

CABINET

Meeting held remotely on Tuesday, 19th January, 2021 at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr D.E. Clifford, Leader of the Council
Cllr K.H. Muschamp, Deputy Leader and Customer Experience and Improvement
Portfolio Holder

Cllr Marina Munro, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder
Cllr A.R. Newell, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder
Cllr M.L. Sheehan, Operational Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr M.J. Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder

The Leader of the Council (Cllr D.E. Clifford) invited the Leader of the Labour Group (Cllr K. Dibble) to attend and contribute to the meeting.

The Cabinet considered the following matters at the above-mentioned meeting. All executive decisions of the Cabinet shall become effective, subject to the call-in procedure, from **1st February, 2021**.

43. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8th December, 2020 were confirmed.

44. **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BUDGET STRATEGY WORKING GROUP –** (Cllr Paul Taylor, Chairman of the Budget Strategy Working Group)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2101, which set out recommendations from the Council's Budget Strategy Working Group in respect of the strategic financial issues that the Group had worked on throughout the year.

Members were reminded that the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder (Cllr P.G. Taylor) was the Chairman of the Group, which had met four times during the current financial year and had one further meeting for the year, scheduled for March, 2021. The Group had considered many matters during the year, including the strategic options around the Council's revenue and capital budget setting for the forthcoming financial year and ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the Council's financial position. The Group had also been introduced to the Council's Service Manager – Commercial Services and had expressed strong support for the work to be carried out under that new role. The Group had formulated a number of recommendations to the Cabinet and details of these were set out in the Report.

The Cabinet expressed gratitude to the Budget Strategy Working Group for its work in producing these recommendations and also to the Rushmoor staff that had supported the local community in recent months.

The Cabinet NOTED the following recommendations from the Budget Strategy Working Group, that

- (i) a new robust, balanced and proportionate savings and income programme for 2022/23 and the medium term strategy period be developed, with the Budget Strategy Working Group acting as a consultee on its development, as set out in the Group's Terms of Reference at Appendix A of Report No. FIN2101;
- (ii) an emphasis be placed on the Council acting more commercially and increasing the level of net income from services;
- (iii) the option be taken to spread any Collection Fund deficit over a three-year period, as set out by the Government in revised regulations; and
- (iv) whilst being mindful of the impact on Rushmoor residents, Council Tax be increased by the maximum permissible level of £5, given the financial pressures facing the Council.

45. **SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2021/23 –**
(Cllr Adrian Newell, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. DCS2101, which set out the Council's Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan 2021/23.

Members were informed that, whilst Rushmoor was, generally, a prosperous, safe and well-connected place, there were pockets of deprivation that the Council was seeking to address. In this respect, the Council had been working with partner organisations to develop a new, collaborative approach to addressing the challenges facing local communities. The Strategy and Action Plan had been developed to build stronger and more resilient communities over the three years to follow by maximising opportunities and reducing inequalities faced by residents in the Borough, especially in the most deprived areas. It was confirmed that the approach had received cross-party support and it was the Council's intention to work together to agree priorities to deliver the Strategy and Action Plan.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan 2021/23, as set out in Report No. DCS2101, be approved; and
- (ii) the proposed expenditure, as set out in paragraph 4 of the Report, for utilising the earmarked reserve fund and the process for the allocation of the funding be approved.

46. **PEOPLE STRATEGY 2020-23 –**
(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. HROD2101, which set out the Council's People Strategy 2020-23.

Members were informed that the People Strategy had been developed to support the Council in developing a workforce that was agile, flexible and able to meet the significant and changing expectations of customers in relation to public service. The 2019 Peer Challenge Report had recognised that this was important to the Council in delivering its business plan and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic had demonstrated further the need for the Council's services to be flexible, with many staff being redeployed to priority areas as part of the Council's local response. The Report set out details of the work carried out to devise the Strategy and Year 1 Action Plan. The Strategy would allow the Council to further adapt and change to face the challenges of the years to follow.

The Cabinet was supportive of the Strategy and felt it would assist the Council in continuing to deliver high quality services to local residents.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the People Strategy 2020-23, as set out in Report No. HROD2101, be approved.

47. **REVIEW OF CHARGING FOR PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE –**
(Cllr Marina Munro, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. EPSH2101, which set out proposed changes to the Council's level of charges for pre-application planning advice and proposed further amendments to the scheme.

Members were reminded that the charges were to potential planning applicants and developers for discussion and advice before the submission of planning applications and had been introduced in February, 2017. Recently, an exercise had been carried out to benchmark the levels of charges levied by local authorities across Hampshire. This had shown that Rushmoor's charges were in need of review to place them in line with those of other authorities. It was confirmed that the proposed level of charges reflected the cost of staff time involved in giving the advice and that the Council was not permitted to make a profit from this area of work. The Report set out the full results of the benchmarking exercise and the rationale for the proposed changes to the levels of charges. In response to a question, it was confirmed that charities would qualify for minimum charges for any advice given.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the continuation of the practice of charging for pre-application planning discussions be approved;
- (ii) with effect from 1st April, 2021, the level of charges be approved as follows:
 - £70 for small householder developments, domestic outbuildings and advertisements
 - £120 for two storey/complex and large householder extensions
 - £240 for changes of use
 - £405 for single house schemes and simple minor developments
 - £860 for small major schemes and medium sized housing developments

- £1,340 plus £195 per additional meeting for major developments;
- (iii) exemptions from pre-application charging in respect of Wellesley/Grainger PLC schemes in relation to the Aldershot Urban Extension, the Council's own developments and Hampshire County Council's schemes relating to the provision of public services in the Borough be approved; and
- (iv) the application of the minimum householder/minor development charge of £70 for requests for pre-application advice, irrespective of the proposal type, from community/charity groups be approved, subject to organisation meeting the following criteria:
- a registered charity
 - headquarters in Rushmoor
 - involved in activity which serves the people of Rushmoor
 - not part of a national charity with multiple UK or international offices.

48. **ALDERSHOT REGENERATION UPDATE - UNION STREET, ALDERSHOT –**
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. RP2101, which set out an update in relation to the redevelopment of the Union Street, Aldershot regeneration site.

Members were reminded that the planning application for this site had been approved by the Council's Development Management Committee on 24th June, 2020. Details of the agreed scheme were set out in the Report. It was reported that Hill Partnerships Limited has been identified as the preferred partner to oversee the demolition works at the site. It was anticipated that demolition work would commence by the end of January, 2021. The Cabinet heard that the Council had engaged Grant Thornton UK LLP and, more recently, Lambert Smith Hampton to support the due diligence process. It was now proposed that a Cabinet Working Group should be established on a task and finish basis to evaluate the due diligence outputs and prepare a Cabinet report and recommendation, to be agreed by the Council in due course.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- i) the update on the demolition works being undertaken and the next steps with the development be noted;
- ii) the update on the due diligence process being undertaken in respect of the delivery of the consented scheme be noted; and
- iii) the establishment of a Cabinet Working Group, consisting of the Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder (Cllr M.J. Tennant), the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder (Cllr P.G. Taylor) and the Leader of the Labour Group (Cllr K. Dibble), to work alongside officers on the due diligence being undertaken associated with the delivery of the consented scheme, be approved.

The Meeting closed at 7.48 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
