

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Executive

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Monday, 18 September 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
D G Foot, Housing
S D Martin, Planning and Development
Mrs S M Walker, Leisure and Community

Also in attendance:

Mrs S M Bayford
Ms C Bainbridge for item 8(2)



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 26 July 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. EXECUTIVE LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Executive Leader announcements.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

5. PETITIONS

There were no petitions received at this meeting.

6. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

7. REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Panel 20 June 2023**Minute 8 – Opportunities Plan 2023-2027

The Panel received a presentation which provided an overview of the way in which the Opportunities Plan has been developed and the significant Year 1 project proposals that relate to the Scrutiny Panel area.

Members commented that it would have been useful to have received details of the proposals in advance of the meeting for prior consideration and to consider any further suggestions to put forward for inclusion within the Plan. The Head of Finance and Audit advised that this is a 2 year plan and that any additional ideas put forward can still be considered for inclusion in the Plan.

The following suggestions were put forward for inclusion in the Plan:

- (i) An increase to the charges at Portchester crematorium as the current charges are lower than other local crematoria; recognising that this would need to be a decision of the Joint Committee due to Partnership Arrangements with neighbouring Local Authorities.
- (ii) The Members Allowances Scheme be reviewed to consider whether there are savings that can be made.

- (iii) Services be made more competitive to encourage Welborne developers to use the Council's Building Control Partnership for Building Regulation services rather than private consultants.

RESOLVED that having asked questions, made comments and put forward further proposals for consideration, as outlined above, the Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Panel notes the content of the presentation.

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

Policy & Resources Scrutiny Panel 22 June 2023

Minute 6 – Opportunities Plan 2023-2027

The Panel received a presentation by the Head of Finance and Audit on the Opportunities Plan 2023-2027.

Members noted the information in the presentation and the projects that are being considered in year one of the plan and asked questions on the proposals that have been put forward.

Members had the following suggestions to be put forward for consideration in the Opportunities Plan:

- (i) Explore the opportunity of cost savings on electricity and heating from Hybrid Working, whilst condensing the staff within the building onto less floors.
- (ii) Teams Meetings, members felt that more meetings could be held over teams which would require less staff required in the building later in the evening, it could also save on heating and electricity.
- (iii) Introducing a scheme to encourage residents to rent spare rooms, which would not only benefit the resident with more income, but could help single occupancy properties which receive a Council Tax discount to pay full Council Tax.
- (iv) Large Projects, members felt that it was important for the Council to regularly review the timelines for delivering large projects to ensure that it is still worthwhile the Council undertaking them.

RESOLVED that having asked questions, made comments, and put forward further proposals for consideration, as outlined above, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel notes the content of the presentation.

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

Streetscene Scrutiny Panel 05 July 2023

Minute 7 – Opportunities Plan 2023-2027

The Panel received a presentation which provided members with an overview of the Council's Opportunities Plan and how the Year 1 project proposals relate to the Streetscene Portfolio.

Members commented that the Plan does not identify any savings that could be made from the Civic Offices building and were advised that the longer-term use of the Civic Offices is a separate piece of work that is being undertaken that includes other Council owned buildings.

The Panel was interested to hear what changes might be made to the service provision in maintaining cemeteries. Members were advised that investigations will be made to assess what other cemeteries are doing to encourage a more natural, wildlife environment and whether this would produce any savings.

It was felt that providing a paid garden maintenance service to elderly residents could be popular as it may be easier and safer than sourcing privately. It was noted however that in order to provide this service, there would need to be resources available to meet demand and that high demand would most likely coincide with times when the service is already very busy.

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

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

Housing Scrutiny Panel 13 July 2023

Minute 7 – Opportunities Plan 2023-2027

The Panel received a presentation which provided an overview of the Council's Opportunities Plan and how the Year 1 project proposals relate to the Housing Portfolio.

Members of the Panel asked a series of questions pertaining to the various projects outlined in the report with a focus on the reduced costs of Bed and Breakfast facilities and the challenges faced to improve void turnaround times. Officers explained that more detail on these projects was to be presented to the Panel at item 8 on the agenda and highlighted that these are a key focus for the Housing department at this time.

Questions were raised around the challenges faced in producing savings in Housing which is a statutory service. Officers explained that the focus is to introduce efficiencies which save money. One of the key areas currently being developed to achieve this, is to improve residents' ability to make initial contact to the Housing Options department via an online form. Although Members agreed that this would free up officer time and allow urgent cases to be prioritised, the Panel asked that face to face contact should always be maintained as an option for anyone using the service.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel notes the content of the presentation and commented on the proposals as appropriate.

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

8. POLICY AND RESOURCES

- (1) Osborn Road Multi Storey car park

RESOLVED that the Executive approves an increased budget of £2.5 million.

- (2) Opportunities Plan Development Update

During introduction of this item, the Executive Leader clarified an error in the original report at paragraph 43. The final sentence should reflect the projected funding gap in 2024/25 and not 2026/27.

At the invitation of the Executive Leader, Councillor Mrs C Bainbridge addressed the Executive on this item.

At the invitation of the Executive Leader, Councillor Mrs S Bayford confirmed the references (iii) and (iv) received from the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED that the Executive approves:

- (a) the draft Opportunities Plan for 2023/24, as set out in Appendix A to the report;
- (b) a revenue budget of £100,000 to be allocated from general fund reserves to support the delivery of the plan; and
- (c) the proposed governance arrangements for the plan.

9. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that it is in the public interest to exclude the public and representatives of the Press from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the matters to be dealt with involve the lively disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government act 1972.

10. POLICY AND RESOURCES

- (1) Irrecoverable Debts

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees that the debts listed in the confidential Appendix A to the report be written off as irrecoverable.

(The meeting started at 5.30 pm and ended at 5.55 pm).

..... Chairman

..... Date