

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council

Date: Thursday, 15 December 2022

Venue: Council Chamber - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

M J Ford, JP
(Mayor)

F Birkett
(Deputy Mayor)

Councillors: Ms C Bainbridge, I Bastable, Mrs S M Bayford,
Mrs P M Bryant, Ms F Burgess, Miss J Burton,
Mrs L E Clubley, H P Davis, J M Englefield, D G Foot,
D J Hamilton, Miss T G Harper, Mrs P Hayre,
Mrs C L A Hockley, Mrs K Mandry, S D Martin,
Mrs J Needham, Ms S Pankhurst, Mrs K K Trott, N J Walker,
Mrs S M Walker and S D T Woodward



1. PRAYERS

The meeting commenced with a short service of prayer led by the Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Mike Terry.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Bird, M R Daniells, S Dugan, Mrs T L Ellis, N R Gregory, S Ingram and P M Nother.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Mayor be authorised to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 27 October 2022.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that the Mayor's Charity Ball will be held on Saturday 22 April in the Ward Room at HMS Collingwood. Further details and tickets will be made available in due course.

The Mayor also announced that Tea Parties are held in the Parlour on the third Thursday of the month with tickets available before the events.

5. EXECUTIVE LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Leader announced that earlier in the week, the Government published a policy paper related to Local Government Finance. There were a number of important elements in the announcement, but the headline was that the government will provide additional funding for District Councils. The statement also confirmed that District Councils could increase council tax by 3% without a referendum, and also confirmed that the "negative Revenue Support Grant" phenomenon of the funding formula would also be eliminated.

The Government has stated that Council's Core Spending Power will increase by at least 3% before any increases in council tax are taken into account. This is a positive recognition of the cost pressures faced by all Councils, not just those with social care responsibilities, however other changes in the funding formula mean that the net benefit for Fareham will amount to approximately £60,000. To put that into context, it equates to about 0.5% of the net cost of Council services, and it is equivalent to an increase in our council tax of less than 1%. This is at a time when inflation exceeds 10% and is bearing heavily on many supplies and services.

As in previous years, Councils will be able to increase the council tax by the greater of 3% or £5. This cap continues to artificially constrain funding through

Council tax for low tax Councils like Fareham, especially when compared to others which charge over double what residents of Fareham pay for a band D council tax (for example Ipswich Borough Council, which charges £384.21). Officers, together with the District Councils Network, have written to the Government to ask for this anomaly in the council tax threshold to be addressed, and we understand that this is still under consideration.

In the meantime, we will need to continue to act prudently as we consider how to address very sizeable budget pressures, amounting to an estimated £2.4m in the coming years. The Executive Leader stated that he would have more to advise Members on this topic when the Executive considers the Medium Term Finance Strategy and 2023/24 budget, at its meeting next month.

The Executive Leader also announced that the Chief Executive, Peter Grimwood, has given 6 months' notice of his intention to retire. Peter has spent the last 40 years working in Local Government and the last 27 years at Fareham Borough Council. He will remain in post until 30 June 2023. The Executive Leader put forward his thanks to Peter for his tremendous support over the years. The Mayor added his thanks on behalf of the Council for all that Peter has achieved over the years.

6. EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Planning and Development

Local Plan Main Modifications

The Executive Member for Planning and Development confirmed that the Council has received just 34 responses to the main modifications consultation (11 from residents, 23 from organisations). The responses were mixed including several 'no comment' responses including from National Highways and the Environment Agency, and support for the modifications from Natural England, The Woodlands Trust and the Fareham Society. A good number of the comments made were not directly related to the main modifications and so will not be considered by the Inspector. A small number of developers and house builders responded and in almost equal measures, they supported the modifications to allocation policies on their sites, with one or two trying to introduce further changes at this late stage, whilst commenting that our housing need was higher, and we should be making additional allocations or a firmer commitment to reviewing the plan early in light of the wider unmet need issue. Some detailed comments were submitted on sites that already have planning permission through the lapse of time. The Executive Member reported that, from the Council's perspective, this is a positive outcome with no significant issues to be addressed.

The next steps are for the Council to collate the responses and send them to the Inspector, along with our summary and commentary on the responses. The intention is for that to be done before Christmas. The Inspector has previously given us an indication of one to two months for her final report, which will conclude the examination process. So, in line with our earlier thinking on timescale, the examination process should conclude in the first quarter of the new year.

The Executive Member stated that members might be aware of lots of proposals for planning reform that have been announced by Michael Gove as Secretary of State recently. Many of these are positive - including putting greater emphasis on the voice of the community in decision making and holding developers to task if they are slow to deliver the homes that we have granted permission for. We also understand that the Government will abolish the need for a five-year housing land supply where a Council has an up to date Local Plan. Some of these proposals will need the new Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to enact them, but others are likely to come through a new National Planning Policy Framework and we understand that a consultation on a new NPPF will launch shortly. We also understand that there will be a renewed commitment to a standard way of calculating housing need but a greater emphasis on the ability for local authorities to set their own Local Plan requirement where certain circumstances exist. Quite what those circumstances are will be made clearer in due course and are likely to take a number of months to bed into new practice. Therefore, we must press on with our Local Plan as these changes are very unlikely to have any bearing on us until the new NPPF is published and/or legislation is brought forward. We are very close to having a new Local Plan with all of the positives it brings us – a planned approach for housing supply and economic growth across our Borough, a commitment to town centre regeneration, and a series of new local landscape protections and other measures to safeguard the environment, including biodiversity net gain. There is too much uncertainty on these reforms, some of which may change as they move through the law-making processes or in response to consultations, to do anything other than press ahead with our Local Plan.

There are likely to be benefits to this Council in future Local Plan cycles from some of the proposals that we have read about and there will continue to be a role for PfSH to progress a Joint Strategy taking into account the many environmental qualities and constraints of this sub-region.

The Executive Member summarised that he hoped very soon to be able to report that the Local Plan has been found sound and is therefore ready to consider for adoption.

Leisure and Community

The Executive Member for Leisure and Community announced that the certificates for The Queen Elizabeth II and The Platinum Copse are going out to all those that have sponsored a tree this week, which should hopefully reach them in time for Christmas. They will also receive a letter letting them know about the next steps.

The Countryside team has begun planting the trees and are expected to have them all planted by early next year, weather dependant. Residents will be able to identify their tree by a mapping system that the Countryside Team is putting together as they plant the trees.

Once this has all been completed, we will look to have an Open Day in the Spring so people can come and visit their tree.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

8. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions presented at this meeting.

9. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations given at this meeting.

10. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE

(1) Minutes of meeting Monday, 7 November 2022 of Executive

The recommendation contained at item 10(4) of the minutes was noted and taken into account at item 17 on the agenda.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on Monday 07 November 2022 be received.

(2) Minutes of meeting Friday, 11 November 2022 of Executive

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on Friday 11 November 2022 be received.

(3) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 6 December 2022 of Executive

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on Tuesday 06 December 2022 be received.

(4) Schedule of Individual Executive Member and Officer Delegated Decisions

RESOLVED that the Schedule of Executive Member and Officer Delegated Decisions be received.

11. REPORTS OF OTHER COMMITTEES

(1) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 9 November 2022 of Planning Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday 09 November 2022 be received.

(2) Minutes of meeting Monday, 21 November 2022 of Audit and Governance Committee

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Council endorses the updates to the Constitution as set out in the tabled item at Part Two of the Monitoring Officer report; and
- (b) the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on Monday 21 November 2022 be received.

12. REPORTS OF THE SCRUTINY PANELS

- (1) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 18 October 2022 of Climate Change Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Climate Change Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday 18 October 2022 be received.

- (2) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 1 November 2022 of Health and Public Protection Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Health and Public Protection Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday 01 November 2022 be received.

13. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 2.12

There were no questions submitted for this meeting.

14. MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 2.6

There were no motions submitted for this meeting.

15. MEMBERS' SAFETY

The Council received a report by the Head of Democratic Services which presented Guidance for Member's Safety. The Guidance advises Members on points to consider when undertaking their role as a Councillor.

RESOLVED that the Council agrees:

- (a) the Members' Safety Guidance as detailed at Appendix A to the report; and
- (b) that a mandatory all-Member training session is held.

16. SCHEDULE OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2023/24

The Council received a report by the Head of Democratic Services which invited the Council to determine the schedule of Council and Committee meeting dates for the next municipal year. Dates of Executive meetings have

been set by the Executive Leader in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

A draft schedule setting out proposed dates for all meetings from May 2023 was submitted for approval.

RESOLVED that Council:

- (a) approves the proposed schedule of Council, Committee and Panel meetings for the municipal year 2023/24, as set out at Appendix A to the report; and
- (b) notes that the dates for the Partnership for South Hampshire Joint Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Committee are provisional until approved by the Joint Committee at its meeting in February 2023.

17. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE STRATEGY 2017-2023

The Council received a report by the Director of Leisure and Community which presented the updated Corporate Strategy 2017-2023 for adoption by the Council.

The recommendation of the Executive was taken into account in considering this item.

RESOLVED that the Council:

- (a) notes the results of the annual review of the Corporate Strategy; and
- (b) approves the updates to the Corporate Strategy.

18. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

In considering the appointment of a representative to the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) for the Local Government Association it was AGREED that Councillor S D T Woodward be appointed as the representative and Councillor S D Martin be appointed as the Deputy for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year.

19. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

There were no changes to the appointments to Committees.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 6.31 pm).