

# Public Document Pack

## COUNCIL

**Date and Time:** Thursday 27 January 2022 at 7.00 pm

**Place:** Council Chamber

**Present:**

## COUNCILLORS -

Ambler (Chairman)

Axam

Bailey

Blewett

Butcher

Butler

Clarke

Coburn

Cockarill

Crampton

Crisp

Crookes

Davies

Delaney

Dorn

Drage

Farmer

Kennett

Neighbour

Oliver

Quarterman

Radley

Smith

Southern

Wildsmith

Worlock

## Officers Present:

Daryl Phillips

Lee Rome

Joint Chief Executive

Committee Services Officer

## 50 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 25 November 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## 51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Collins, Forster, Kinnell, Lamb, Wheale and Wright.

## 52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

## 53 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 - QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Questions had been received from David Turver, details of which are set out in Appendix A attached to these minutes.

## 54 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14 - QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

No questions were received from Members.

## 55 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that he conducted the following visit:

11 December 2021 - Sleeping Beauty Pantomime Gala Night at The Harlington.

## 56 CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council, **Councillor Neighbour** reminded Members that it was Holocaust Memorial Day, and that this day represented an opportunity reflect and to take stock.

He announced that he had attended a County Deal meeting on 8 January 2022, but that as no White Paper had been published by the Government, no decisions about the way forward could be decided, though there had been positive discussions around potential responses. The current expectation was that the paper may be published on 3 February 2022, and that a County Deal would be beneficial for all Hampshire residents and change the way services are delivered across Hampshire in the future.

**Councillor Radley** announced:

That Hart had 170 applications on the Omicron Discretionary Grants Scheme and 89 applications on the main scheme. The administration process was proving lengthy and was taking full five working days for assurance checks to come back from Central Government, and when they came back further checks were required on all applications. Therefore, 33 discretionary grants and 33 mainstream grants had been authorised on payment runs. We encourage businesses and particularly leisure and hospitality businesses to continue to apply.

**Councillor Clarke** announced:

On Monday the Council found out that a bid for cyber improvements from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities was successful with £125k being provided to implement a cyber treatment plan, which would see improvements to cyber security at Hart District Council over the next 12 months.

**Councillor Bailey** announced:

This week had a further Afghan family move into a home in Fleet – one made available by a housing association (Metropolitan Thames Valley). We have also secured a private rented home in North Warnborough, awaiting a family match. To date, we have now made 4 homes available locally.

The Community Safety team were in court Christmas week, securing the extension to the Antisocial Behaviour Injunction on the owners of the property in Yateley who were causing serious neighbour nuisance. The Court awarded costs and secured an undertaking from the property owner to sell the property. Excellent joint work was completed between the Community Safety Team and the Police, who are also investigating illegal activity at the house. Obviously, we

are happy to be able to restore a sense of normal life for the neighbours who have been so badly impacted by the activities at this address.

**Councillor Oliver** announced:

Members should be aware that the Green Waste service had resumed and following a successful start-up in Basingstoke this week, and that there is a positive outlook going forward when collection vehicles come to Hart next week.

Parking concessions for residents coming to Fleet for Covid-19 injections will be suspended from next Monday 31 January 2022. Permits for medical and volunteer staff will continue until Vaccination Centers are no longer required.

## **57 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORTS**

The Joint Chief Executive reported that due to the end of the Government Plan B Covid restrictions, meeting layouts and arrangements had returned to a conventional format. Members were asked to follow office rules in place for Council staff when using the building, observing social distancing and mask wearing requirements, to protect others.

It was confirmed that the Council offices could be used for group meetings again.

## **58 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

The Minutes of the following Committees, which met on the dates shown, were received by Council.

### **Cabinet 2 Dec 2021**

No questions were asked.

### **Cabinet (draft) 6 Jan 2021**

No questions were asked.

### **Planning 8 Dec 2021**

No questions were asked.

### **Overview & Scrutiny 16 Nov 2021**

No questions were asked.

### **Overview & Scrutiny (draft) 14 Dec 2021**

No questions were asked.

### **Audit (draft) 7 Dec 2021**

No questions were asked.

### **Licensing (draft) 23 Nov 2021**

It was asked if the cancellation of Licensing meetings over the municipal year had delayed the Shared Services Policies due for renewal in 2021, and if these could be expedited.

It was clarified that previous meetings had been cancelled due to there being no business for the Licensing Committee to discuss at the time, and that the meeting due in February had been cancelled due sickness and bereavement within the Licensing Team. Reassurances had been given that work items will not be delayed as a consequence, and that the policies in question were not delayed but were returning after further consultations requested by the Committee.

**59 COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23**

Councillor Radley introduced the paper and the recommendation.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Hart District Council as its council tax base for the 2022/23 year shall be set at 41,815.86 (2021/22 - 41,175.55).

**DECISION**

That the proposed Council Tax Base 22/23 be approved.

**60 OUTSIDE BODIES - FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS**

Feedback was provided on the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Authority. It was noted that making progress on capital projects and other areas in their budget was difficult due to challenges in recruiting the appropriate specialist staff required.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

### COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

#### QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

**Mr David Turver** asked:

According to the FY21/22 budget book (account 91019), the track record of actual and budget for income from the Leisure Centres is:

- FY18/19: £828K actual
- FY19/20: £1,268K actual
- FY20/21: £633K budget
- FY21/22: £1,407K budget.

What was the thinking behind setting the budget at that level and what plans were made to deliver record revenue from the Leisure Centres during a pandemic?

**Cllr Radley** responded:

Hart District Council has a contractual arrangement with Everyone Active (EA); for robust commercial reasons this was used as the budget for 21/22.

The Government recognised the contractual position for Local Authorities and to mitigate the worst adverse impact introduced a compensation scheme. The scheme is linked to the published Budget Book. The 20/21 Budget Book reflects the contracted management fee with Sports Leisure Management Ltd.

The budget accounts for the management fee contractually agreed with EA, it is not directly dependent upon Leisure Centre usage. A new contractual arrangement is being entered into moving forward which takes account of the anticipated pandemic recovery trajectory.

**Mr Turver** asked a supplementary question:

If the budget was set at £1,407k and government support was expected to that level, why is income down £700k at the halfway point.

**Cllr Radley** responded:

The government compensation scheme does not cover for the full amount, but is based upon the set budget, which reflected the contractual agreement with EA. The government gives some of the money based the budget not all, which is why it has fallen short. The amount entered into the budget book was correct as that it is what we would expect under the contract with EA in normal circumstances.

**Mr David Turver** asked a second question:

The Q2 Monitoring report shows that the Leisure Centres are reported to have a shortfall in income of £700K YTD and Cabinet papers indicate that this shortfall will be made up from reserves earmarked for Sports Facilities. However, note 5.11.1 in the draft accounts sets out the details of earmarked reserves and does not explicitly mention a reserve for Sports Facilities. Can you please explain exactly how much is being transferred and where the money is coming from?

**Cllr Radley** responded:

There is an earmarked reserve with funding set aside from a historic VAT refund on leisure services to the value of £1,393k. This reserve forms part of Corporate Services earmarked reserves. The reserve will be used as needed depending on our review of open book income and expenditure on the contract with Everyone Active.

To be clear this is revenue budget money and is not taking away from any leisure services capital reserves or Section 106 funding.

**Mr Turver** asked a supplementary question:

What risk is there of a further reserve transfer next year?

**Cllr Radley** responded:

The budget to be approved in February anticipates the contractual amount we will receive from EA, so there should be no need for a further transfer, as we are producing a balanced budget.

**Mr David Turver** asked a third question:

The recently published Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) shows a funding gap of £57.9m. However, 72% of the projects identified remain un-costed. What is the realistic estimate of the full infrastructure funding gap and when will a complete IDP be published?

**Cllr Cockarill** responded:

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is a living document, which is reported to Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny at regular intervals. The report referenced in the question is the one presented to those committees in November. The next iteration of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan is due to be presented in the spring. This will have an updated estimate of the funding requirements and the shortfall.

**Mr Turver** asked a supplementary question:

The indication in November was that there is that the CIL contribution will meet of ¼ of the IDP funding, what is the impact on the CIL consultation if you are to republish a 'proper' IDP in three months' time?

**Cllr Cockarill** responded:

The results of the CIL consultation will inform the next iteration of the IDP, but government mandates that the IDP must be set up with a shortfall to allow for developer contributions and other funding mechanisms to operate. The next iteration of the IDP will be published after the CIL consultation is complete, and then we will be able to establish the estimates of funding and shortfall at that time.

**Mr David Turver** asked a final question:

Which sports facilities will now not get delivered because of the transfer from reserves to cover the hole in the Leisure Centre budget?

**Cllr Radley** responded:

The money that is being used to subsidise EA is coming from a revenue fund not S106 money or Capital Reserves, so there will be no impact on future provision leisure facilities or services.

**Mr Turver** asked a supplementary question:

Something must be losing money somewhere if you are using the reserves on the leisure centre unplanned, so what would that money have been spent on?

**Cllr Radley** responded:

The Council has reserves earmarked for specific purposes and a general reserve built up that balances the ebbs and flows of our revenue streams. It is built up in good years to deal with difficult years, it is basically a 'balancing reserve'. The last two years have been especially challenging because of the pandemic, so it has been a natural decision to use some of the reserves put away for a 'rainy day' for a couple of 'rainy years' and we would seek to add to the reserves again in good years. The money is there for that purpose. No one has lost out; it is simply good financial management.