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Minutes of the special meeting of the **Cabinet** held in Virtual on Tuesday 16 February 2021 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 D Cooper (Group Accountant), Mr A Frost (Director of Planning and Environment), Mrs L Grange (Divisional Manager for Housing), Miss L Higenbottam (Democratic Services Manager), Mrs J Hotchkiss (Director of Growth and Place), Mrs S Peyman (Divisional Manager for Culture), Mrs E Reed (Environmental Housing Manager), Mrs L Rudziak (Director of Housing and Communities), Mrs D Shepherd (Chief Executive) and Mr J Ward (Director of Corporate Services)

117 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no apologies for absence.

118 **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

119 **Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

120 **Budget Spending Plans 2021-22**

Cllr Wilding introduced the item. Mr Ward clarified that the draft Budget had been made with reference to the draft Government Settlement which is now confirmed without further change. With regard to the Covid Support Grant for Local Council Tax support (page 3 of the agenda pack) when the Budget Task and Finish Group had received its update it was intended that the Grant be put in reserves. However, it will now form part of the main Budget. Mr Ward added that the council had been

approached by West Sussex County Council regarding a county wide Council Tax Hardship Scheme working across the districts and boroughs.

Mr Ward then provided points of clarification raised by members. With regard to the incremental drift (page 18 of the pack) the figure of £100,000 relates to staff progressing through salary spinal points which are accounted for each year.

In a vote the following recommendations and resolutions were made:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- a) That a net budget requirement of £15,041,200 for 2021-22 be approved.
- b) That Council Tax be increased by £5.00 from £165.81 to £170.81 for a Band D equivalent in 2021-22.
- c) That a contribution from the General Fund Reserve of £2,099,300 be approved to help fund the 2021-22 budget.
- d) The capital programme, including the asset renewal programme (appendix 1c and 1d of the agenda report) be approved.

RESOLVED

- a) That the current estimated resources position set in appendix 2 of the agenda report as amended, and
- b) the budget variances included in the Draft Budget Spending Plan as set out in appendix 1b of the agenda report be noted.

121 Housing Standards Financial Assistance and Enforcement Policy 2020-2025

Cllr Sutton introduced the item.

Mrs Reed then provided clarification on points raised by members. With regard to the publicity of electricity safety standards information was circulated via the Members Bulletin, social media, landlord database held by the council and the landlord database held by the University of Chichester. The council already requests gas safety certificates and reports gas safety concerns to the Health and Safety Executive.

With regard to paragraph 3.3 on page 72 of the agenda pack it was noted that the number of homes requiring improvement is not comparable to the funding available. Mrs Reed explained that the Policy does provide other tools to encourage property improvement. These include supporting vulnerable applicants to apply for external funding, and also raising awareness of funding opportunities for those residents who are able to pay for improvements themselves. The council will also continue to take advantage of any bidding opportunities for additional funding that arise. An example of this was a recent successful consortium bid which provided the council with a share of the £3 million. With regard to financial assistance which is applied as a charge on a property, the charge is revealed on sale and then recovered. All monies will be returned to the original budget and recycled for future applications.

In a vote the following recommendations were made:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- 1) That the Housing Standards Financial Assistance and Enforcement Policy 2021-2026 set out in the appendix is approved.
- 2) That the remaining existing budgets are used together with £233K, repurposed from the Affordable Housing Capital fund, to provide the financial assistance required to support this policy, as set out in 7.1, and a review of the policy and funding requirements is undertaken in year 3.
- 3) That the enforcement of the new Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 be delegated to the Director of Housing and Communities for enforcement under the new policy.
- 4) That the use of monies received through the issuing of fines to be used to meet the cost and expenses incurred in, or associated with, carrying out any such enforcement work.
- 5) That delegation be given 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.

122 Late Items

There were no late items.

123 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Cllr Lintill proposed and read the part II resolution in relation to agenda item 8 which was seconded by Cllr Taylor.

The Cabinet then voted to go into part II.

RESOLVED

That with regard to agenda item 8 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.

Members took a short break.

124 Leisure Management Contract 2021-2022

Please note this item was discussed in part II and a recording was made.

Cllr Briscoe began by announcing that the Westgate centre would be used as a Covid-19 Vaccination Centre. He then introduced the item.

Cllr Dignum requested an amendment to the recommendations which were discussed and then seconded by Cllr Briscoe.

In a vote the following resolution was made:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

That the recommendations as set out in sections 2.1a and 2.1b of the report as amended be agreed.

The meeting ended at 10.28 am

CHAIRMAN

Date: