

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Executive

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Monday, 11 October 2021

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

Present:

S D T Woodward, Policy and Resources (Executive Leader)
T M Cartwright, MBE, Health and Public Protection (Deputy
Executive Leader)
F Birkett, Housing
S D Martin, Planning and Development
Mrs S M Walker, Leisure and Community

Also in attendance:

Mrs K K Trott, for item 8(2)
Mrs C L A Hockley, for item item 9(1)
R H Price, JP, for items 9(1), 10(2) & 10(3)
J S Forrest, for item 10(2)



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor I J Bastable.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 30 September 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. EXECUTIVE LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Leader noted that this was the first meeting of the Executive held in the Collingwood Room marking a return to the arrangements for formal meetings before the Covid pandemic, without live streaming or broadcasting of the meeting. The Executive Leader confirmed that whilst the legal requirement for formal meetings to be at least audio broadcast had ended, he has asked the Head of Democratic Services to look into the possibility of live streaming meetings from the Collingwood Room in the future. This may be limited to audio only if set up costs and resource costs are high but the Executive Leader highlighted the ability of members of the public to attend meetings without needing to travel to the Civic Offices.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

5. PETITIONS

There were no petitions submitted at this meeting.

6. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

7. REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**Housing Scrutiny Panel – 16 September 2021****Minute 7 - Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy**

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Housing and Benefits which presented the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Members' consideration and comment.

Following discussion and review of the draft policy, members commented that it had been a very good idea to commission the independent review of homelessness services provided by the Council and commended the Housing officers for the excellent service provided to residents.

The Panel was fully supportive of the draft Strategy and had no suggested amendments to make.

Members requested that, as this will be a long term, rolling strategy, an annual review of progress be added to the scrutiny priorities for the Panel.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel agrees that:

- (a) the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy be recommended to the Executive for approval to commence a period of public consultation; and
- (b) once approved, an annual review of the Strategy be added to the scrutiny priorities for the Panel.

This item was considered at 8(2) on the agenda

Streetscene Scrutiny Panel – 15 July 2021

Minute 9 – Floral Displays and in Bloom Arrangements

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Mrs C L A Hockley addressed the Panel on this item.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor I J Bastable, the Executive Member for Streetscene, addressed the Panel on this item.

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Streetscene and a presentation by the Public Spaces Operations Manager which outlined the proposals for the future provision of the Council's floral displays and In Bloom Arrangements.

The Panel was very supportive of the development of more sustainable planting that has taken place across the Borough and complimented Officers on making the Borough look so attractive.

Members requested that floral towers be provided in Portchester and Stubbington district centres as well as in the Town Centre in order to increase the attractiveness of using district centres as shopping destinations. It was suggested that with help from community volunteers in maintaining the towers, only a capital cost would be needed.

Whilst the Panel was very supportive of the future provision of sustainable floral displays, there was considerable concern for the potential loss of valuable community involvement that may result from the proposed changes to Fareham in Bloom Arrangements. Reassurance was given by Officers that community volunteering and involvement will be retained and will continue to be part of any plans going forward.

The Head of Streetscene and the Public Spaces Operations Manager were thanked for providing an interesting report and presentation.

RESOLVED that the Streetscene Scrutiny Panel notes the content of the report.

This item was considered at item 9(1) on the agenda

Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel – 6th October 2021

Minute 8 – The Council’s Approach to the Pandemic – A Review

The Panel considered a report by the Chief Executive Officer on a review of the Council’s approach to the Pandemic.

The Chief Executive Officer referred members to page 76 of the agenda pack and to recommendation C which is to be amended to read, “The proposal that future deputations can also be made in writing, or by a video or audio clip, be approved, subject to the separate deputation scheme for the Planning Committee being kept under review.”

The Panel requested that their praise for the entire workforce for their continued commitment to work throughout the Pandemic over past 18 months, which has put significant pressure on all Council services, be passed on to all staff. The Panel recognises that the Council’s success in continuing all services throughout the Pandemic was due to all employees rising to the challenges that were brought about as a result of the Pandemic.

The Chief Executive Officer confirmed that he would pass on the Panel’s comments to the workforce and agreed with the Panel’s comments. He also explained that part of the success for the Council to be able to adapt so quickly to the Pandemic was due to having a majority directly employed workforce, which allowed the Council to easily redeploy staff to other services areas where needed to deal with pressure demands on those more significantly impacted service areas.

RESOLVED that the Panel recommends to the Executive at its meeting on 11 October 2021:

- (i) That the proposed amendment to recommendation (c) of the report be approved; and
- (ii) The Panel’s comments above are noted.

This item was considered at 10(3) on the agenda

Minute 9 – Proposal for a new way of working

The Panel considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer on a proposal for a new way of working.

The Chairman asked why recruitment was becoming more difficult, and whether this was specific to the Council, or whether other authorities were also experiencing the same issues. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer confirmed that this was an issue for Local Authorities in general and difficulties were being experienced across a broader range of roles, partly due to ongoing competition from the private sector. This is one of the reasons why the Council was taking steps to ensure it was an attractive employer.

Councillor Walker expressed concern that employing staff from outside of the local area could lead to staff making decisions with limited knowledge of the Council and needs of the community. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer confirmed this would be unlikely, especially for posts where knowledge of the

borough was a necessity to carry out a role effectively, as well as recognising the Council's expectation that all staff will continue to attend the civic offices for work regularly.

A question was asked of the Chief Executive Officer if this would require a change of contract for all current staff. He confirmed that this would not be necessary as it is a voluntary offer to staff, and they recognise that not all staff will want to adopt this new way of working. He also explained to the Panel that this would not apply to the entire workforce as there is a large proportion of staff whose job could not be undertaken from home, for example grounds maintenance staff and waste and recycling collection staff.

Councillor Bull enquired as to whether this is any thought to adopting a more flexible working hours to better suit the public needs with more staff being available at different times whilst working from home. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer confirmed this is something that there is an opportunity for, and that engagement with the public to understand their preferred way of dealing with the Council would need to be undertaken first.

Councillor Daniells expressed his support for the proposals and noted that many places of work are currently looking into the feasibility of being able to offer this to employees. He acknowledged that the Council has taken the welfare of its employee into consideration when working at home but commented that employees can also feel isolated when working in an empty office and that this needs to be considered as well. He also stressed the importance of maintaining a team focus and suggested that team days could be arranged to ensure that staff maintain the team ethos.

Councillor Kelly acknowledged that life is dynamic and ever evolving and that the Council is not immune to that. He enquired as to whether the Council Offices were still fit for purpose. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the viability of the offices has been considered and it was determined that for now the building will remain the central hub for the Council's operations. He explained that this was reflected in the feedback from the staff consultation exercise. He also stressed that it is important to retain a centre point for local democracy and recognised the role the Council has to play as a large employer in the town centre, for the local economy.

RESOLVED that the Panel recommends to the Executive at its meeting on 11 October 2021: -

- (i) That it notes the Panel's comments above; and
- (ii) Approves the recommendations as set out in the report.

This item was considered at 10(2) on the agenda

8. HOUSING

- (1) Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 (LAD2) Funding scheme for energy efficiency measures to Council homes

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees:

- (a) that entering into a contract for the works which facilitate the use of LAD2 funding be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer; and
- (b) the funding mechanisms to meet the Council's contribution towards the costs of the works.

(2) Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy - Consultation

At the invitation of the Executive Leader, Councillor Mrs K K Trott addressed the Executive on this item.

The comments of the Housing Scrutiny Panel were taken into account in considering this item.

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees that:

- (a) the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, as provided in Appendix A to the report, and accompanying Delivery Plan, as provided in Appendix B to the report, are published for an eight-week period of public consultation; and
- (b) the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, following consultation with the Executive Member for Housing is authorised to make any necessary minor amendments to the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and accompanying Delivery Plan, prior to publication, provided these do not change the overall direction or emphasis.

9. STREETSCENE

(1) Sustainable In-Bloom and Floral Displays

At the invitation of the Executive Leader, Councillors Mrs C L A Hockley and R H Price, JP addressed the Executive on this item.

The comments of the Streetscene Scrutiny Panel were taken into account in considering this item.

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees the proposals set out in paragraphs 45 to 53 in the report, to help deliver the Council's Climate Change objectives and increase biodiversity in the Borough, subject to an action plan being developed to provide further details on each proposal, to be reviewed by the relevant Scrutiny Panel.

10. POLICY AND RESOURCES

(1) Agency Staff Recruitment

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees to award the contract for the Council's Preferred Supplier List for agency services on our agreed terms to the Agency Worker Suppliers set out in the confidential Appendix A to the report as the Agency Worker Suppliers are deemed to be the most suitable to cover the breadth of skills and role requirements within the Council.

(2) Proposal for a new way of working

At the invitation of the Executive Leader, Councillors J S Forrest and R H Price, JP addressed the Executive on this item.

The comments of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel were taken into account in considering this item.

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees the vision for the new way of working.

(3) The Council's Approach to the Pandemic - A Review

The Executive Leader brought this item forward on the agenda to be considered before item 10(2).

At the invitation of the Executive Leader, Councillor R H Price, JP addressed the Executive on this item.

The comments of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel were taken into account in considering this item.

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees that:

(a) the following reviews are undertaken and presented to the Executive for decision:

- future ICT provision for elected Members;
- establishing clear protocols on virtual briefing meetings;
- new ways of working for office-based employees including more flexible home working arrangements and the future requirements of office accommodation and ICT;
- the future of the cash office
- the Council's approach to seasonal planting in the light of the lessons learned from the pandemic period
- future parking need in Fareham Town Centre; and
- service level agreements with One Community and Fareham CAB to reflect the lessons learnt from responding to the pandemic.

(b) an Economic Development Strategy for the Borough be produced;

(c) the proposal that future deputations can also be made in writing, or by a video or audio clip, be approved, subject to the separate deputation scheme for the Planning Committee being kept under review; and

(d) thanks be given for exemplary work and support shown for Fareham residents by all officers during the pandemic.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.57 pm).