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CABINET

7 NOVEMBER 2022

Present: Councillors Barnett (Chair), Evans (Vice-Chair), Batsford, Cannan, Rogers, and Roark.

In attendance: Jane Hartnell (Managing Director), Mary Kilner (Chief Legal Officer), Kit Wheeler (Chief Finance Officer), Natasha Tewksbury (Customer Services, Communications and Emergency Planning Manager), Kevin Boorman (Marketing and Major Projects Manager), Chantal Lass (Tackling Climate Change Programme Manager), and Rosie Leech (CHART Delivery Animator).

469. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence received from Councillor Willis, Victoria Conheady (Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture), and Pranesh Datta, (Economic Development Manager).

Councillor Barnett outlined recent changes to the membership of the Cabinet. Councillors Hilton and Haffenden are no longer Cabinet members and Councillor Barnett thanked them for their work and contributions during their time as portfolio holders. Councillor Cannan joins the Cabinet as the Chair of the Charity Committee and Councillor Roark takes over the environment portfolio. Climate change will form part of Councillor Barnett's regeneration portfolio.

470. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None received.

471. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2022 be approved as a true record.

472. CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN REFRESH

The Chair called this item for discussion first.

Councillor Patmore was present and asked the Cabinet to consider how best to measure progress against the agreed climate change action plan.

Councillor Hilton was present and asked how the Cabinet intends to move forward with cross-party working on this issue, and how climate change and carbon reduction can be embedded into every decision the Council makes?

The Tackling Climate Change Programme Manager presented a report setting out the next phase of the climate change strategy and action plan, including a pathway and set of actions to work towards delivering net zero emissions.

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The strategy and action plan will build on the work that started in 2020 to meet the challenges of the climate emergency that the Council set out in 2019.

The strategy has been expanded to include four new themes of food; climate adaptation and resilience; water; and waste and the circular economy. The Council is doing what it can to reduce carbon emissions from its core service provision through such initiatives as moving the Council's fleet of vehicles to electric where possible. Work has been ongoing with all services areas to embed the action plan.

Council Batsford asked if there was a way for the Council to track its progress in reducing its carbon footprint year-by-year? The Tackling Climate Change Programme Manager said that should be feasible. The Council has baselined its own emissions and it publishes data every financial year considering energy usage and any other data that can be captured from partner organisations. The Leader of the Council noted that the report includes the baseline figures and demonstrates that things are moving in the right direction.

Councillor Barnett commended officers for their work on the strategy, and thanked Councillor Hilton who as the previous portfolio holder oversaw work on the report.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To approve the adoption of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to work towards delivering net-zero carbon emissions for the borough by 2030.

Reasons:

The report presents a refreshed draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan building upon the achievements of the 2020-2022 strategy and action plan.

473. FINAL ACCOUNTS 2021/22

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer presented a report detailing the draft 2021/22 Statement of Accounts on behalf of the Council in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015.

The report is for information only, with a recommendation that the draft 2021/22 statement of accounts be noted. The final accounts have already been discussed and noted by the Audit Committee on behalf of the Council. The statement of accounts provides various statements and disclosures in a statutory format in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) code of practice.

The final accounts are currently in draft and unaudited. Both Covid and a change in auditing standards has led to a backlog of external audits across local authorities, with only 9% of 2020/21 audits being completed by the statutory deadline. Work is underway on auditing the 2020/21 accounts. This is expected to be completed before

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Christmas. The audit of the 2021/22 accounts is expected to be completed by the end of March 2023. The audited accounts along with the auditor's report will be brought back to Cabinet and Audit Committee for review and approval once the audit is concluded.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

1. The draft 2021/22 Statement of Accounts be noted.

Reasons:

Compliance with statutory requirements and good practice. The Council is accountable for the use of public money and continuously seeks to improve Value for Money.

The draft 2021/22 Statement of Accounts be noted.

474. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

The Marketing and Major Projects Manager presented a report to advise Cabinet of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan and seek delegated authority to implement the programme, subject to government approval.

The Council has been allocated £1 million over 3 years, to be focussed in Broomgrove, one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Hastings. Over the first two years of the project the Council will work with the community in Broomgrove to develop proposals which will make a difference for the community. The majority of the funding will arrive in the third year.

It was confirmed that the Council had met with social housing provider Optivo to discuss working with them on tenant engagement. The Shared Prosperity Fund isn't designed to deal with housing specifically, but through tenant engagement support may be able to be directed to areas where tenants want to see improvements.

It was also confirmed that the Council had been awarded £85,000 from the Levelling Up Parks Fund which will be used to improve parks and open spaces in Broomgrove.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To seek delegated authority to the Managing Director or relevant nominee, in consultation with the Leader to:

- **Sign Memorandum of Understanding with Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC)**
- **Sign any relevant service level agreement with delivery partners**
- **Allocate the UKSPF to eligible costs in line with the funding scheme aims and investment plan**

Reasons:

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To ensure that the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is used to best effect in Hastings and particularly the targeted area identified.

475. PROPOSAL TO GATE A FOOTPATH IN BAIRD WARD

Councillor Hilton was present and noted that there is a trend of gating rights of way. Councillor Hilton said she understood that there are clear reasons for gating this path, but we need to value our rights of way and the Cabinet shouldn't consider gating as a default solution. Rights of way need to be made more attractive places as an alternative to closing them off to the public.

The Customer Services, Communications and Emergency Planning Manager presented a report to authorise the gating of a footpath in Baird ward seriously affected by anti-social behaviour under powers contained in the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The footpath has been subject to anti-social behaviour which has affected the residents living immediately adjacent to the footpath. There have been increased patrols by police and council wardens but these have not had a longstanding effect.

Consultation has been undertaken with residents and other statutory partners. Residents and the police were overwhelming in favour of gating. The gating will not be indefinite as the effectiveness of the gates has to be reviewed after three years. Adjacent residents will still have access to the footpath.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That cabinet authorises the customer services, communications and emergency planning manager in conjunction with the Chief Legal Officer, to implement the statutory legal process required to gate the public right of way (ESCC Ref; No 232) described in the report by varying the existing gating order that is already in place for the public right of ways: ESCC Refs: Nos. 94, 97 and 175.

Reasons:

As a result of long standing serious anti-social behaviour affecting a public right of way in Baird ward (No 232), the council has been asked to consider gating it using powers set out in the Antisocial Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to restrict general access.

To enable the gating of the footpath proposed, approval is sought to vary and extend the existing Public Space Protection Order already in place for other gated footpaths.

476. CABINET APPOINTMENTS

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The Chief Legal Officer presented a report to consider the nominations for Cabinet committees, working groups and partnerships and to appoint the Chair of the Charity Committee.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

1. To appoint members to committees, working groups, partnerships and representative bodies as set out in Appendix A and;

2. To appoint the Chair of Charity Committee as listed in Appendix A

Reasons:

Members are required to serve on the committees, working groups, partnerships and representative bodies to which Cabinet appoints. Chairs and Vice Chairs are required for the committees that report to Cabinet.

477. PROCUREMENT AND RENEWAL OF HYBRID MAIL SOLUTION (PART 1)

The Transformation and Programmes Manager presented a report to request approval from Cabinet for the renewal of the corporate hybrid mail solution.

The hybrid mail system has been in use since 2017 and has been highly successful in reducing mailing costs. The contract now needs to be renewed and the recommendation is to proceed with the renewal under the ESPO Framework Lot 7 Hybrid Mail, Digital and Transformational Communications.

Before implementing the hybrid mail system, the Council operated a post room which was resource intensive and involved officers stuffing and franking envelopes. The hybrid mail system has produced savings both in labour time and costs.

The renewal is particularly important for ensuring Council Tax billing can be undertaken in the most cost-effective and efficient way.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

1. That Cabinet approves the procurement of a hybrid mail solution

2. To extend the hybrid mail solution with our existing supplier through the East Sussex Procurement Hub via the appropriate framework to continue the provision of hybrid mail.

3. To give delegated authority to the Managing Director in consultation with the Lead Member for Organisation to complete the procurement process and appoint the successful vendor.

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Reasons:

The existing hybrid mail solution used by the Revenues and Benefits service expires on the 16 November 2022 and needs to be extended to maintain our postal and electronic communications.

The use of the existing supplier has been extremely successful and has reduced the organisations spend per year on postage and mail services prior to their appointment.

The ESPO Framework allows for direct award to the existing supplier without the need for a full tender exercise and due diligence shows that they provide best value.

478. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items of business listed below because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of “exempt” information as defined in the paragraphs of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 referred to in the relevant report.

479. PROCUREMENT AND RENEWAL OF HYBRID MAIL SOLUTION (PART 2)

The Transformation and Programmes Manager presented a report to request approval from Cabinet for the renewal of the corporate hybrid mail solution for the Revenues and Benefits Service and other areas of the Council in order to maintain productivity and efficiency savings.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- 1. That Cabinet approves the procurement of a hybrid mail solution**
- 2. To extend the hybrid mail solution with our existing supplier through the East Sussex Procurement Hub via the appropriate framework to continue the provision of hybrid mail.**
- 3. To give delegated authority to the Managing Director in consultation with the Lead Member for Organisation to complete the procurement process and appoint the successful vendor.**

Reasons:

The existing hybrid mail solution used by the Revenues and Benefits service expires on the 16 November 2022 and needs to be extended to maintain our postal and electronic communications.

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The use of the existing supplier has been extremely successful and has reduced the organisations spend per year on postage and mail services prior to their appointment.

The ESPO Framework allows for direct award to the existing supplier without the need for a full tender exercise and due diligence shows that they provide best value.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.20pm)

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