



Minutes of the meeting of the **Cabinet** held in Committee Room 1 - East Pallant House on Tuesday 7 April 2015 at 9.30 am

Members Present: Mrs H P Caird (Chairman), Mrs E P Lintill (Vice-Chairman), Mr M A Cullen, Mr J C P Connor, Mr A P Dignum, Mrs L C Purnell and Mr J J L T Ransley

Members not present:

In attendance by invitation:

Officers present all items: Mrs D Shepherd (Chief Executive), Mr S Carvell (Executive Director), Mr J Ward (Head of Finance and Governance Services) and Mr P Coleman (Member Services Manager)

740 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3 March 2015 be signed as a correct record.

741 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

742 **Declarations of Interests**

No interests were declared at this meeting.

743 **Public Question Time**

No public questions had been submitted.

744 **Coastal Management: Award of Maintenance Contract 2015-2018**

The Cabinet considered the report circulated with the agenda (copy attached to the official minutes). Mr Connor introduced the report, explaining that the proposal was for the continuation of a contract to maintain coast protection works not covered by the Beach Management Plan.

Mr Lowsley, Senior Engineer, added that this was a fairly routine matter, which arose every three years. The contract had been tendered and the tenders had been

scored on price (75%) and quality (25%). The existing contractor's bid had scored markedly higher than competing bids on both assessments.

In response to questions, Mr Lowsley explained the alternatives if the Council chose not to use its coast protection powers, in the absence of any statutory duty to do so. He explained that either a Government-appointed Coast Protection Board or the Environment Agency would be likely to look to the Council for additional funding, and would be less accountable to local communities. The Cabinet agreed that the Council should continue to fulfil this function, which was much appreciated by local coastal communities.

Cabinet Members expressed concern that so few contractors had responded. Mr Lowsley explained that the contract had been tendered through the Solent Minor Works Coast Protection Framework, and there were only three contractors on the approved list. The Framework was due to be renewed later in the year and he hoped for a better response. There were, however, relatively few specialist contractors with relevant experience of timber coast protection structures.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Contract for the routine maintenance of coast protection assets for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018 be awarded to JT Mackley.
- (2) That the Head of Housing and Environment Services (following consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment) be authorised to extend the contract by mutual agreement, for a further two years should the contractor perform satisfactorily.

745 Avenue de Chartres, Multi Storey Car Park, Chichester - major refurbishment scheme.

The Cabinet considered the report and appendix circulated with the agenda (copy attached to the official minutes, except for the restricted appendix of costs breakdown). Mr Ransley introduced the report, explaining that approval was being sought for a Project Initiation Document (PID) for a 2 year refurbishment programme of the Avenue De Chartres car park. The preliminary estimate for the essential works was £1,043,000, excluding loss of income. In addition, there were additional optional works, referred to in paragraph 5.3, for which the preliminary estimate was a further £615,000.

Mr Ransley commented that he believed that, of the optional works, a vacancy lighting system and electric vehicle charging points were justified. However, he asked members to consider whether the provision of a coloured flexible coating to the pedestrian walkways and parking bays was desirable and justified to be included as an option in the tender process. In his view, such works would not only add a significant cost but also extend the time period of the works, thus incurring an increased loss of income.

Mr Bacon, Buildings and Facilities Services Manager, described the works required and explained that there were cracks in the car park decks which would require

treatment to combat corrosion and the application of a coating. The application of a coating to the complete deck would be more attractive, but not essential.

It was pointed out that there was no need, at this stage, to make a decision on this; tenders should be sought for a full menu of options and final choices about works should be made later. At this stage, no survey by consulting engineers had been carried out, and so the full extent of the required repairs was unknown. It was, therefore, not necessary to approve the allocation of funding from reserves until the final costs of the works was known.

Mr Bacon agreed that this was the case for the structural repairs; however, some works, such as those to the brickwork, could go ahead without further approval, if the tenders were within budget. These would be a separate contract from the structural works.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (the Act), the public and the press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the appendix on costs breakdown, for the reason that it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted that there would be disclosure to the public of 'exempt information' being information of the nature described 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 Act and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Mr Bacon advised on the funding required to carry out cleaning and repairs to the brickwork and for consulting engineers to carry out structural surveys and other relevant consultancy work.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to re-admit the press and public.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Project Initiation Document (PID) set out in the Appendix to this report be approved and funded from the Asset Replacement Programme (ARP).
- (2) That the option for coloured flexible surfacing, red/green vacancy lights and electric vehicle charging points be included as optional costs as part of the invitation to tender process.
- (3) That £93,000 be released from the Asset Replacement Fund to undertake the works to the brickwork, general repairs, consultancy and survey work.
- (4) That the tender analysis be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet for contract award.

746 **Asset Maintenance Standards 2015-2020**

The Cabinet considered the report circulated with the agenda (copy attached to the official minutes). Mr Ransley introduced the report, explaining that the Council had an annual asset maintenance budget of £380,000 to repair and maintain its property

assets valued at £85m. The last 5 year programme had just been completed and the new programme standards for 2015-2020 needed to be approved. The objective of the new programme was to reduce property maintenance costs by 3% and, once in place, the proposed new standards approach would provide an opportunity for challenge to demonstrate effectiveness within a fixed annual budget as well as inform the Asset Management Plan.

RESOLVED

That the Asset Maintenance Standards (April 2015 – March 2020) be approved.

747 Digital Access Strategy 2015-2018

The Cabinet considered the report and appendix circulated with the agenda (copy attached to the official minutes). Mr Ransley introduced the report. He referred to the Richard Dimpleby Lecture, recently delivered by Baroness Lane-Fox, which was an inspirational reminder that the opportunities to take advantage of digital technologies and their potential to change public services delivery were enormous. He was, therefore, delighted to introduce the Digital Access Strategy (2015-2018) to move the Council on from information technology and to make services accessible to a more mobile customer and a flexible workforce.

The Strategy embraced the key areas of channel shift, embedding digital services and engagement, digital working and extended data access that supported the four key enabling objectives for the Council to deliver services. If approved, the Strategy resources would be defined to ensure targeted delivery of projects and it was important that resources within other services contributed to outcomes, especially business process change, customer insight, and implementation. The Council was fortunate with the talent in the ICT Department, but there were great challenges ahead in balancing new projects and day-to-day work.

The member-led Information Technology Advisory Group (ITAG), the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Business Improvement Board (BIB) had been consulted and their comments included in the strategy.

Cabinet Members received an assurance that, even if less efficient channels were closed, help would be available to those who could not or would not use digital channels to access services.

Cabinet members expressed the view that careful prioritisation in cost/benefit terms was needed in implementing the Strategy, and Mrs Dodsworth, Head of Business Improvement Services, confirmed that the Business Improvement Board would scrutinise the workplan to ensure this was the case.

RESOLVED

That the Digital Access Strategy (2015 to 2018) be approved.

748 **Committee Rooms Audio System and Recording Meetings**

The Cabinet considered the report circulated with the agenda (copy attached to the official minutes). Mr Ransley introduced the report. He reminded the Cabinet that he had previously lobbied for the introduction of webcasting Council and other major committee meetings without success. When the Government introduced regulations on openness of Local Government, considered by Council last September, he had again raised webcasting with the hope that this would be used as a chance to embrace more openness, increased transparency, increased public awareness and more participation in the Council's work.

He was, therefore, disappointed to be introducing a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the procurement of a new microphone system with a proposal for audio publication online, albeit that the system would be suitable to accommodate a webcasting option.

His personal view was that, whilst online audio broadcast was a step towards providing easy access to the Council's deliberations, it made no attempt to meaningfully engage with customers, given that this was a visual age.

The viewing figures from West Sussex County Council in the last year indicated that 1340 people on average viewed the webcast of their 13 main meetings at a cost of 80p a view. That compared to relying on the local printed press choice and interpretation of what they chose to inform residents at a cost of £1 a copy.

If even 350 Chichester district residents watched the Council's deliberations this would, in his view, be a meaningful engagement. Unfortunately this recommendation supported the view that the additional cost of 129p per webcast view, based on 350 views, was too high a price to pay for more openness, transparency and increased awareness of the democratic process.

Mrs Dodsworth, Head of Business Improvement Services, explained that, as a result of the deliberations of the Task and Finish Group and subsequent member testing of various microphone systems, a detailed specification of requirements had been drawn up for use in the tendering process. The cost of the proposed one year pilot to audio record and publish meetings online was £3,900, which would be funded from reserves.

The Cabinet expressed disappointment that, because the Task and Finish Group had decided not to recommend webcasting of meetings, the full costs and implications of this option were not included in the report. They, therefore, decided to defer any recommendation to the Council on publication of meetings online, in order for these matters to be researched and reported to a later meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That a new microphone system be purchased with the capability of making audio recordings for council use and for publication online and compatible with possible future webcasting and that the appended Project Initiation Document (PID) be approved.

- (2) That the Head of Business Improvement Services be authorised, following consultation with the Cabinet member for Support Services, to finalise the specification for the new microphone system and award the contract.
- (3) That a detailed report, with costs, be brought to the Cabinet meeting in July 2015 on the practical possibilities of webcasting, rather than audio recording, meetings.

749 Chichester Contract Services (CCS):Service Improvements

The Cabinet considered the report circulated with the agenda (copy attached to the official minutes). Mr Connor introduced the report, and asked that recommendation 2.1 should be amended to make it clear that the £71,250 would be carried forward from an underspend in the current year.

Mr Darton, Head of Contract Services, explained that Chichester Contract Services (CCS) was a very successful service, but needed to maintain momentum by introducing digital, rather than continuing to rely on paper, systems, in order to reduce the supply chain and improve reconciliation of income. In order to achieve this, the appointment was sought, by secondment, of a Business Development Manager to work with the CCS Management Team. The report also sought funding for a Trade Waste ICT system; proposals for systems for other services would be submitted later.

The Cabinet welcomed the proposals to modernise this high profile service and asked Mr Darton to improve the advertising and promotion of the services provided by CCS.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the carry forward of £71,520 to fund the new Trade Waste Information and Communication Technology (ICT) system and the Business Development Manager post be approved.
- (2) That the Initial Project Proposal Document (IPPD) for the new Trade Waste system be approved.

750 Byelaw Enforcement

The Cabinet considered the report circulated with the agenda (copy attached to the official minutes). At the Chairman's invitation, Mr Ward introduced the report, explaining that a review of the Council's byelaws had shown that the delegated authority to take action under the byelaws was fragmented. It was, therefore, proposed to grant authority to all Chief Officers and Heads of Service to authorise action, if necessary, under the Council's byelaws. Mr Ward confirmed that the use of byelaws was discretionary and the delegated authority would leave discretion with Chief Officers and Heads of Service whether to take enforcement action in any particular circumstance.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

That the following addition be made to the powers granted to any Chief Officer and Heads of Service under the Constitution:

“To authorise any action under Council Byelaws including prosecution.”

751 Air Quality Action Plan for Chichester District

The Cabinet considered the report and appendix circulated with the agenda (copy attached to the official minutes). Mr Connor introduced the report, making the following amendments to it:

Paragraph 3.2 fourth bullet: add “initiating” before “55”

Paragraph 5.1: add “that is maintaining the annual mean NO₂ measure” at the end of the second sentence

Paragraph 7.1(a): add “or any replacement system” after “Members’ Bulletin Board”

Paragraph 7.1(b) Add “Highways England” to list of external consultees

Mr Connor explained that the proposal was to update the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP), which had first been put to public consultation in 2008. Since 2008, the Council’s Environmental Protection Team had carried out considerable work with West Sussex County Council Highways on behavioural change, and further evidence had come to light about the harm to human health caused by air pollution. There was, as mentioned in paragraph 8.2, a risk of the UK Government being fined by the EU for breach of the air quality limit, and such fines could be passed on to local authorities. However, it was hoped that this would have less impact on authorities that could demonstrate determined action to tackle the problem. It was ironic that a significant contributor to air pollution in parts of Chichester was associated with traffic congestion on the A27, which was the responsibility of Highways England.

Mr Ballard, Senior Environmental Protection Officer, answered members’ questions about the report, including the effectiveness of measures to encourage council staff and members to cycle using the pool bikes scheme and to provide for electric cars through installation of charging points. Members commented on the pollution caused by diesel engines and expected the Government to take action on diesel emissions.

The Chairman congratulated Mr Ballard and his team on attracting funding for measures to tackle air pollution.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the draft revised Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for Chichester District be approved for public consultation.
- (2) That the Head of Housing and Environment Services be authorised to consider any representations arising from the consultation exercise and, provided the representations do not require significant amendments to the AQAP, to approve adoption (with minor amendments if considered appropriate) of the AQAP following consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment.

752 **Think Family Neighbourhoods - Selsey Pilot Evaluation**

Further to minutes 564 of 1 April 2014, the Cabinet considered the report and appendix circulated with the agenda (copy attached to the official minutes). Mrs Lintill introduced the report, and reminded the Cabinet that, in March 2012, Chichester in Partnership had agreed to a pilot project in the Selsey area to investigate whether a targeted approach by partner organisations to work in the area would be feasible. This approach was approved by the Cabinet in May 2012. Following research, an action plan for the Selsey area had been developed and approved by the Cabinet on 5 February 2013 and by Chichester in Partnership Core group on 7 February 2013.

The report was an evaluation of this interesting project and spelled out the lessons that had been learned. It was significant that, as reported in paragraph 5.9, the project had revealed hidden needs within the community. In consequence, some of the anticipated income streams from fee-earning projects had not materialised. The consultation had revealed that the project was viewed positively by other partners, including the Selsey Town Council.

Mr Hansford, Head of Community Services, added that the project was a pilot. It had demonstrated the effort and time required to build relationships. The involvement of Selsey Town Council and its Town Co-ordinator had been critical success factors. The benefits of the project fell across several public services and agencies, and it anticipated the Early Help and Think Family initiatives that had arisen subsequently. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the recommendations in the report.

Mrs Purnell agreed that the project had been a success, but it did show the need for sustainable revenue funding on a continuing basis. The Selsey Works project would continue, but in a different form in a different place.

Mr Ransley and Mr Dignum pointed to the cost benefit analysis summarised in paragraph 5.6, which demonstrated an excellent return on investment and an improvement in the lives of disadvantaged people. They felt that the Council should take the lead in maintaining the project and that officers should be invited to put forward a costed proposal for long-term or transitional funding.

Mr Hansford pointed out that the pilot had addressed a number of issues and that the Selsey Works project had grown out of it. Funding was still in place to continue that until the end of the Summer and partnership work was taking place to explore how it could be put on a sustainable footing, including the preparation of a business case for a part time Advisor. Consideration was also being given to how to replicate the project in other neighbourhoods in the district. There was no need at this time to seek approval for additional funding, and a further report would be made if this became necessary.

The Chief Executive emphasised that the Council had not cut off funds for the project. It was important that key partners, such as Selsey Town Council should be involved in developing a sustainable future for the project, and that consideration should be given to the roll out of the project to other areas. Revenue funding would be supported where appropriate on a case by case basis.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the SelseyWorks project be supported in its transition to a sustainable service model and that the Council's services outreach support be continued.
- (2) That the lessons learnt at paragraph 5 be noted, and continued support for the Think Family Neighbourhood work in the areas identified at paragraph 5.10 be endorsed.

753 Development Management Service Resourcing

The Cabinet considered the report circulated with the agenda (copy attached to the official minutes). Mrs Purnell introduced the report, explaining that the workload of the Major Applications and Business Team had increased since the division of the Development Management Service into three teams in 2013. The existing team of five was not adequate to deal with the predicted workload, with more enquiries and applications expected on parish sites and strategic locations identified in the Local Plan. It was, therefore, proposed to carry forward an underspend to fund the first year of an additional senior planning officer post, which would be included in the base budget from 2016/17. Mr Whitty, Development Management Service Manager, confirmed that the number of major applications in 2014/15 anticipated in paragraph 3.1 of the report had been realised.

RESOLVED

That an underspend of £42,000 in 2014/15 be carried forward to 2015/16 to fund the cost for the first year of an additional senior planning officer post in the Development Management Major Applications and Business Team.

754 Envoi

The Chairman thanked the officers and Cabinet Members for all their support during her term of office as Leader of the Council, and thanked the press for their generally fair reporting of the Cabinet's discussions.

The meeting ended at 12.13 pm

CHAIRMAN

Date:

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