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CABINET

5 OCTOBER 2020

Present: Councillors Forward (Chair), Fitzgerald (Vice-Chair), Barnett, Batsford, Chowney, Evans, O'Callaghan and Rogers.

273. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

274. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor	Minute	Interest
Cllr Forward	281	Personal – Member of the Town Deal Board

275. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 1st September 2020 be approved as a true record.

RESOLVED - the chair called over the items on the agenda, under rule 13.3 of the council's constitution, the recommendations set out in minute numbers 280 and 281 were agreed without being called for discussion.

276. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Assistant Director, Financial Services and Revenues presented a report to forecast the council's financial position over the medium term in order to ensure it can align corporate objectives with available resources.

This Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) seeks to identify the financial risks that will affect the annual budgets for each of the next 3 years, and the anticipated resources that will be available to the council.

In assessing the impact of Covid-19 on the council's finances modelling undertaken to date identified net additional costs/loss of income at £4,900,000 for 2020/21. The government have provided £1,208,695 in direct funding support to the council and a further £800,000 is predicted from the lost income compensation scheme.

The funding announcements that normally follow the budget would be expected to provide details of the resources available to councils over the 2021/22 financial year. The date of this announcement remains unknown and the Fair Funding Review has been postponed.

For financial planning purposes, the assumption in the Medium Term Financial Strategy is for no overall reduction in Settlement Funding Assessments (government

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funding and retained business rates) for 2021/22. The years thereafter assume continued funding levels (business rates) of similar amounts and increasing annually by inflation (assumed at 2% for 2021/22), but this may well be overly optimistic given the state of the country's finances.

The Assistant Director concluded that after ten years of funding reductions, there are few illusions left about the difficulty in identifying the further budget reductions required. Services should continue to identify opportunities to make in-year savings and investigate other ways of achieving corporate objectives.

Councillor Chowney proposed approval of the recommendations seconded by Councillor Barnett.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that:

1. Approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

2. The Council continues to take the robust actions necessary in this financial year and throughout the 2021/22 budget process to achieve a sustainable budget.

Reasons:

The council matches its available resources to its priorities across the medium term. The Council needs to achieve estimated savings of some £2.7m in order to achieve a sustainable budget in 2021-22. In arriving at this figure many assumptions have had to be made on future funding and particularly on the impacts of Covid-19. The estimate will continue to be updated as and when implications become clearer and once the government announces details of future funding.

The report provides the opportunity to assess the council's resources to assist the review of corporate priorities. The Council must be prepared for continued ongoing reductions in funding, greater volatility in its income streams, economic uncertainty and the need to continually ensure limited resources are properly aligned to targets.

The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced revenue budget each year and this strategy seeks to highlight the major issues (in advance) in order to do so.

277. PLANNING FOR RECOVERY: HBC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

The Managing Director presented a report to set out the council's recovery and resilience actions.

The onset of Covid-19 has exacerbated an already challenging budget position and has created a great deal of uncertainty, making the process of resilience and recovery planning challenging.

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The Managing Director outlined the council's ongoing management of the pandemic and its operational transformation and set out next steps for building resilience and recovery for the town, drawing on the partnership working and community spirit shown to date.

The council's initial intentions are set out in the appendix to the report (Planning for Recovery: HBC priority themes and actions – Autumn 2020). This document identifies 8 key themes that form the basis for ongoing management of the council's resilience and recovery activity.

With the agreement of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Hastings Borough Council will continue to work with partners to develop a town wide recovery narrative.

Councillor Forward proposed approval of the recommendations seconded by Councillor Rogers.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that:

1. That Cabinet approve appendix A as an initial direction of travel for the council's recovery and resilience intentions.

2. That Cabinet agree the associated next steps proposed.

Reasons:

1. The onset of Covid-19 has prompted the need to reconcile existing commitments agreed in the corporate plan 2020-24 with new or changed commitments brought about as a result of this virus and the need to track how we are doing against new or changed commitments.

2. That the council also clarify its recovery and resilience intentions as far as possible, as a basis to continue and extend dialogue with partners to prepare for subsequent opportunities and challenges that lay ahead, given the onset of Covid-19.

278. GREEN HOMES GRANT LOCAL AUTHORITY DELIVERY

The Assistant Director, Housing and Built Environment, presented a report to agree that Hastings Borough Council be the lead local authority in the East Sussex Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery bid and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

A first round bid to the Green Homes Grant fund was submitted by Hastings Borough Council on behalf of East Sussex local authorities and Optivo housing association. The total value of the bid was £912,714. In addition, project partners are also contributing their own resources to the project bringing the total value to £1,357,656.

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For homes in the private sector (owner occupiers and private rented tenant) the installations will be delivered through the East Sussex County Council commissioned Warm Homes Check Service and for homes in the socially rented sector they will be delivered directly by Optivo housing association. The proposed breakdown of tenures is 51% owner occupied homes, 9% private rented accommodation and 40% Optivo homes.

The project proposes to install over 400 energy efficiency measures in 125 homes across East Sussex, saving households an average of £395 per year in fuel bills.

Councillor Batsford proposed approval of the recommendations seconded by Councillor Evans.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that:

- 1. Cabinet agree that Hastings Borough Council be the lead local authority in the East Sussex Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery bid and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.**
- 2. Cabinet agree entering into partnership funding agreements with East Sussex County Council and Optivo for the delivery of the East Sussex Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery fund.**
- 3. Delegated power is provided to the Assistant Director Housing and Built Environment to amend the funding payable to East Sussex County Council and Optivo in the event the grant made by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is different than identified in the application.**

Reasons:

1. As the lead authority in the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery funding bid for East Sussex any successful bid funding will be made to Hastings Borough Council. To receive the funding Hastings Borough Council is required to sign a memorandum of understanding with BEIS.
2. In order to deliver the project Hastings Borough Council needs to enter into funding agreements with the two main delivery partners in the bid (East Sussex County Council and Optivo housing association)
3. If the grant made by BEIS is different than the original application the funding provided to ESCC and Optivo will need to be re-calculated and the agreements amended as necessary.

279. NEXT STEPS ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME

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The Assistant Director, Housing and Built Environment, presented a report to approve the mobilisation of the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and enhanced support services for rough sleepers.

Following the “Everyone In” instruction issued at the start of lockdown, the Council made additional discretionary temporary accommodation placements for former rough sleepers. There are currently 62 former rough sleepers living in emergency accommodation in Hastings.

Outreach services continued throughout lockdown and the number of verified rough sleepers remained low. Since lockdown measures have begun to be eased, there has been an increase in the number of people found rough sleeping.

There is currently a projected budget shortfall of £643,00 at year-end to continue temporary accommodation placements for former rough sleepers.

The government announced additional capital and revenue funding to continue work with rough sleepers in the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and Hastings Council led a consortium bid working with other East Sussex local authorities.

In Hastings, the total capital investment would be £1,855,000. This is made up of £1,113,000 worth of grant funding and £742,000 match funding from the council. The cost of borrowing this amount based on the current interest rate from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLb) would be £31,208.

Councillor Batsford proposed approval of the recommendations seconded by Councillor O’Callaghan.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that:

- 1. Cabinet approves the activation of Hastings Borough Council’s Registered Provider and Homes England Investment Partner status**
- 2. Cabinet grant an exemption to the council’s financial operating rules under paragraph 21c of the Financial Operating Procedures, to vary our existing contract for the Rapid Rehousing Pathway service to provide additional staffing cover and landlord incentives**
- 3. Cabinet grant an exemption to the council’s financial operating rules under paragraph 21c of the Financial Operating Procedures, to vary our existing contract for the Rough Sleeping Initiative Assessment Unit to provide additional staffing cover**
- 4. Cabinet grant an exemption to the council’s financial operating rules under paragraph 21c of the Financial Operating Procedures to vary our existing grant funding agreements with Change, Grow Live (CGL) and Sussex Partnership**

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NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT) to provide enhanced substance dependency and mental health support for former rough sleepers

5. Cabinet grant an exemption to the council's financial operating rules under paragraph 21c of the Financial Operating Procedures, to commission additional day centre provision for rough sleepers, as part of the Clinical Commissioning Group's health inequalities programme

6. Cabinet recommend to Full Council that the capital programme is amended to provide match funding of £742,000 for new Housing First units, including £442,000 reassigned from the second phase of investment in emergency accommodation

Reasons:

The council has submitted a bid to the MHCLG's Next Steps Accommodation Programme on behalf of East Sussex Partners to help enhance services locally for rough sleepers.

280. MUSEUM COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture, submitted a report to seek approval for the recommendations of the Museum Committee meeting held on 7 September 2020.

The Museum Committee unanimously approved the Museum Update Report and Collections Report and recommended approval by Cabinet.

Under rule 13.3 the recommendations of the report were agreed without being called for discussion.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet note and approve the recommendations of the Museum Committee meeting held on 7 September 2020.

Reasons:

The Museum Committee has no formal decision making powers and acts as an advisory committee to Cabinet.

281. HASTINGS TOWN FUND £1M ACCELERATED FUND PROJECTS

The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture, submitted an urgent report to seek approval for delivery of the Town Fund Accelerated Fund projects.

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The Accelerated Fund projects will be used to improve the visitor offer in the town, bring back into use key buildings, widen the use of the college facilities and increase footfall into the town centre.

24 projects were assessed, with a total ask of £4,211,500. This was over 4 times the amount of funding available. HBC officers and Locate East Sussex assessed submissions for viability and eligibility against the intervention framework criteria.

The projects were sent to the Town Board Executive Delivery Group (EDG) for assessment. The Town Deal Board EDG recommended 4 projects for approval which were felt to be deliverable in the timescales asked for by the government and met all the criteria of the Town Fund guidelines.

The 4 projects recommended for approval are:

- Redevelopment and Regeneration of the White Rock Baths
- An Employment, Events and Tourist Advice Hub at Hastings College
- Investing in electric vehicle charging infrastructure in town centre public car parks – HBC
- Hastings Commons - the Lower Alley – White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures

Under rule 13.3 the recommendations of the report were agreed without being called for discussion.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet note, subject to confirmation by the government to approve all the projects and expenditure identified in the Town Fund Accelerated Fund Approved Project list detailed in Paragraph 9.

2. That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Culture or her nominee, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to enter into agreements with the managing authority and the identified Accelerated Fund project leads to deliver the projects and associated outcomes as set out in paragraph 9.

Reasons:

The fund has been released as an early phase of the Governments Town Fund Initiative. Cabinet approval is needed to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Culture, in consultation with the leader of the council, to enter into agreements with the delivery partners. This is still subject to formal MHCLG approval, which is expected by the end of September 2020.

In closing the Leader of the Council acknowledged Black History Month as an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the outstanding contributions people of African

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and Caribbean descent have made to the UK over many generations. Locally the St Leonards and Hastings Alliance for Diverse Ethnicities is planning a cultural trail and Hastings Borough Council will be changing the lights in Bottle Alley in recognition.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 7.01 pm)