

**Record of Decisions made at a Meeting of the  
Adur District Council Cabinet**

**4 February 2014**

Councillor Neil Parkin (Leader)  
Councillor Julie Searle (Deputy Leader)

Councillor Pat Beresford  
Councillor Keith Dollemore  
Councillor Angus Dunn

Councillor Jim Funnell  
Councillor David Simmons

Also in attendance: Councillors Carson Albury, Donaldson and Hamblin.

Wendy Farmer representing the ACF was in attendance for the Housing items.

Councillor Simmons left at 8pm after consideration of the item 'Shoreham Harbour Regeneration'

**CAB/005/13-14 Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

**CAB/006/13-14 Questions and Statements by the Public**

The Chairman of the Cabinet invited members of the public present to address the Cabinet.

Mr Morris of Shadwells Court, Chairman of the Residents' Association in welcoming the review of council housing asked for an assurance that the sheltered housing would remain in full control of the Council, questioned the future of Adur Homes and sought a guarantee that staffing levels would be maintained.

The Leader responded that the Council was not about to dispose of its Council House stock, rather that it was increasing stock by investment in new builds; he was unable to give a guarantee on operational matters relating to staffing levels.

Mr Hillman of the Allotments Association asked if on page 66 of the agenda the income quoted included rent from masts on the Lancing Manor and The Pylon's sites, the Executive Head of Financial Services confirmed that the income was included.

**CAB/007/13-14 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions**

There were no items raised under urgency provisions.

**CAB/008/13-14 Housing Revenue Account – Budget 2014/15**

The Cabinet had before it a report by the Executive Head of Financial Services, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting and a copy of which is attached to the signed record of these decisions as item 4.

The report set out financial arrangements for the Housing Revenue Account and asked Members to set the rent levels and service charges for 2014/15. The report also considered some of the issues emerging from 2015/16 onwards.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services commended the Head of Adur Homes for the report noting the contribution of £566K to the HRA for new developments. Mention was made on the development of a Business Plan for Adur Homes to move forward including the commitment to buy back leasehold properties. The Cabinet Member advocated that the proposed 8% rise in rents was not accepted but this be a more modest 6.4% and regarding the growth items in Appendix 5 - the Buy Back of leasehold flats - remove from the budget with the money being found from elsewhere by the Council.

The Deputy Leader supported the Cabinet Member to have a lower proposed increase and the removal of the £180,000 from Appendix 5 – the amount to be found from elsewhere in the budgets.

The ACF representative felt that the proposed rent increase of 8% was too much for many residents and supported a more modest increase if one was necessary. The ACF were also supportive of the increases proposed in the services

The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that the removal of the £180,000 from the budget did not mean that there would be no buy back of the properties, the money would be found elsewhere.

Recommendation (iii) was amended to take into account the removal of the £180,000 in Appendix 5.

### **Decision** the Cabinet

- (i) considered and approved the Housing Revenue Account estimates;
- (ii) determined the level of associated rents and charges with effect from week one of 2014/15 as follows:-
  - (a) **Rents of Council Dwellings** – agreed an average increase of 6.4% raising the average council dwelling rent by £5.41 to £89.98 per week (average rent currently £84.57 per week) detailed in Para.6.11 of the report;
  - (b) **Rents of Council garages** – agreed an increase of 2% to £8.84. (currently £8.67 per week), plus VAT for non-Council tenants) detailed in Para.6.15 of the report;
  - (c) **Service Charges** - delegated to the Acting Head of Adur Homes and Executive Head of Financial Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, the setting of the service charges as detailed in Para. 12.2 of the report;
- (iii) approved a contribution of **£386,060** to the earmarked reserve specifically for new development and refurbishment of council housing as detailed in Para. 14.4 of the report;

(iv) approved the HRA Treasury Management Strategy contained in Appendix 6 to the report.

### **Reason for Decision**

To set the rent level for 2014/15

### **Call In**

The call-in for this decision will be 5pm Tuesday 18 February.

### **CAB/009/13-14 Adur Homes Management Review**

The Cabinet had before it a report by the Executive Head of Adur Homes, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting and a copy of which is attached to the signed record of these decisions as item 5.

The report explained that Adur Homes stood at an important juncture with the recent introduction of self-financing for the Housing Revenue Account, the retirement of the Executive Head of Adur Homes and a new corporate strategic direction set out in Catching the Wave. These events had triggered the need for an independent review to consider the strategic choices facing Adur Homes on its future management arrangement. The range from full stock transfer, to partnership with another body, restructuring involving the wider Council, to an internal remodelling of resources in the service, to “no change” in the way the service is organised and delivered.

It was generally recognised that “no change” was not an option for the service.

The Strategic Director (JM) spoke to section 3 of the report which outlined a way forward for the service that included a governance board of partnership representation, he mentioned that the Acting Head of Adur Homes had started work on the Business Plan.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services felt that the report had a number of proposals in Section 3 that were particularly welcome including leadership, a governance board and a development role in housing strategy.

The ACF representative commented that the Forum was unanimous in its support for a permanent head of Adur Homes, whilst it was less certain about a governance board.

The Cabinet Members who spoke on the item were supportive of the proposals in the report, a request was made for early re-consideration of Cabinet Member portfolios to ensure that the split of responsibilities between Regeneration and Customer Services was fit for purpose.

As part of the consultation to provide the Adur Homes Action Plan that tenants be included in the process.

## **Decision the Cabinet**

- i. Considered and noted the findings of the IESE Report “Adur Homes Management Review”;
- ii. Approved the recommendations of the of the IESE Report “Adur Homes Management Review” as detailed in Section 3.0 of the report;
- iii. Requested that the Head of Adur Homes in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer Services produce an Adur Homes Action Plan based on the recommendations of the IESE Report “Adur Homes Management Review” as detailed in Section 3.0 of the report;

## **Reason for Decision**

### **Call In**

The call-in for this decision will be 5pm Tuesday 18 February.

## **CAB/010/13-14 Shoreham Harbour Regeneration – Draft Joint Area Action Plan for Public Consultation**

The Cabinet had before it a report by the Executive Head of Planning, Regeneration and Wellbeing, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting and a copy of which is attached to the signed record of these decisions as item 6.

The report and appendices were the first full draft of the Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) which was a 15-20 year plan to guide the regeneration of Shoreham Harbour.

The JAAP is a Development Plan Document (DPD) which would sit underneath the Adur Local Plan (and Brighton & Hove City Plan), when adopted, to provide further detail on the Shoreham Harbour Regeneration Area. The JAAP formed part of the Local Development Frameworks for Brighton & Hove and Adur District.

The draft JAAP had been reviewed by the Adur Planning Committee and the Cabinet was being asked to approve it for public consultation (for a ten week period).

The Planning Committee had considered the report and draft documents at the previous evening’s meeting and its views were reported to Cabinet by the officer.

Cabinet members commented on the Plans raising issues relating to transport, the impact of increased traffic arising from the proposals, Kingston Beach, waterfront proposals/ use of beach huts and the planning of education spaces at local schools. Members asked that when consultation took place, that it was meaningful and clear with regard to transport issues.

The Officer confirmed that the transport study and strategy as well as other studies commissioned for the JAAP would have to support policy proposals and these would be scrutinised by the Inspector at the Public Examination.

The Cabinet supported the role of the Action Plan in helping to deliver the broad location policy for Shoreham Harbour in the draft Adur Local Plan.. The Cabinet were supportive of the Action Plan for public consultation.

**Decision** the Cabinet

- i. Acknowledged the comments provided by the Adur Planning Committee
- ii. Approved the document for a ten week period of public consultation.

**Reason for Decision**

To approve a draft for consultation

**Call In**

The call-in for this decision will be 5pm Tuesday 18 February.

**CAB/011/13-14 Adur Overall Budget Estimates 2014/15 and Setting of 2014/2015 Council Tax**

The Cabinet had before it a report by the Executive Head of Financial Services, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting and a copy of which is attached to the signed record of these decisions as item 7.

The report represented the culmination of the annual budget exercise and asked the Cabinet consider the following:

- The final revenue estimates for 2014/15;
- An updated outline 5-year forecast; and
- The provisional level of Council Tax for Adur for 2014/15,

prior to its submission to the Council for approval on 20 February 2014, subject to any proposals to change the draft revenue budget following the consideration of the budget proposals by Cabinet.

The budgets as presented reflected the decisions taken by Members to date in relation to agreed savings proposals. The report also updated Members of the Cabinet about the impact of the draft 2014/15 settlement.

The major points raised within the report included:

- The Council would benefit from surplus business rates in 2014/15 of £142,000 (paragraph 3.9.7);

- The Council expected to receive £198,000 more in New Homes Bonus in 2015/16 due to principally to the removal of the top-slice to the New Homes Bonus (paragraph 3.10.3);
- The referendum criterion had yet to be announced the referendum criterion had yet to be announced, speculation within the press suggested that this would be set at a rate lower than 2%, probably around 1.5%. Consequently, the maximum Council Tax increase that the Council could approve without triggering a referendum had been judged by officers as 1.5% when writing the report (paragraph 3.11); the most up to date information from the Executive Head was that she expect to know the criteria for a referendum around 12 February.
- The Cabinet would need to consider whether to increase Council Tax by 1.5% or to freeze Council Tax for the fourth successive year and accept the Council Tax freeze grant (paragraph 5.12); and, finally
- The Cabinet needed to consider the growth items in appendix 2

The budget was analysed by Cabinet Member portfolio. In addition, the draft estimates for 2014/15 had been prepared, as always, in accordance with the requirements of the Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities 2014/15 (except in relation to pension costs adjustments that do not impact either on the Budget Requirement or the Council Tax Requirement)

The report indicated that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had consulted on an increase to the Council Tax for 2014/15 of 3.6% and the proposed 2014/15 budget was due to be considered by the Sussex Police and Crime Panel (PCP) on 24 January 2014. If the proposals are vetoed by the PCP, revised proposals will be considered by the Panel on the 21 February 2014 at which point the Commissioner will be in a position to confirm the Council Tax for 2014/15. If the proposals for the PCC's share of the Council Tax are not confirmed until 21 February, then the planned Council date of the 20 February will be rearranged to the 27 February 2014.

The precept for West Sussex County Council has not yet been finalised and will not be confirmed until 14 February 2014. Therefore the formal detailed resolution setting the overall Council Tax for next year will be presented direct to the Council Meeting on 20 February 2014.

The Executive Head informed Cabinet of a budget surplus of £600K however she drew members attention to Page 254 which illustrated the declining RSG. Business Rates were strong with a number of larger projects, the Football Academy being one, that would generate revenue in the future.

Until the referendum criteria was announced the PCC was unable to confirm the level of its budget which was necessary prior to the Council Tax being set in Adur. Regarding the Council Tax freeze grant, there was a small financial impact in accepting the grant.

The Leader informed the Cabinet of the decisions of the Worthing Cabinet the previous evening relating to the growth items in Appendix 2; two items had been removed from the list – of which only one affected Adur (the Information Security Officer increased hours).

Members discussed whether this item should also be removed from the Adur budget but decided to continue to support it but that the extension of hours should be delayed until such time as Worthing Borough Council were in a position to fund their share of the post.

The Cabinet Member for Resources spoke on the level of Council Tax making a recommendation that the Council tax increase be 0% for a Band D property the rate to remain at the same as in 2013/14

### **Decision the Cabinet**

- i. Considered which of the growth items detailed at appendix 2 should be included within the revenue budget and funded from the budget surplus in 2014/15.

Supported:

Human Resources – computerisation of recruitment process

Legal Services – increase in hours of Senior Information Officer

Supported and starred items for which a further report to the Executive, with more details was required:

Estates – internal or external appointment; details of monitoring of the output of the appointment

Engineers - details of monitoring of the output of the appointment

Event Co-ordinator – details of the duties and salary

- ii. Agreed to recommend to Council for approval the following:
  - a. the draft budgets for 2014/15 at Appendix 7 as submitted in Cabinet Member Portfolio order, and the transfer to Reserves leading to a net budget requirement of £9,700,430, subject to any changes arising from the inclusion of the supported items in (i) above and the approved Council Tax increase;
  - b. the Band D Council Tax for Adur District Council's requirements in 2014/15 be as required in 2013/14 as set out in paragraph 12.3 of the report amounting to a 0% Council Tax increase;
  - c. the special expenses of £17.55 per band D equivalent charged in all areas of the District except Lancing;

### **Reason for Decision**

Statutory requirement to set a budget

**Alternative options considered**

As detailed in the report; growth bids were considered, increasing the Council Tax was considered against the availability of the Council Tax support Grant.

**Call In**

There is no call-in for this decision as it is a recommendation to Council.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.16 pm having commenced at 7pm.

Chairman