

CABINET

7 MARCH 2016

Present: Councillors Chowney (Chair), Forward (Vice-Chair), Cartwright, Poole, Atkins, Davies and Fitzgerald

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Cooke

At the start of the meeting, the Chair announced that Councillor Colin Fitzgerald had been appointed as a member of Cabinet and Chair of the Charity Committee

49. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2016 AND MINUTES OF THE BUDGET MEETING HELD ON 15 FEBRUARY 2016**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2016 and the Budget meeting held on 15 February 2016 be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record of the meeting

RESOLVED the Chair called over the items on the agenda, under rule 13.3 the recommendations set out in minute numbers 53, 54, 55, 56 and 57 were agreed without being called for discussion

MATTERS FOR CABINET DECISION

50. **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO REVIEW SCRUTINY FUNCTIONS, PROCESSES AND POTENTIAL STREAMLINING**

The Director of Corporate Services and Governance presented a report which provided a management response to the recommendations made by a task and finish group of overview and scrutiny members in respect of the council's scrutiny function.

Councillor Howard, as Chair of the task and finish group, presented the group's recommendations to Cabinet.

As part of the 2015/16 overview and scrutiny work programme, members had agreed to review the structure of the council's overview and scrutiny function, in the context of the broader organisational transformation programme taking place across the council. The task and finish group had considered examples of good practice of other authorities and the priorities and role of the council's overview and scrutiny function in the future.

The task and finish group made an initial recommendation to adopt a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee, combining the responsibilities of the present Services and Resources committees, with effect from May 2016. This proposal was supported by members of both overview and scrutiny committees at their meetings in November 2015. The task and finish group was then reconvened to refine their recommendations, this included defining the role of the chair, vice chair and members of the new committee. Members have also been piloting new way of reporting performance monitoring information over the past year, which it is hoped will assist the new committee.

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The task and finish group recommended that the unspent special responsibility allowance for the Chair and Vice Chair under the previous structure be ring-fenced for a period of six months. Councillor Cartwright proposed an amendment to the recommendations of the Director of Corporate Services and Governance's report, as set out in the resolution below, which would enable the savings from the unspent special responsibility allowances for the Chair and Vice Chair to be realised immediately.

A report on the new structure for overview and scrutiny, and the required changes to the council's constitution was supported by the Working Arrangements Group.

Councillor Cartwright proposed approval of the amended recommendations to the Director of Corporate Services and Governance's report, which was seconded by Councillor Davies.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that: -

- 1) Cabinet thank the scrutiny task and finish group for their report, and;**
- 2) Cabinet approve the recommendations of the task and finish group, subject to the comments set out in paragraphs 11 to 21 of the Director of Corporate Services and Governance's report. Including realising the savings from the unspent special responsibility allowance for the Chair and Vice Chair allowance immediately, as outlined in paragraph 14.**

The reason for this decision was:

To acknowledge and respond to the recommendations arising from the work undertaken by the scrutiny task and finish group.

51. CULTURE-LED REGENERATION STRATEGY

The Assistant Director for Regeneration and Culture presented a report which sought approval of the Culture-Led Regeneration Strategy 2016/21.

Culture-led regeneration remained a priority for the council. The purpose of the strategy was to assist the council and its partners in realising the potential of the town's cultural heritage and environment, ensuring that Hastings became a highly desirable place to live, work, visit and invest.

The previous strategy had come to an end in 2015 and the new strategy had been developed in consultation with the creative and cultural sector together with the wider community. The strategy identified six key objectives, which supported the overall vision for this sector.

The Assistant Director for Regeneration and Culture explained that an action plan would be compiled to support the strategy. The action plan would also assist the council and its partners in pursuing funding opportunities to support key activities.

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Councillor Poole proposed approval of the recommendations to the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Culture's report, which was seconded by Councillor Cartwright.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that:

1) Cabinet support the adoption of the strategy

The reason for this decision was:

The previous strategy, Hastings Cultural Regeneration Strategy 2010/15, has come to an end. Culture-led regeneration is still a priority for HBC and therefore a new strategy is needed to guide the next stage of development and ensure that the greatest impact and benefit is achieved.

52. SEAFRONT STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

The Assistant Director for Regeneration and Culture presented a report which updated members on the development of a Seafront Strategy Action Plan, which had been requested by Cabinet following a refresh of the Seafront Strategy in January 2015.

The Seafront Strategy acknowledged that the seafront is a key part of the town's identity and tourist offer and set out the council's vision for the regeneration of the area. The priorities in the strategy were intended to assist residents and visitors in utilising the area for leisure, recreational and cultural activities, as well as supporting broader objectives for a safe and cohesive community.

The action plan provides further detail as to how strategic projects and targets will be delivered, including potential sources of funding. The action plan is monitored on a regular basis by the Lead Member for Regeneration and Director of Operational Services.

Members acknowledged a number of significant improvements to the seafront over recent years, including the development of the Stade Open Space and the refurbishment of the former White Rock Baths as a BMX and skate park.

Councillor Poole proposed approval of the recommendations to the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Culture's report, which was seconded by Councillor Davies.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that members ratify the action plan

The reason for this decision was:

Further to the adoptions of the Seafront Strategy refresh in January 2015, Cabinet requested that the action plan was presented for ratification.

53. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Assistant Director of Housing and Built Environment submitted a report which sought adoption of the draft Homelessness Strategy 2016/18. The report also set out the results of a 12 week public consultation which had been undertaken on the draft strategy.

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Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities were required to carry out homelessness review and prepare a homelessness strategy every five years. The present strategy came to an end in 2015 and the council had carried out a detailed review of homelessness in Hastings, over the past three years, with a range of partner agencies, voluntary sector organisations and service users. The review had found that significant progress had been made towards achieving the priorities set out in the last strategy. However, recent changes to legislation, particularly the Housing and Planning Bill and the Government's budget and spending review will impact the housing sector.

Following the review, a draft homelessness strategy had been developed, focusing on the priority areas of preventing and minimising homelessness, improving access to good quality accommodation in the private rented sector and working in partnership to deliver quality housing and support services.

The draft strategy had been subject to a public consultation between 4 November 2015 and 28 January 2016, the responses to the consultation had supported the overall direction of the strategy although some of the representations received had raised concern at the growing use of temporary accommodation, increases in visible rough sleeping and reductions to the Adult Social Care budget from 2016/19.

RESOLVED that the Homelessness Strategy 2016/18 is adopted by Cabinet

The reason for this decision was:

Local Authorities are required to produce and consult on a Homelessness Strategy for their areas. The council's existing Homelessness Strategy covers the period 2013/2015 and therefore needs to be updated.

As such, we have now produced the Hastings and St Leonards Homelessness Strategy 2016/18, which has been informed by a comprehensive homelessness review, ongoing partnership work, Government guidance and a 12 week public consultation.

The new strategy provides a framework for addressing the ongoing challenges resultant from the Localism and Welfare Reform Acts 2011 and 2012 combined with changes to homelessness legislation and new reforms proposed in the Government's 2015 budget and spending review and the new Housing and Planning Bill.

54. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR OF THE CHARITY COMMITTEE

The Chief Legal Officer submitted a report to appoint the Chair of Charity Committee.

The Charity Committee is responsible for the running of the Foreshore Trust and its members are appointed by Cabinet.

Following the recent death of Councillor John Hodges, it was necessary to appoint a new chair of the committee. The Leader of the Council had nominated Councillor Colin Fitzgerald as Chair.

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RESOLVED that the Leader of the Council's nomination to appoint Councillor Colin Fitzgerald as Chair of the Charity Committee be accepted

The reason for this decision was:

Following the death of Councillor John Hodges it is necessary to appoint a new Chair of the Charity Committee. The Charity Committee is responsible for the running of the Foreshore Trust.

MATTERS FOR COUNCIL DECISION

55. AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

The Chief Legal Officer submitted a report on amendments to parts 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the council's constitution.

The constitution formed the basis of the council's corporate governance. A task and finish group of scrutiny members had recommended a number of changes to the structure of the council's overview and scrutiny function, it was therefore necessary to revise the constitution to reflect the new structure which would come into effect from May 2016.

The amendments to the council's constitution had been approved by Working Arrangements Group (WAG) at their meeting in February 2016.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommend to Council approval of the changes to the council's constitution for overview and scrutiny

The reason for this decision was:

A task and finish group of members have been undertaking a review of the structure of the council's overview and scrutiny function. Members have proposed a number of changes to the structure to be implemented from the 2016/17 municipal year.

This requires the amendments to the council's constitution described in the Chief Legal Officer's report.

The amendments are shown as track changes in the report.

WAG approved the amendments on 3 February 2016.

As part of this process the Members Allowance Scheme has been updated.

MATTERS FOR CABINET DECISION

56. FACTORY BLOCK ON CHURCHFIELDS ESTATE

The Assistant Director of Financial Services and Revenues submitted a report which sought approval to progress with proposals to purchase the long leasehold interest of a factory block.

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The council owned the freehold of a plot on the Churchfields Estate, which was currently let on a ground lease until 2 July 2112. The leaseholder has indicated their intention to dispose of their long leasehold interest and offered the council the opportunity to purchase it.

Purchasing the long leasehold interest would enable the council to achieve additional income by marketing the vacant units for rent. There was also potential to configure a more efficient layout for the site, as the council already owned the adjoining units. A condition survey of the existing units had not identified any issues that would require capital investment in the short term.

RESOLVED to purchase the long leasehold as set out in the Part 2 report

The reason for this decision was:

The council will gain a unit that could be rented out and would have more control over the land to assist with any development of the adjoining plots that are in our ownership.

57. FACTORY BLOCK ON CHURCHFIELDS ESTATE

The Assistant Director of Financial Services and Revenues submitted a report which set out the financial implications of the proposed purchase of along leasehold interest of a factory block.

RESOLVED to purchase the long leasehold interest for the amount set out in the Assistant Director of Financial Services and Revenue's report

The reason for this decision was:

The council would gain a unit that could be rented out and would have more control over the land to assist with any development of the adjoining plots that are in our ownership.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 6.41 pm)