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Minutes of the meeting of the **Cabinet** held in Virtual on Tuesday 8 December 2020 at 9.30 am

Members Present Mrs E Lintill (Chairman), Mrs S Taylor (Vice-Chairman), Mr R Briscoe, Mr A Dignum, Mrs P Plant, Mr A Sutton and Mr P Wilding

Members Absent

In attendance by invitation

Officers Present Mr N Bennett (Divisional Manager for Democratic Services), Mr A Buckley (Corporate Improvement and Facilities Manager), Mr M Catlow (Group Accountant (Technical and Exchequer)), Mr A Frost (Director of Planning and Environment), Miss L Higenbottam (Democratic Services Manager), Mrs J Hotchkiss (Director of Growth and Place), Mrs S Peyman (Divisional Manager for Culture), Mrs L Rudziak (Director of Housing and Communities), Mrs D Shepherd (Chief Executive) and Mr J Ward (Director of Corporate Services)

76 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no apologies for absence.

The Chair gave the sad news that she had recently learnt of the death of former district councillor Nick Thomas.

77 **Approval of Minutes**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 3 November 2020 be approved as a correct record.

78 **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

79 **Public Question Time**

The following public question was asked by Mr Kerry-Bedell:

A 2018 Environment Agency report says the shellfish industry in Chichester Harbour should be worth over half a million pounds a year. Yet only two weeks ago the harbour quality water report showed faecal matter in the harbour well above the permitted limits to sell any shellfish from it. The September 2020 report in Science of the Total Environment into Chichester Harbour water quality and faecal indicator organisms also concluded:

“Compliance with the guideline E. coli standard of the Shellfish Water Protected Areas Directions was not consistently achieved. We suggest that better harmonisation of monitoring practices used in the various statutory programmes would help in understanding if the observed discrepancy in FIO compliance between waters and shellfish is due to actual pollution levels at compliance sites or other factors.”

The current Beach Buoy daily email reporting system is almost useless. Whilst harbour water quality is monitored, there is no storm discharge volume or compliance failure data available from sewage treatment outlets.

So what is Chichester Council doing to solve the lack of publically available daily water quality or sewage outlet reporting on faecal matter, nitrates and ammonia, and what action is proposed to create a better, more useable, accurate and actionable daily report for residents and the shellfish industry in Chichester Harbour?

Valuation of Chichester Harbour shellfish:

<https://secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk/clients/34087/sitedata/files/Research/Chichester-Shellfish-Valuation-Report-2018.pdf>

Cllr Plant provided the following response:

Thank you for your question. The Council under its food hygiene remit, has a programme of shellfish sampling which monitors E.coli and biotoxin levels and from which the beds are then classified from A to C. The November samples fell into a B class for the beds in Chichester Harbour which requires the oysters to be purified for a minimum of 42 hours. Very few beds in England will have the higher A class of water, which permits immediate consumption without purification. That said, the Shellfish beds are affected by the storm water discharges and the Council is notified directly by Southern Water of any potential spills into the harbour from the waste water treatment works and the Council notifies the harvesters if harvesting is occurring. The Council also shares its shellfish monitoring data with the Environment Agency.

Nitrates and ammonia are not covered by the food hygiene monitoring. The Environment Agency, as the water regulator, rather than the District Council, is responsible for monitoring water quality through the Shellfish Water Protected Areas Directions and regulating and overseeing Southern Water's performance through their environmental permit for the waste water treatment works.

Beachbuoy is Southern Water's online release notification system. Launched in 2018 and improved in September this year following feedback, it is able to give automatic updates from Southern Water infrastructure. This service will continue to

be enhanced and is the best route to receive first-hand the most up to date information.

The pressures on water quality range from diffuse pollution from villages and roads, pollution from waste water, and run off from agriculture and livestock. The Council sits on a waste water working group which includes all the key stakeholders, including the Environment Agency, Southern Water, Chichester Harbour Conservancy and through this group there are on-going discussions relating to improving harbour water quality in relation to the existing situation and the Sewage Treatment Works capacity necessary in relation to the Local Plan review. The Council, through this group, can feedback the concerns about Beachbuoy to SW and the EA at the next meeting.

The following supplementary question was asked by Mr Kerry-Bedell:

It was established at the last Council meeting on 24th November that the water quality group meets irregularly. A concern raised by Parishes and residents is that none of the items they raise or discuss or the results that are minuted get into the public domain. Like all Parish information discussed, the minutes should be in the public domain, where their information could be very useful in determining LP and NP policy and also influencing planning applications. How and when will the water quality group minutes be published and how does the Council propose that these are best circulated to Parishes?

The Chief Executive provided the following response:

Following the Council meeting on 24 November 2020 I have begun discussions with senior officers about the effectiveness of the water quality group as instructed by members. These talks are ongoing but once concluded I will advise members on how we can improve communications on the topics discussed by this group and will ensure an update is made publically available on the website.

80 **Financial Strategy and Plan 2021-22 to 2025-26**

Cllr Wilding introduced the item. He confirmed that at its meeting the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee had been supportive of the report.

Mr Ward was then invited to provide an update following the Chancellors recent announcements. He explained the following:

- The public sector pay restraints stands to save the council £110,000 in staffing each year for the next five years.
- It is anticipated that a Council Tax rise will still be accepted.
- Local Government as a whole is anticipating £1.55 billion in local government Covid support funding in the first quarter.
- It is anticipated that there will be £670 million in local government Council Tax funding to support the increase in additional claims.
- It is anticipated that eth sales, fees and charges compensation scheme will be extended into the first quarter.

In a vote the following recommendations and resolutions were made:

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

- 1) The key financial principles and actions set out in appendix 1 of the 5 year Financial Strategy report are approved.
- 2) That having considered the recommendations of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, the Minimum Level of Reserves remains set at £4m.
- 3) That the current 5 year Financial Model detailed in appendix 2 and the Resources Statement in appendix 3 to the Financial Strategy report be noted.

RESOLVED

That the updated Fees and Charging Policy shown in appendix 4 be approved.

81 Draft Revised Contaminated Land Strategy

Cllr Plant introduced the item.

In a vote the following resolutions were made:

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet approves the revised Contaminated Land Strategy for Chichester District for public consultation.
2. That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Environment (following consultation with the Cabinet member for the Environment and Chichester Contract Services) to consider the representations arising from the consultation exercise and, provided the representations do not require significant amendments to the Strategy, to approve adoption (with minor amendments if considered appropriate) of the Strategy.

82 Determination of the Council Tax Base 2021-2022

Cllr Wilding introduced the item. Mr Jobson added that the Council Tax Base is increasing following new builds across the district. However although the underlying trend shows continued growth in the taxbase, due to an increase in payment of council tax reduction the 2021/22 taxbase is 0.3% lower than the taxbase for the previous year.

In a vote the following resolutions were made:

In order to comply with section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 the Cabinet resolved:

1. No item of expenditure shall be treated as 'special expenses' for the purposes of section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
2. This resolution in (2.2) shall remain in force for the 2021-2022 financial year.
3. The calculation of the Chichester District Council's taxbase for the year 2021-2022 be approved.

4. The amounts calculated by Chichester District Council as its council taxbase be those set out in appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

83 **Enabling Grants to support New and Existing Businesses**

Cllr Dignum introduced the item.

In response to members questions Ms Burgoyne confirmed that businesses could use the grant funding towards training and help to set up a website. With regard to the frequency of applications any one business would not be able to apply again within a three year period in order to enable provision of grants for the greatest number of businesses across the district.

In a vote the following recommendations were agreed:

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet approves the continuation of the Enabling Grant Scheme as set out in section 4, funded by £71,428 allocated from the Pooled Business Rates Fund.
2. That Cabinet approves delegated authority to the Divisional Manager of Property & Growth to approve the Enabling grants.

84 **Homelessness Prevention and Relief Fund**

Cllr Sutton introduced the item.

In response to members questions Mrs Grange confirmed that once the Fund reached £10,000 it would be reviewed and other options for provision of funding would be explored. With regard to when the Fund has to be used, there is no current time limit. Cllr Sutton added that the Fund is designed to cater for those who do not qualify for existing funding sources.

In a vote the following recommendations were agreed:

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet approves the revised Homelessness Prevention and Relief policy at the Appendix which will supersede the existing Homelessness Prevention Fund policy.
2. That Cabinet Approves delegation to the Divisional Manager for Housing, and Housing Options Manager to approve payments under the policy.
3. That Cabinet approves delegation to the Divisional Manager for Housing following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Communications, Licensing and Events to make minor amendments to the policy as required.
4. That Cabinet notes the remaining funding budget of £39,800.

85 **Independent Retail Support Programme**

Cllr Dignum introduced the item.

In response to members questions Ms Burgoyne explained that consideration would be given to the best timing for future events including offering 1:1 support. She added that if support were to be offered to businesses virtually the time commitment to access the service would be greatly reduced.

In a vote the following recommendations were agreed:

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet approves the Retail Support Grant Scheme and provision of Retail Training for independent retailers as set out in sections 4.1 to 4.3 of the report funded by £80,000 allocated from the Pooled Business Rates Fund.
2. That Cabinet approves delegated authority to the Divisional Manager of Property & Growth to approve the retail support grants.

86 **Call-in request from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Electrical Vehicle Charging Infrastructure**

The Chair invited Cllr Moss as Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to address the concerns of the Committee to Cabinet. Cllr Moss outlined the following points:

- There is a national push to roll out use of electric vehicles.
- West Sussex County Council have provided the council with the opportunity to collaborate at an early stage to be involved in writing the contract.
- A single solution could be sought across the county.
- The Council could be leaders in a collaborative solution.

Cllr Plant as Cabinet Member for the Environment and Chichester Contract Services was invited to respond.

Cllr Plant addressed the points as follows:

- The council is ahead of many other local authorities having already installed charging points five years ago following agreement by Cabinet.
- The council has already approved £60,000 of grant funding for the provision of charging points in close proximity to areas without off street parking.
- The council can choose to join the scheme at any point, once the contract detail is available, without the risks of not knowing the content of the contract.

Cllr Plant suggested an additional recommendation to provide delegated authority to the Director for Planning and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Chichester Contract Services to consider the contract and decide whether a further report to Cabinet should be brought forward. This was seconded by Cllr Taylor.

Members acknowledged the comments made by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In a vote the following resolutions were agreed:

RESOLVED

1. That the Cabinet having reconsidered the decision made at its meeting on 3 November 2020 relating to Item 12 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure taking into account the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee maintains the following resolution:

That having considered the recommendation from the Environment Panel (para 9.2), the Cabinet resolves to not join West Sussex County Council's concession contract for the planning, installation and deployment, service and maintenance of electric vehicle charge points across the county of West Sussex but to monitor usage of the Council's electric vehicle charge points and keep under review whether the Council wishes to join the contract at a future date.

2. That the Cabinet gives delegated authority to the Director for Planning and the Environment in collaboration with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Chichester Contract Services to consider the content of the West Sussex County Council Electrical Vehicle Charging Infrastructure contract once it has been received and to decide whether it would be appropriate at that stage to bring a further report back to Cabinet.

87 Call-in request from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Review of Parking Services

The Chair invited Cllr Moss as Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to address the concerns of the Committee to Cabinet. Cllr Moss outlined the following points:

- The need for affordable parking.
- The impact of parking on the high street.
- How small increases would make little improvement to the council's finances but would discourage people from visiting.

Cllr Dignum as Cabinet Member for Growth, Place and Regeneration was invited to respond.

Cllr Dignum made the following points:

- The average long stay cost in Chichester is £2.08.
- The average short stay cost in Chichester is £2.32.
- The increase equates to 5p per visit which would not deter people from visiting.

Cllr Dignum proposed amending recommendation 2.1 to read that Cabinet confirms its decision made having taken Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments into account. This was seconded by Cllr Briscoe.

Members acknowledged the comments made by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Cllr Plant added that although during lockdown there had been a free parking offer at Avenue Du Chartres people had still paid more for the convenience of parking in car parks such as Baffins Lane.

Mr Ward was asked to confirm the financial impact. He clarified that in the five year financial model the increase equates to £100,000 per year therefore amounting to a total loss of income of £500,000 over this period period, which would otherwise have to be found through service savings elsewhere.

The Chair confirmed that the next stage would be for the review to go out to consultation.

In a vote the following resolutions were agreed:

RESOLVED

1. That the Cabinet having reconsidered the decision made at its meeting on 3 November 2020 relating to Item 14 Review of Parking Charges taking into account the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee maintains the following resolution:

That the proposal as set out in 5.1 of this report to increase car parking charges, which subject to consultation responses, be implemented from 1 April 2021 for a one year period be approved subject to the following amendments:

- a. *That any individual proposed increase in Appendix 1 exceeding 30p should be reduced to 30p.*
 - b. *That the increase in the Bosham season ticket monthly charge should be reduced to 50p.*
2. That some further minor amendments to the Parking Order to provide further clarification on details relating to the use of the Council's car parks as set out in 3.9 of this report be approved.
 3. 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 2019 and the Road Traffic Act 1984.

88 Future Customer Services Delivery

Cllr Wilding introduced the item.

Mrs Standing added that following comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee she could confirm that all the reception area screen views would be written in Plain English as far as possible and customers are given the option to leave a message for a call back if there is a queue on the phone lines. With regard to availability of documentation in other languages Mrs Standing explained that as far as possible support would be offered including calling on multi-lingual staff and use of online translation tools.

Cllr Briscoe commended the increase in enquiries that had been dealt with over the lockdown period.

In a vote the following recommendations were agreed:

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet approve the proposed remodelling of services provided by the Customer Services Centre (CSC) as set out in the IPPD at Appendix 1.
2. That subject to approval of recommendation 2.1, Cabinet is asked to note that the permanent shift to this service delivery model will become effective when it is deemed Covid safe to do so.

89 **Next Steps Accommodation Programme**

Cllr Sutton introduced the item.

Mrs Grange added that £28,000 would be paid to Stonepillow with £32,000 for ongoing temporary accommodation costs.

Cllr Briscoe commended the work of officers in providing alternative accommodation. Mrs Grange confirmed that at 9 November 2020 there were three homeless people in Chichester compared to 31 at the same time last year.

In a vote the following recommendation was agreed:

RESOLVED

That the Next Steps Accommodation Programme grant funding of £60,508 received from Government be used to fund accommodation and support for rough sleepers as set out in para 5.1 of the report.

90 **Urgent Decision Notice - Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Scheme**

RESOLVED

That the urgent decision made during the Pandemic be noted.

91 **Late Items**

There were no late items.

92 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Cllr Lintill proposed and read the part II resolution in relation to agenda items 17, 18 and 19 which was seconded by Cllr Taylor.

The Cabinet then voted to go into part II.

RESOLVED

That with regard to agenda items 17, 18 and 19 the public including the press should be excluded from the meeting on the grounds of exemption in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 namely Paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) 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.

93 **Award of Income Management and Cash Receipting Systems Contract**

Cllr Wilding introduced the item.

In a vote the following recommendation was agreed:

RESOLVED

That Cabinet considered the report and makes the resolutions as set out in sections 3.2 and 3.3 of the report.

94 **Leisure Services Performance Review**

Cllr Briscoe introduced the report.

Mrs Peyman added that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in November 2020 had raised no concerns.

In a vote the following resolution was agreed:

RESOLVED

That Cabinet considered the report and agrees the recommendation set out in 2.1 of the report.

95 **Future Services Framework - Efficiency Savings and Policy Options**

A separate restricted minute was circulated to members for this item.

The meeting ended at 11.50 am

CHAIRMAN

Date: