

CABINET

Date and Time: Thursday 7 January 2021 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Fleet

Present:

Ambler, Bailey, Cockarill, Kinnell, Neighbour, Oliver, Quarterman and Radley

In attendance: Axam, Forster, Kennett and Smith

Officers: Elson, Foy, Hughes, Phillips, Sheppard, Tetlow and Vincent

79 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of 3 December 2020 were agreed and confirmed and signed as a correct record.

80 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

81 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

82 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman informed Members of Emergency Decisions taken this month in light of the most recent Lockdown.

1. Front line reception at the Council Offices are now closed and communication has been put on the website advising residents.
2. Redeploying staff to Covid-19 Response.
3. Re-allocation of the Audit Team to work on the Business Grant Scheme.

83 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

84 MINUTES FROM CIVIC REGENERATION WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the meeting of 1 December 2020 were noted.

85 MINUTES FROM CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2020 were noted.

86 2020-21 BUDGET MONITORING - POSITION STATEMENT AT 31 OCTOBER 2020 FOLLOWING LOCKDOWN 2.0

Members were advised of the position on revenue expenditure as an additional report following Lockdown 2.0. It was important that during these unprecedented times Members were regularly informed of significant changes to expenditure on a timely basis which may be outside the standard quarterly budget reporting cycle.

It was explained that Officers are doing diligent work on the year-end figures which are still being revised. The Finance Team are working hard at allocating additional funds and Cabinet will need to look at making cost savings for 2021-2022 due to reduction in Government funding because of COVID-19 and our level of earmarked reserves will alleviate some of the deficit. Members were advised that the Overview & Scrutiny January Committee meeting will discuss the options for future savings.

DECISION

That the revised projections and reasons for the main revenue variations be noted.

87 UPDATE ON BUSINESS RATES GRANTS SCHEMES LOCKDOWN 2.0

Cabinet received an update on the process and performance regarding the two Lockdown 2.0 Business Rates Grant Schemes that the Council has implemented during December 2020, and an update on the additional schemes that Hart District Council will be required to administer and deliver over the coming months.

Councillor Radley, thanked Ms Foy, Head of Corporate Services and the Finance Team for their hard work helping the businesses in our Community to receive business grant funds from newly setup Government schemes.

Members were advised of the different schemes accepting claims and further additional discretionary schemes that commenced on 26th December and from the 5th January 2021, offering further support for organisations who have been severely impacted. CAB.35

It was suggested not enough information is available in regard to a statement of schemes available to businesses in our Community and information on how to make an application should be better communicated to make the process easier for future claims.

DECISION

That the report be noted.

88 COUNCIL TAX BASE 2021/22

Cabinet were asked to accept the Local Council Tax base for 2021/2022 for onward recommendation to Council.

Members were informed:

- The reason why a number of houses in several Parishes had gone down slightly is partially due to new developments not being fully delivered and partly occupied properties.
- The historical figure and calculation of uncollected tax payments of 1.3% is still tracking at the same level even during the pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION to Council

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 2021/22 year shall be set at 41,175.55.

89 FLEET POND GREEN CORRIDOR

Cabinet were asked for approval to release funding subject to planning permission and tenders being received within budget. Members were advised that the scope for works tendered is exactly the same as was considered previously and reported. A Planning Application for the entire scheme is currently being submitted.

DECISION

That funding allocated within the Council's capital programme be released to deliver the Fleet Pond Green Corridor subject to planning permission being granted and the successful tender being within the approved budget.

90 NEXT STEPS IN COVID-19 RECOVERY

Cabinet were updated on the Council's work to support the recovery phase since the last report in October, in response to the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19). It was important to note that the situation remains live as the pandemic continued. CAB.36

Members were informed that the Council has moved from the COVID-19 Recovery phase back to the response phase. Subsequent to this paper and moving into Lockdown 3.0, this has resulted in resources being reallocated back into the response phase to support our Community and the recovery programme has been impacted.

Members questioned the Recovery Plan and were informed that all statutory services the Council provides to residents are running and working effectively.

Additional roles are being undertaken and a clearer picture of business continuity plans will be available next week.

Members discussed:

- Economic Dashboards will be made clearer to the public on our website and to highlight a central database of businesses open during Lockdown.
- The financial and resourcing impact from the outcome of these plans and the possibility of backfilling with agency staff.
- Extending delivery dates presenting more flexibility and resilience for the recovery plan.
- Finances involved with re-allocation of the Fleet Road space resource to be incorporated back into the normal working element.
- Fleet Road enhanced cycle provision to be rolled into the Green Grid Project and M3 LEP funding for delivery of this project to be given in a written response to be provided by the Chief Executive.

DECISION

- 1 That the updates on the Recovery Plan be noted.
- 2 All decisions regarding resourcing shortages to be considered by the Chief Executives at time critical of each element of our plan and responses.

91 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was considered and amended.

92 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Members agreed that the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to, on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

93 HART DISTRICT COUNCIL LEISURE CONTRACT - COVID 19

Members were invited to consider the current position with the current agreement regarding management fee relief to be extended up to the 31st March 2021 and to recognise the financial implications for Everyone Active due to enforced closure of both the Hart and Frogmore Leisure Centres during 2021.

Members considered the paper and agreed the recommendations.

94 CORPORATE VEHICLE FOR PROPERTY HOLDING PURPOSES

This report outlined the principle of the creation of a wholly owned company limited by shares to hold and maintain residential assets procured by the Council for commercial return purposes.

(Council Radley left at 9.15pm and returned at 9.16pm during this item)

RECOMMENDATION to Council

Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council in January the following:

- (A) Approve the establishment of a Council owned housing limited by Shares to hold and deliver housing and meet the Council's objectives for the housing company as set out in the report. (Section 5)
- (B) Agree that on incorporation of the company, the appointments set out below in Section 6 (The Governance structure) take place. Any future appointments are to be made by Cabinet.
- (C) Accept the recommendation (Section 7) approving the holding vehicle procurement rules.
- (D) Authorise the Joint Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, and the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Section 151 Officer to establish the housing company and complete the relevant paperwork and documents as required.
- (E) Confirm that, subject to availability, the company be incorporated as 'Hart Homes Limited'.

The meeting closed at 9.28 pm