to look into this and respond to Mr Elliott.

The recommendations were put to the vote, and declared carried.

In accordance with the Standing Order 9 as required by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote was taken as follows:

For the recommendations: Mrs C Apel, Mr G Barrett, Mr J Brown, Mr P Budge, Mr J Connor, Mr M Cullen, Mr T Dempster, Mrs P Dignum, Mr T Dignum, Mrs J Duncton, Mr M Dunn, Mr J F Elliott, Mr N Galloway, Mrs N Graves, Mr M Hall, Mrs E Hamilton, Mrs P Hardwick, Mr R Hayes, Mr G Hicks, Mr L Hixson, Mr F Hobbs, Mrs G Keegan, Mrs J Kilby, Mrs E Lintill, Mr S Lloyd-Williams, Mr L Macey, Mr G McAra, Mr S Morley, Ms C Neville, Mr S Oakley, Mrs P Plant, Mr R Plowman, Mr H Potter, Mrs C Purnell, Mr J Ridd, Mr A Shaxson, Mrs J Tassell, Mrs S Taylor, Mr N Thomas, Mrs T Tull, Mr D Wakeham and Mrs S Westacott (42)

Against the recommendations: None

Abstained: None

## **RESOLVED**

- 1) That a net budget requirement of £12,362,700 for 2017-2018 be approved.

- 2) That the 2017-18 Council Tax requirement in respect of the Council's own services be approved at £7,829,898.
- 3) That council tax is increased by £5 from £145.81 to £150.81 for a band D equivalent in 2017-2018.
- 4) That the Investment Opportunities Reserve is increased by £470,600.
- 5) That the Council Tax Resolution as set out in Appendix A to the report by the Head of Finance and Governance Services be passed.

## 190      **Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2017-18**

Mrs Hardwick, (Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance Services), seconded by Mr Dignum (Leader of the Council), moved the recommendations of the Cabinet.

Mrs Hardwick introduced the report saying that by law the council was required to approve a Treasury Management Strategy and the relevant prudential indicators included in this report by 31 March 2017. The Corporate Governance and Audit Committee had considered this strategy on 26 January 2017, suggesting inclusion of clarification as to how Community Infrastructure Levy monies were considered as part of treasury management. The key updates to the strategy were detailed in the report and were drafted to support the vision as outlined to members in the treasury management training provided in January 2017. These were a) to identify core cash requirements and invest this for security & liquidity and b) to identify long term surplus funds and invest these for security and return.

Mrs Hardwick extended thanks to the treasury management team - Mrs Belenger (Accountancy Services Manager) and Mr Catlow (Group Accountant) in particular.

Mr Plowman commended the Treasury Management Statement, but was concerned at the 'unknown' in three areas going forward – inflation, general economy and the housing market in general. Mrs Hardwick confirmed that these items were regularly under review and that the first two were on the council's Strategic Risk Register which was constantly reassessed and monitored. The third was a well-known and valid risk. Mrs Tull (Chairman of the Corporate Governance & Audit Committee) confirmed that her committee had reviewed the strategy and the corporate risks and had commended the strategy to Council for approval.

On the recommendations being put to the vote, they were declared carried.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1) That the Treasury Management Policy and Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2017-2018 as contained in appendix 2 to the agenda report be approved.
- 2) That the Investment Strategy 2017-2018 as detailed in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement be approved.
- 3) That the Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2017-2018 included in appendices 2 and 4 to the agenda report be approved.
- 4) That the Minimum Revenue Provision statement for 2017-2018 in appendix 4 to the agenda report be approved.

## 191      **Corporate Plan Annual Review**

Mr Dignum (Leader of the Council), seconded by Mrs Lintill, moved the recommendations of the Cabinet.

Mr Dignum introduced the report, saying that the Cabinet on 7 February 2017 had approved a number of Initial Project Proposal Documents and £50,000 funding from Council reserves to undertake appropriate appraisals and feasibility work. No amendment had been required to the Corporate Plan for the year 2017-18.

On the recommendation being put to the vote, it was declared carried.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Corporate Plan, which was approved in December 2015, shall remain unchanged for the year 2017-2018.

## 192      **Revised Local Development Scheme 2016-2020**

Mrs Taylor (Cabinet Member for Planning Services), seconded by Mr Dignum, moved the recommendation of the Cabinet.

Mrs Taylor introduced the report, summarising the nature and purpose of the Local Development Scheme (LDS). She gave an overview of the three principal areas where it was proposed to revise the LDS: the Chichester Local Plan Review, the Southern Gateway Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the Statement of Community Involvement. She also referred to neighbourhood development plans.

The LDS contained information about the current development plan for Chichester District and the timetable for the future production of planning policy documents. The LDS was used to monitor the council's progress in producing planning policy documents as part of the Authority's Monitoring Report and was last reviewed in March 2016. It was essential that the LDS was kept up to date to take into account government legislation and local developments that had occurred over the last twelve months.

Mrs Apel queried whether, as a result of the A27 bypass funding having been withdrawn, the Local Plan was still considered sound. Mrs Taylor responded that, when the Inspector had examined the Local Plan, the current A27 position had been taken into account which was one of the reasons why the lower housing figure had been approved. Mr Carvell added the Local Plan was adopted (and therefore sound) and that there were firm arrangements in place for collecting contributions from developers for improvement to the A27 roundabouts through S106 and 278 agreements. The recent decision to cancel the A27 bypass scheme would have an effect on our review of the Local Plan.

Mr Dunn and Mr Oakley highlighted the vastly inflated housing figures being experienced by neighbouring authorities without an adopted Local Plan in place. Mr Carvell, in response to a question from Mr Oakley querying whether there was a system at Arun District Council to obtain developer contributions towards the Chichester bypass, advised that he would take soundings from other authorities but was not sure there was anything in place which was comparable to the scheme in Chichester.

Mrs Purnell (Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment Services) asked the Leader whether schemes such as Southern Gateway and Chichester Vision would go ahead in light of the A27 bypass cancellation. Mr Dignum undertook to respond to Mrs Purnell on this matter.

On the recommendation being put to the vote, it was declared carried.

## **RESOLVED**

That the revised Local Development Scheme 2017-2020 be approved.

### **193      Community Led Housing Fund**

Mrs Purnell (Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment Services), seconded by Mrs Lintill (Cabinet Member for Community Services), moved the recommendations of the Cabinet.

Mrs Purnell introduced this report, summarising the objective of the Government's community-led housing development scheme and how the council, which would be allocated £1,386,067 in two tranches, would be required to use the funds in a prescribed manner. The funds provided by this scheme would enable the council to implement the key priorities of its Housing Strategy.

Registered provider partners were now looking to maximise economies of scale in response to government grant funding reductions and the revenue loss through the government's 1% per annum rent reduction policy on all affordable rented tenancies. They were no-longer interested in delivering small sites as they were relatively expensive to deliver.

The Council currently holds £435,000 in commuted sums yet to be allocated. A further £1.23m of commuted sums was expected to be received from completed section 106 agreements. The Housing Strategy review approved by the Council last year approved the use of commuted sums both to attract investment to meet specific local needs, such as bungalows and to make small schemes viable, particularly rural schemes. This scheme achieved both of these objectives.

Funding had been determined on the number of second homes in the district and on affordability level. Chichester district has more second homes than Arun, for example, and more on the coastal strip than in the South Downs National Park area.

Council was being asked to note receipt of the funding and not to consider how it was allocated.

Mrs Grange advised that over 25 expressions of interest in community led housing had been received over the last six months. She had spoken to a number of groups – parish councils, landowners and community groups as well as Action in Rural Sussex, housing consultants in the district and to other organisations who provide advice. An options report would now be drawn up to consider how this money could be allocated.

Mrs Duncton supported the scheme, saying that it was the only option in our small communities and rural villages where we could provide housing which did not go onto the open market. Mr Shaxson praised the proactive work that Mrs Grange (Housing



Enablement Manager) and her team were doing in speaking to individual parishes. Mr J F Elliott suggested that more one bed properties should be made available in rural villages for widows/widowers.

Mr Dunn considered that it had not been a good decision to transfer our housing to housing associations and that Community Land Trusts should be encouraged to build housing for rental to secure housing tenure.

Mr Dignum asked members to encourage their parishes to get behind the scheme, particularly in the South Downs National Park area. Chichester had received 50% more than the rest of West Sussex combined and there may be more such funding available to us. Para 5.4 of the Cabinet papers gave examples of the sorts of things we could spend our money on.

On the recommendations being put to the vote, they were declared carried.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1) That the allocation of funding of £1,386,067 for the 2016-2017 financial year from the government's Community Housing Fund to support community-led housing developments be noted.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Housing and Environment Services, following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members for Finance and Governance and for Housing and Environment Services, to approve the spend of the funds in para (1) above in line with government guidance issued with the notification of the award (appendix 1 to the agenda report) and Chichester District Council's Housing Strategy.

### **194 Chichester Site Allocations Development Plan Document - Proposed Submission Update Report**

Mrs Taylor (Cabinet Member for Planning Services), seconded by Mr Dignum, moved the recommendations of the Cabinet.

Mr Oakley, Mrs Duncton and Mr McAra declared a personal interest in this item as members of West Sussex County Council, who were a consultee on this item.

Mrs Taylor introduced the report, advising that the representations received to the pre-Submission Site Allocation Draft together with the Development Plan Document would be submitted to a Planning Inspector who would conduct an independent examination, assessing the plan against the tests of soundness.

At Council in November 2016 a resolution had been passed that the Site Allocation Development Plan Document be submitted "subject to confirmation from the Environment Agency that there was no objection once the flood zone modelling has been completed". Since then further information and clarification had been sought from both the Environment Agency (EA) and West Sussex County Council (WSCC).

The EA had not completed the flood zone modelling but it had reviewed a flood model for the site and was "satisfied that the approach taken to assess flood risk on the proposed development was sufficiently precautionary" and that it could be used by the council to give a better understanding of the flood risk on the site. In light of technical advice received

from WSCC as the statutory consultee, there was no sound evidence in relation to ground water flooding to justify the removal of the site from the DPD.

Residents' concerns regarding highway safety and site access were also considered in the report and these issues would be further considered at planning application stage.

Mrs Hardwick was concerned that key evidence anticipated at the Council meeting in November 2016 was still not available. Council had voted by a small majority at that meeting to include the site but only if the EA had completed the necessary modelling. In determining the soundness of a DPD the evidence to support allocations needed to be prospective, not retrospective. She stated that the evidence here was thin, contradictory and largely retrospective and that the site should be removed from the DPD.

Mrs Graves also spoke in support of removal of the site from the DPD. Mr Plowman agreed that it was vital that the EA modelling work was complete before making a decision. The Inspector examining the plan would look at this at a very strategic level and if passed, parish councils may need to produce the flood risk evidence which would be very expensive.

Mr Potter, Mr Dunn, Mrs Apel, Mr Shaxson and Mrs Tull all supported the views expressed by Mrs Hardwick.

Mr Frost (Head of Planning Services) and Mr Allgrove (Planning Policy Conservation and Design Manager) both responded to members questions. The majority of the site is classed as flood zone 1 (1:1000 risk of flooding) and therefore the safest land (in terms of flood risk) in the country. The majority of this site was not prone to fluvial flooding. Whilst the site is subject to groundwater flooding, the advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority was that the development would be safe and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Ten dwellings on this site would be low density and development would be able to be contained in the area classed as flood zone 1. The modifications which Thames Water suggested to the policy are recommended for approval in this report.

Mrs Taylor advised that if the Inspector approved the site, the developer would still need to submit a detailed planning application and to consult with statutory consultees. Conditions would be attached to any approval of the application. The surface water and foul drainage SPD would also need to be considered.

Mrs Hardwick requested an amendment to the recommendation as follows:

*That the site to the rear of Sturt Avenue, Lynchmere, be removed from the DPD*

She was seconded by Mr Plowman.

A recorded vote was requested by Mrs Hardwick and was supported by four councillors.

On this amendment to the recommendation being put to the vote it was declared carried.

For the motion: Mrs C Apel, Mr J Brown, Mr M Dunn, Mr J F Elliott, Mrs N Graves, Mr M Hall, Mrs P Hardwick, Mr L Hixson, Mr F Hobbs, Mr L Macey, Mr G McAra, Mr S Morley, Ms C Neville, Mr R Plowman, Mr H Potter, Mr A Shaxson, Mrs J Tassell, Mr N Thomas, Mrs T Tull and Mrs S Westacott (20)

Against the motion: Mr G Barrett, Mr P Budge, Mr J Connor, Mr M Cullen, Mr T Dempster, Mrs P Dignum, Mr A Dignum, Mrs J Duncton, Mrs E Hamilton, Mr G Hicks, Mrs J Kilby, Mrs E Lintill, Mr S Lloyd-Williams, Mr S Oakley, Ms P Plant, Mrs C Purnell, Mr J Ridd, Mrs S Taylor and Mr D Wakeham (19)

Abstained: Mr N Galloway and Mrs G Keegan (2)

Absent: Mr R Barrow, Mr I Curbishley, Mr J W Elliott, Mr R Hayes, Mr P Jarvis, Mrs D Knightley and Mr J Ransley (7)

The substantive recommendation, including the amendment agreed above, as follows:

*That the Site Allocation Development Plan Document: Proposed Submission, including the ~~retention of the~~ **excluding** the allocation to the rear of Sturt Avenue, Lynchmere and associated documents be approved for submission to the Secretary of State for examination.*

was then put to the vote and declared carried.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1) That the Site Allocation Development Plan Document: Proposed Submission, excluding the allocation to the rear of Sturt Avenue, Lynchmere and associated documents be approved for submission to the Secretary of State for examination.
- 2) That the Proposed Modifications to the Site Allocation Development Plan Document: Proposed Submission as set out in the schedule in appendix 1 be approved for submission to the Secretary of State; and
- 3) That during the examination into the Site Allocation Development Plan Document: Proposed Submission the Head of Planning Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, be given delegated authority to agree minor amendments to the Site Allocation Development Plan Document.

## **195 Infrastructure Business Plan 2017-2020**

Mrs Taylor (Cabinet Member for Planning Services), seconded by Mr Dignum, moved the recommendations of the Cabinet.

Mrs Taylor introduced the report, stating that the Infrastructure Business Plan (IBP) was in place in order to prioritise and select infrastructure that was most needed to ensure that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was spent to best effect. The results of the consultation had been discussed by the Joint Member Liaison Group which comprised officers and members from both the council and WSCC and modifications had been agreed.

The group had agreed that CIL monies allocated to school places be reduced from 50% to 40% of the total cost, subject to further detail and evaluation and after a schedule of unspent education related S106 payments had been submitted by WSCC.

The 'Bike It' projects had been deleted from the CIL spending plan to be replaced by new bicycle infrastructure, detail of which was awaited from WSCC. The CIL funds of £1.3m requested by the West Sussex Coastal Commissioning Group to be allocated to the Medical Centre West of Chichester Project 398 would remain as it related to strategic site

infrastructure. However, further justification from the group for this level of funding was awaited.

Since the implementation of CIL on 1 February 2016, £547,250 had been collected and another £250,645 demanded. In the early years of CIL collection, it was expected that the amount collected would be lower than subsequent years but as the housing delivery increased throughout the plan period, the amount of CIL collected would increase. There would be insufficient CIL monies to cover every project proposed therefore the projects had been categorised into essential, policy high and desirable. A robust approach would be required in selecting projects which assisted development.

Mr Shaxson, referring to an appeal by a developer against payment of CIL, asked whether this was likely to become more commonplace. Mrs Taylor responded that, because it was a new tax, certain developers were not fully aware of the implications. Mrs Dower confirmed that this was not unusual e.g. Southampton City Council had experienced similar issues and developers often needed to be pursued through the courts to pay CIL monies.

Mr Oakley wanted to be reassured that resources would be made available to ensure developer compliance with CIL. Mrs Taylor, supported by Mr Dignum, both confirmed that sufficient resources would be made available.

Mrs Westacott asked whether the council was able to recover the costs from developers when we take court action. Mrs Dower advised that we were able to retain 5% of CIL monies for the administration of CIL. Mrs Tull confirmed that the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee would continue to have a role in reviewing the current S106 expenditure and CIL allocations in future.

On the recommendations being put to the vote, they were declared carried.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1) That the proposed responses to the representations received and subsequent modifications to the Infrastructure Business Plan as set out in appendix 1 to this report be approved.
- 2) That the amended Infrastructure Business Plan including the Community Infrastructure Levy Spending Plan in appendix 2 be approved.

### **196 Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Project - Project Initiation Document**

Mrs Plant (Cabinet Member of Business Improvement Services), seconded by Mrs Hardwick, moved the recommendations of the Cabinet.

Mrs Plant introduced the report. In 2016 the council had worked on a business case for shared services, which the Cabinet earlier this year had resolved not to pursue. Instead it was decided to carry out an in-house review of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services, to deliver the required saving of £148,000 as identified in the Deficit Reduction Plan. The Project Initiation Document included with this report proposed three work streams - 1) transfer of the customer contact role from the back office into the customer service centre, 2) review of revenues and benefits back office services, 3) identify the future reduction in customer services staffing levels and to encourage customers to self-

serve. An e-solution is proposed to allow residents to self-serve and to update their own information in the back office system. Revenue savings had been estimated at £177,000 in the 2018-19 budget cycle, reaching £224,000 in 2019-21. There is a one off cost of £327,000 to purchase and deliver the electronic application and payback would be realised within three years.

Mrs Plant continued that the timetable set out the transfer of processes from revenues and benefits to customer services. Those moving would need to take on new skills which would be phased and monitored. Mr Ward added that the module the council was looking to invest in was used widely by other councils. Safeguards were built in, with a number of verification checks on data entered to check its validity.

Mr Lloyd-Williams queried the reporting structure for the three work streams and the deliverables of the project and how they would be measured. He also suggested that the planned mitigation for not achieving high levels of channel shift was weak and the risk that staff would be unwilling to transfer should be addressed at the outset. Mrs Shepherd responded saying that senior officers were taking an overview of this project supported by a capable project manager. As a council we have had experience of this sort of project in the past five years. The Business Improvement Programme Board would monitor deliverability and outcomes. We were confident that we could redesign the system having experience of other examples in the country, which demonstrated that most customers would use the electronic system whilst a proportion would continue to use the telephone and those people would be supported. We would need to take proactive action if channel shift did not happen. The council had a good record of transferring staff to the customer services centre.

On the recommendation being put to the vote, it was declared carried.

## **RESOLVED**

That a total budget of £327,000 be approved to be allocated from reserves to fund the one-off delivery costs of this project.

### **197      Senior Staff Pay Policy**

Mrs Plant (Cabinet Member for Business Improvement Services), seconded by Mr Dignum, moved the recommendations of the Cabinet.

Mrs Plant introduced the report.

On the recommendation being put to the vote, it was declared carried.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Senior Staff Pay Policy Statement be published.

### **198      Questions to the Executive**

a)    Question: Loss to this district of the A27 bypass improvement scheme

Mr Lloyd-Williams asked the Leader who was responsible for the catastrophic loss to this district of the £300m bypass project.

Response by Mr Dignum (Leader of the Council):

Mr Dignum responded that we would now need to consider an option which was within the cost envelope to the government. There needed to be consensus across the district. The northern route was ruled out as it did not involve improvement of the A27 junctions. We now needed to find the best way forward. We had lost our place in the government's Road Investment Strategy 2021 but would need to find a place in the next tranche of funding.

b) Chichester Vision affected by the loss of A27 improvement scheme

Mrs Apel asked whether the Vision for Chichester and tourism would be negatively affected by the loss of the A27 bypass as traffic got worse with increased housing in the district.

Response by Mr Dignum (Leader of the Council):

Mr Dignum advised that he was working on Southern Gateway with certain assumptions about the A27 which would require revision. The Vision was not developed in sufficient detail that elements of it would go ahead or not. We would need to adjust our objectives according to what was available but it did not rule out either project.

c) Confidence in the A27 consultation process

Mr Brown asked whether we had been misled by Highways England and by the Minister for Transport. When we voted to request a re-run we did so knowing that we might not get the funding. Can we trust that process? We could have been told by the Minister that there would be no re-run of the consultation and not that the funding had been withdrawn entirely.

Response by Mr Dignum (Leader of the Council):

Before the Road Improvement Strategy (RIS) was announced in 2013 Highways England had put the northern route option on the table at meetings with West Sussex County Council and this council. The RIS then confined the work to these four junctions there was a campaign to present these to the public through maps which were picked up in The Observer. The Minister for Transport then announced that the northern route was off the table. He considered that there was no reason for the Secretary of State to withdraw the funding.

d) Use of the A272 as the future A27 bypass option

Mr Morley was concerned that the A272 should not become the future A27 bypass option. He requested the Leader to reassure residents in the A272 corridor and Midhurst Parish Council that this concern would be acknowledged at any future bypass considerations which took place.

Response by Mr Dignum (Leader of the Council):

Mr Dignum responded that it would certainly be taken into account by the district but he couldn't speak for other consultees. Because nothing would be done for a number of years it was something we would have to live with. Communities had been very divided and we would need to bring them together.

e) A northern route in a future RIS

Mr Oakley asked whether, as the Secretary of State did not expressly include the northern options, on what basis the Leader believed the northern options would not be reconsidered.

Response by Mr Dignum:

Mr Dignum responded that it was unlikely that the Secretary of State would change that strategy. The information was confined to the RIS and work to the four junctions and this was something that would need clarity in the future.

f) Question: Video recording of Sturt Avenue layout

Mr Macy asked whether it would have been useful to have a video recording of the site at Sturt Avenue.

Response:

Mrs Taylor noted his comments but said it was not usual to have a video recording of sites.

199 **Late items**

There were no late items.

200 **Exclusion of the press and public**

## **RESOLVED**

That the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that it is likely that there would be a disclosure to the public of 'exempt information' of the description specified in Paragraph 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and because, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption of that information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

201 **Acquisition of Additional Temporary Accommodation**

Mrs Purnell (Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment Services), seconded by Mrs Keegan, moved the recommendations of the Cabinet.

Mrs Purnell introduced the report. Since the introduction of the Welfare Act in 2015 there has been a significant rise in homelessness at both a national and local level. Registered providers have become increasingly commercial and risk adverse, withdrawing from supporting those most vulnerable. The Home Group has recently advised that they will be withdrawing from providing young persons' services and closing the Chichester Foyer at the end of the year - a loss of 56 bed spaces for young vulnerable adults.

Westward House, the Council's homeless hostel, has been operating at almost full capacity and in particular the Council is experiencing increasing demand for single person and larger family temporary accommodation. As a consequence the Council has become increasingly reliant on the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, which is both

expensive and unlawful, unless in exceptional circumstances. There is an immediate need for additional temporary accommodation.

An opportunity has arisen for the Council to purchase a property considered to offer good value. An initial options appraisal indicates the building has the potential to enable the Council to expand our existing homeless service.

It is proposed that the property is purchased and bought immediately back into use to provide four one-bedroom flats as temporary accommodation. At the same time a full options appraisal is undertaken to evaluate the most effective use of the building in the longer term with a Project Implementation Document being presented to Cabinet outlining recommendations later in the year.

The purchase of this property will enable the Council to meet its statutory duty towards homeless households, providing additional temporary accommodation both in the short and longer term. It will reduce reliance on and the high cost to the Council of bed and breakfast accommodation.

Mr Plowman, Mr Hixson, Mrs Duncton all supported this initiative. To a question from Mr Oakley querying whether there were any encumbrances or restrictive covenants on the site, Mr Over advised that completion of the purchase would be dependent on their being no unusual encumbrances or restrictive covenants.

Mrs Tull was concerned at the cost of professional fees and suggested that the council had many experienced in-house staff that could carry out this work. Mrs Purnell responded that the options appraisal would consider how the property could be best used, whether for larger families or single occupancy. If we had the experienced, available resources in-house we would use them.

On the recommendations being put to the vote, they were declared carried.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1) That the Council approves the purchase of the property shown hatched black in appendix 1 on the terms set out in paragraph 4.7 of the report and that the Head of Commercial Services be authorised to conclude the purchase following completion of due diligence investigations.
- 2) That the Council approves the allocation of the sums in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2 of this report from the Housing Investment Reserve to cover the costs of purchase, ancillary costs and the appointment of consultants to carry out a full options appraisal.

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm

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CHAIRMAN

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Date: