

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Executive

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Monday, 6 February 2023

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

Present:

S D T Woodward, Policy and Resources (Executive Leader)
I Bastable, Streetscene
Miss J Burton, Health & Public Protection
Mrs C L A Hockley, Housing
S D Martin, Planning and Development
Mrs S M Walker, Leisure and Community

Also in attendance:



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies given for this meeting.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 09 January 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. EXECUTIVE LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

The Executive Leader was pleased to announce that the Council has been awarded £1m as part of the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, which aims to address inequality and contribute towards the Levelling Up agenda.

Over the next two years, around £800,000 will be spent on planning for and delivering improved community facilities in two areas that experience comparatively high levels of deprivation.

The most significant project will bring forward proposals, developed in conjunction with the local community, for the Henry Cort Drive area in Fareham North West. Designated in our emerging Local Plan, this site could provide up to 55 much needed affordable homes alongside enhanced community buildings and sports provision.

The second community focused project is the provision of greatly enhanced recreational and play facilities at Crossfell Walk in Fareham South. Residents in both areas will help lead the designs ensuring that their needs are met.

In addition to our community projects, £200,000 has been committed to supporting local businesses and the economy. The Executive Leader recognised that the regeneration of the town centre is a key issue for many of our residents and businesses. Funding for specialist advice and evidence will help ensure that the Town Centre Masterplan being produced will provide an effective framework for regeneration and the Executive Leader was delighted to say that work on this project is already underway.

Funding has also been allocated for physical improvements to our district and local centres. Support will also be given to businesses to help them reduce their carbon footprint and support green economic growth.

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

A deputation was received from Mr Gareth Jones in respect of item 9 on the agenda.

7. REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

The following references from other committees were received for consideration by the Executive:

Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel – 23 January 2023

Minute 6 - Capital Programme and Capital Strategy 2023/24

The Panel considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer on the Capital Strategy 2023/24 and the overall capital programme for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27.

Members noted that it is difficult to predict the future spend for the Council with the current national financial crisis but found the report and Capital Strategy 2023/24 document extremely useful in understanding the financial pressures on the Council.

RESOLVED that the Panel recommends that the Executive endorse the Capital Strategy 2023/24 at its meeting on 6 February 2023.

This was considered at item 9(3) on the agenda.

Minute 8 - Finance Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budget & Council Tax 2023/24

The Panel considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer on the Finance Strategy, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2023-24.

Members discussed the 5-year financial forecast and the predicted funding shortfall and were keen to ensure that there would be public engagement with looking at options to secure the budget going forward. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer addressed the Panel and confirmed that there would need to be a significant piece of work undertaken to look at where savings could be made, and part of this work would indeed involve public consultation.

RESOLVED that the Panel requests that the Executive notes the Panel's comments above when they consider this item at their meeting on 6th February 2023.

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

Minute 9 - Housing Revenue Account 2023/24

The Panel considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer on the Housing Revenue Account for 2023/24.

Councillor Walker enquired as to whether Council tenants are coping with the continuing increase in charges. The Finance Manager confirmed that

there has been a slight increase in rent arrears recently, and the Council has increased the bad debt provision to help assist manage this. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer confirmed that although there are early signs of an increase in arrears, nothing serious is being flagged at present.

The Chairman enquired as to what support the Council offers for tenants who are struggling. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer confirmed that the Neighbourhood Officers are giving support to the tenants in their area along with the help and support of the Fareham Housing Welfare Support Officer.

Members also enquired as to whether the number of evictions has increased over the past year. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer confirmed that there has not been any increase in evictions, and whilst some tenants are struggling financially the Neighbourhood Officers are working closely with these tenants to ensure that they do not get to the point of evictions.

RESOLVED that the Panel requests that the Executive notes the Panel's comments above when they consider this item at their meeting on 6th February 2023.

This was considered at item 9(2) on the agenda.

8. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

(1) The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill - Planning Policy Consultation

RESOLVED that the Executive:

- (a) considered the content of the report and approves the suggested approach to the Council's response; and
- (b) delegates authority for the final consultation response to the Director of Planning and regeneration, following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Development.

9. POLICY AND RESOURCES

(1) Finance Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budget & Council Tax 2023/24

A deputation was received from Mr Gareth Jones in respect of this item.

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

RESOLVED that the Executive approves and recommends to the meeting of the Council to be held on 24 February 2023:

- (a) the capital programme and financing of £37,768,800;
- (b) an overall revised revenue budget for 2022/23 of £10,987,300;
- (c) a revenue budget for 2023/24 of £11,897,100;

- (d) a council tax for Fareham Borough Council for 2023/24 of £180.46 per band D property, which represents a £5.24 per year increase when compared to the current year and is within referendum limits;
- (e) an unchanged Council Tax Support scheme for 2023/24; and
- (f) that the Council continues to disregard the whole of any incomes prescribed in the Housing Benefit (War Pensions Disregards) Regulations 2007 and the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012.

(2) Housing Revenue Account 2023/24

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

RESOLVED that the Executive approves and recommends to the meeting of the Council to be held on 24 February 2023 that:

- (a) rents be approved for Council Dwellings as set out in paragraph 21 with effect from 01 April 2023;
- (b) rents for Council garages be increased by 7% with effect from 01 April 2023;
- (c) the revised budget for 2022/23 be approved; and
- (d) the base budget for 2023/24 be approved.

(3) Capital Programme & Capital Strategy 2023/24

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

RESOLVED that the Executive:

- (a) endorses the draft Capital Strategy for 2023/24, attached as Appendix A to the report;
- (b) approves the capital programme for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27, amounting to £62.9million as set out in Annex 1 of the Capital Strategy; and
- (c) agrees to submit the Capital Strategy for 2023/24 to Council for approval.

(4) Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24

RESOLVED that the Executive:

- (a) endorses the draft Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2023/24, attached as Appendix A to this report; and

(b) agrees to submit the report to Council for approval.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 6.44 pm).