

CABINET

Thursday, 7 July 2022 (6:30 pm – 7:07 pm)

PRESENT:

Councillor House (Chair); Councillors Corben, Craig, Groves and Kyrle

Also in attendance: Councillors Gomer, Bourne and Duguid

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bicknell and Pretty

RESOLVED ITEMS (SUBJECT TO QUESTIONS ONLY)

116. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation on this occasion.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS (REQUIRING A DECISION)

117. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from Committees.

118. MOTION - COST OF LIVING CRISIS

It was agreed to suspend Standing Order 10.1 and for the motion to be presented to Cabinet given the urgency.

An amended motion was presented, debated by Councillors and agreed.

Cabinet notes the impact of increased prices and taxation and that:

- a. On 1 April 2022, Ofgem increased the energy price cap by 54%, increasing the average standard tariff energy bill by £693 per year and the average pre-pay meter energy bill by £708 per year (Ofgem, 2022);
- b. The energy price cap is expected to rise by 42% in October;
- c. Latest ONS data shows average households are now spending more than £5,780 a year on food, drink and clothing, £425 more than a year ago. Meanwhile record petrol and diesel prices mean that a typical Eastleigh family re-filling their car twice a month pays an additional £620 a year;
- d. On 6 April 2022, the Government increased National Insurance by 1.25%, which is projected to cost the average family in Eastleigh an additional £600 per year.

- e. The hit to families from soaring food and fuel prices is being practically doubled by an additional £638 in extra National Insurance, Income Tax and VAT this year;
- f. Inflation is currently at a 40-year high of 9.1% and expected to rise to 11% by October;
- g. So far Eastleigh Basics Bank has provided food for 1,188 people in 2022 – 614 adults and 574 children, which is up by over one-third compared to pre-pandemic levels, and that other foodbanks in the Borough will have similar figures. The soaring cost of fuel and food will inevitably mean that many of our local residents will face a tough time in the months ahead; and
- h. While the Government has announced it will reinstate the triple lock for pensions next year, by suspending it for 2022/3, Eastleigh's 19,437 pensioners will see a rise of 3.1% this year (instead of 8.3% under the triple lock formula) costing pensioners in Eastleigh hundreds of pounds.

Cabinet further notes the decision taken in June 2022 to impose a 'Windfall Tax' on the super-profits of oil and gas companies and to redistribute this as a one-off payment of £400 to households later this year. Cabinet notes that the Windfall Tax was first proposed by Sir Ed Davey MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, in January 2022. Cabinet welcomes the Windfall Tax, but believes it does not go nearly far enough and the Government should be doing much more to support local people through the Cost of Living crisis.

Given the urgency of the situation, Cabinet acts on behalf of Eastleigh Borough Council in declaring a 'Cost of Living Emergency' and calls on the Government to:

1. Immediately reduce the standard rate of VAT from 20% to 17.5% for one year, saving the average household in Eastleigh a further £600 this year;
2. Immediately re-introduce the pensions triple lock to support Eastleigh pensioners;
3. Immediately restore the Universal Credit supplement of £20, which was cancelled by the Government in September 2021; and
4. Immediately change taxation on fuel to transfer the risk of price changes to the Government with fuel prices pegged at long-term average prices.

Cabinet asks the Chief Executive to send a copy of this motion to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

Cabinet further notes the long-term benefits to residents through the Council's 19-year record of setting Council Tax at 1% below CPI each year and commits to continue this policy to help tackle the regressive nature of

Council Tax, and commits to review the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme in light of the Cost of Living Emergency.

Cabinet further notes the increasing demand on food banks and looks to continue to support our local communities and voluntary sector to work towards an outcome where foodbanks are not needed in what is still one of the world's richest countries.

Cabinet resolves that it will seek to consider the Cost of Living Emergency in policy and financial decisions.

119. DEFRA 21-22 AIR QUALITY GRANT SCHEME AWARD

Issue

Eastleigh Borough Council (the Council) has a statutory duty to monitor air quality and produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for the four declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across the Borough. The Council's AQAP 2020-2025 was adopted in February 2020. (Paper 7)

Consideration

This grant funded project will help deliver the AQAPs aspiration to reduce the exposure of people in the Borough to poor air quality.

Cabinet asked about reporting at a local level and agreed it is important that air quality is discussed at a local level and at Local Area Committees (LAC). Cabinet asked that data is continued to be provided to LACs.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet approved the use of the DEFRA Air Quality Grant fund of £132,932.

120. PHOSPHATE MITIGATION STRATEGY

Issue

The Council has an established nutrient neutrality mitigation scheme to address the impact of nitrates generated from the wastewater from new housing development and development that generates overnight accommodation in the Solent catchment. Following a review of the evidence, Natural England launched new guidance in March 2022 advising that mitigation is now also required to address the impact of phosphates in the River Itchen catchment area. The Habitats Regulations place the responsibility on the Council as Competent Authority to ensure when permitting new residential development and development that provides for

overnight accommodation, that there is no net increase in phosphates reaching the internationally designated River Itchen ensuring phosphate neutrality is maintained. If the Council as the Competent Body cannot ensure phosphate (and nitrate) neutrality, the proposed development should not be permitted as it would be a breach of Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) 2019 (as amended). Broadly, qualifying development is within the catchment that extends approximately from West End / Hedge End north to include the northern part of the borough.

Consideration

A proposed Interim Phosphate Mitigation Strategy has been developed to avoid “loading” additional phosphates into the river and to enable planning permissions to be granted. The interim strategy will be reviewed in 6 months and will be in place until a longer term solution is developed. The Interim Strategy has three main strands:

- on-site mitigation using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);
- sale of phosphate credits currently available from taking land out of agricultural use, using the Council’s strategic land acquisitions;
- future sale of credits from wetland creation. A feasibility study is proposed to consider the creation of new wetlands to inform a longer term solution.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet approved:

- (1) an Interim Phosphate Mitigation Strategy allowing developers to purchase credits at a cost of £4,500 + VAT per dwelling to address the environmental impacts of phosphates arising from new development within, and draining into Wastewater Treatment Works in, the River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC) catchment area.**
- (2) Capital Expenditure of up to £200,000 for a feasibility study, to be funded from revenue income from the sale of Phosphate Credits, for the creation of new wetlands on Council-owned land as a longer-term strategy, subject to undertaking monitoring, detailed design and the development of a business case.**

121. RESPONSE TO HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON PASSENGER TRANSPORT AND CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL

Issue

Hampshire County Council (HCC) is consulting residents and other stakeholders on options for finding £800,000 of savings to supported passenger transport services and the concessionary travel scheme by:

- making operational changes to supported passenger transport services (including supported bus services, Dial-a-Ride, Call & Go, Taxishare and Minibus Group hire services);
- removing some enhancements to the Concessionary Travel Scheme currently funded by the County Council;
- increasing the contributions users pay for some services; and
- changes to back-office functions (which are not covered by the consultation). (Paper 9)

Consideration

Currently HCC invests the following into Passenger Transport services:

- £3.5 million per year on supporting passenger transport services made up of:
 - o £2,077,145 for local bus services;
 - o £416,952 for Dial a Ride, Call & Go and shopper services;
 - o £205,428 for Taxishare Services;
 - o £212,174 towards Minibus Group Hire Schemes;
 - o with the balance being spent on publications, passenger information, infrastructure, maintenance and training.
- £329,000 per year on discretionary enhancements to the Concessionary Travel scheme for Hampshire residents.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet agreed the Council’s response to Hampshire County Council’s ‘Supported Passenger Transport and Concessionary Travel Consultation’ attached at Appendix 1.

122. RESPONSE TO HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4 CONSULTATION

Issue

Hampshire County Council (HCC) has consulted residents and other stakeholders on the proposed Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), which will replace the existing LTP3 to provide a framework to guide all future transport planning and investment.

The Council’s response has been agreed by the Leader of the Council and Portfolio holder for Transport under delegated powers due to the consultation deadline falling before this Cabinet meeting date. (Paper 10)

Consideration

Hampshire County Council (HCC) has a statutory requirement to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP) which sets out its vision for future transport and travel infrastructure. LTP4 will replace the current Local Transport Plan (LTP3) which was developed in 2011, which is considered no longer relevant to meet modern challenges and opportunities.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet noted the response to Hampshire County Council's 'Local Transport Plan 4 Consultation' attached at Appendix 1.

123. CORPORATE COMPLAINTS POLICY

Issue

The Corporate Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy outlines how The Council will deal with customer compliments and complaints, and a separate policy for dealing with Unreasonably Persistent Complainants and Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour. (Paper 11)

Consideration

The Council's Compliments, Comments and Complaints policies set out the way in which customer complaints and other feedback will be treated and acted upon. The policies reflect the Council's aim to engage with customers to continually improve services, dealing with complaints consistently and fairly.

Cabinet agreed to amend the second bullet point of the Customer Complaints Policy (page 80) to remove examples and agreed complaints about Policy should be directed to Councillors in the first instance.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet approved:

- (1) the revised and updated Customer Care Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy subject to the amendment above; and**
- (2) the Unreasonably Persistent Complainants and Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy.**

124. COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES 2021/22 - ACTUAL AMOUNTS PAID

Issue

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 require that every authority publicise, within its area, the sum paid by it in that year under the scheme to each Councillor and co-opted member in respect of basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, dependents' carers allowance, travelling and subsistence allowance. (Paper 12)

Consideration

It is a requirement of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 that the actual allowances paid relating to basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, dependents' carers allowance, travelling and subsistence allowance are published in the local press.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That Cabinet note the allowances paid in 2021/22 contained in Appendix 1 to this report;**
- (2) That in future this report be presented to the Administration Committee, who are responsible for proposing changes to the Councillor Allowances Scheme; and**
- (3) That the constitution be updated at the next review to support the change above and approval sought from Council.**

125. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING

Issue

The Council is reporting a provisional financial position for 2021/22 as a total net favourable variance against the Rolling Budget of £463,000. (Paper 13)

Consideration

Capital expenditure for financial year 2021/22 was £48.2M compared to the Rolling Budget for the year of £48M. The understanding of both elements of monitoring enables a full picture of the Council for 2021/22.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet:

- (1) noted the performance of the Council for 2021/22 and the Council's provisional financial position for the year and consider any recommendations from Policy and Performance Scrutiny Panel;**
- (2) noted the performance of the Community Investment Programme (Appendix C);**
- (3) approved additional capital expenditure for the Lakeside Community Facilities of £313,000 to be funded from borrowing,**

with the borrowing costs of £13,000 per annum to be financed from revenue growth.

- (4) approved additional capital expenditure for Bandstand Court of £617,000 to be funded from borrowing, with the revenue costs being met by additional income.
- (5) noted the Treasury Management Outturn Position as at 31 March 2022 (Appendix O);
- (6) approved transfers to and from reserves as per Appendix P.

126. EXEMPT BUSINESS

RESOLVED -

- (1) That, in pursuance of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they are likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act; and
- (2) That, in pursuance of the public interest test, the public interest in disclosing the information contained in the following item of business was outweighed by the public interest in maintaining the exemption.

127. POST OFFICE REDEVELOPMENT

Issue

To consider Post Office Redevelopment (Paper 15)

Consideration

The report sets out a number of matters relating to Post Office Redevelopment.

RESOLVED –

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

128. PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

Issue

To consider a property transaction (Paper 16)

Consideration

The report sets out a number of matters relating to a property transaction.

RESOLVED –

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

RESOLVED ITEMS (SUBJECT TO QUESTIONS ONLY)

129. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

130. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in relation to items of business on the agenda.