

## **CABINET**

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Friday, 8 July 2016 at 1.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

### **Present**

Councillor Donna Jones (in the Chair)

Councillors Luke Stubbs  
Ryan Brent  
Jim Fleming  
Robert New  
Linda Symes  
Steve Wemyss  
Neill Young

#### **27. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)**

Apologies for absence were offered for Councillor Lee Mason.

#### **28. Declarations of Interests (AI 2)**

There were no declarations of members' interests.

#### **29. Record of Previous Decision Meeting - 9 June 2016 (AI 3)**

DECISION: that the record of decisions of the Cabinet Meeting held on 9 June 2016 be agreed as a correct record, to be signed by the Leader.

#### **30. Council Tax Support Consultation (AI 4)**

Louise Wilders, the Director of Community & Communication, presented her report, which set out the current cost of £12.3m per year and the £17.m funding gap which needed to be addressed. The timetable within her report set out the planned review and the formal consultation which would take place in the autumn to report back to Council in November 2016. The consultation would be inclusive of disabled groups and social landlords.

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson, whilst supporting going out to consultation, was concerned about the possible effect on disabled residents and those on sickness benefits.

Councillor Donna Jones, as Leader, was supportive of reviewing to make savings but wanted to ensure that the most vulnerable are protected, particularly the disabled. This would therefore be looked at further, once the consultation had been undertaken and she encouraged residents to participate in this exercise. Councillor Luke Stubbs referred to examples of reductions offered by other councils, such as at Brighton where a lower rate is charged for the disabled.

**DECISIONS:**

**(1) Cabinet noted the provisional timetable for review of the current Council Tax Support policy (see page 5 of the report);**

**(2) Cabinet noted that in order to consult with the Council's precept Authorities and the residents of Portsmouth on the changes to the local scheme and the financial implications for them, it will be necessary to take decisions on the Council Tax Support scheme before the Council's annual budget for 2017/18 is ratified and to allow sufficient time for implementation for April 2017;**

**(3) Cabinet noted that changes to the council tax support scheme will have the potential to impact on the overall collection of council tax.**

**31. Protocol for Demise of Senior National Figure (AI 5)**

Claire Looney, Partnership & Commissioning Manager, presented her report on behalf of the Director of Culture & City Development. This had been drawn up to ensure an appropriate protocol was in place and the Communications Team and Lord Mayor's Office had been involved in its production.

Councillor Donna Jones, as Leader, felt that it was important for this to be in place as Portsmouth was a significant military city which attracted media coverage for national commemorations.

The cabinet members discussed whether the list appended to the report needed any additions before agreeing the list unamended.

**DECISIONS:**

**(1) That the Protocol be adopted to be used in the circumstances of the death of a senior national or significant local figure.**

**(2) Members requested an annual review of the protocol by officers to ensure that it is kept up to date, relevant and correct within relevant legislation and heraldic rules.**

**32. Safer Portsmouth Partnership (SPP) - Partnership Plan (AI 6)**

Lisa Wills, the Strategy & Partnership Manager, presented her report on behalf of the Director of Regulatory Services & Community Safety. This represented a significant update to a 5 year plan, and was based on both analysis and residents' views in response to a survey. The Safer Portsmouth Partnership was reducing the number of priorities from 6 to 3. Domestic Abuse was the single most significant driver for violent crime in the city and was present in 60% of child protection cases. A new priority was in the area of complex cases as it was known that in the majority of longstanding Anti-Social Behaviour cases there were complex needs identified.

Councillor Rob New, as Cabinet Member for Environment & Community Safety, thanked Lisa Wills and her team for producing the refresh of the

Partnership Plan. The strategy had highlighted the need for better data sharing from the police to allow better analysis, as Portsmouth's information is then provided to the region's Police & Crime Commissioner.

Councillor Donna Jones, as Leader of the Council, had met with the new Chief Constable and new Police & Crime Commissioner, and whilst she was pleased that the low level crime figures were down she was concerned by recent incidents of serious crime. It was therefore important to have reliable data and discussions on shared information were taking place between Hampshire authorities. Councillor New confirmed that the Safer Portsmouth Partnership was discussing information sharing with Southampton City Council and Lisa Wills reported that a bid for shared analyst positions pan-Hampshire had been submitted to the Police & Crime Commissioner, which she hoped would be successful.

**RECOMMENDED to Council that it endorses the strategic priorities contained in the Safer Portsmouth Partnership Plan 2016 update and aligns the relevant budgets to support activity.**

### **33. Solent Combined Authority Governance Review and Scheme (AI 7)**

Councillor Hugh Mason addressed the Cabinet and commented on the need to keep all councillors involved in the progress of the negotiations as there had been a lot of recent press coverage on this subject. He was concerned regarding the recommendations to delegate power to the Leader on such an important matter when all councillors have a key role as policy makers as a Combined Authority would constrain some of the authority's future powers.

Councillor Darren Sanders then spoke and thanked the Chief Executive for briefing members earlier in the week and questioned the extent of the powers that could be lost under a Combined Authority, such as on bus subsidies and housing targets. He suggested that this merited wider consultation via a referendum.

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE also addressed the Cabinet to say that he supported the idea of a Combined Authority he stressed that there needed to be greater public involvement as part of the process, and felt that the timing would allow debate at Council. He referred to Southampton City Council's meeting of Council before a decision was taken by their Cabinet.

David Williams, Chief Executive, explained the background to the report and the process of negotiations between the authorities. There was now a draft devolution deal for consideration and a governance review that had been prepared by the three unitary authorities, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight. There were 5 options to consider, ranging from the status quo, to a joint authority (similar to the PUSH model) through to a mayoral combined authority. If the conclusion of the review is accepted the next step was for the development of a draft scheme to go out to consultation and then report back to the Secretary of State. The report before the Cabinet was

asking for agreement that if the Leader is content that the mayoral combined authority is the best mechanism for our geographical area we should go out to wider consultation on our scheme. He confirmed that this was an executive function that could be made by the Cabinet or delegated to the Leader, and one that Southampton City Council's Cabinet were taking rather than full Council.

In response to the issues raised by earlier speakers the Chief Executive expanded on the subsidiarity issues and felt that effective transport routes (which extended beyond the city's boundary) were good reasons for pursuing a combined authority. Public health and adoption were also suitable for collaborative work over a wider area, with work already taking place on the appointment of a joint Director of Public Health with Southampton City Council. He would not favour a referendum but there would be consultation and these responses would be reviewed. The Secretary of State would need to be convinced on our submission showing the benefits of a combined authority and on the validity of the consultation.

Councillor Donna Jones, as Leader, guaranteed that she would not be taking this decision by herself and would ask the Council for their views. She explained that the draft scheme had not been available at the time of publication of papers but this would now be forwarded to all members and this would form the basis of consultation. At Southampton CC their group leaders had debated this and the Isle of Wight had discussed at Council and would go to their Executive the following week.

The consultation would be on all the options and the results would be reported to members before the submission is made to the Secretary of State. A letter had gone from the Leaders of the three authorities to inform the Secretary of State that executive decisions were being taken and that the district councils would be invited to join the combined authority as non-constituent members.

The Leader was keen to keep the group leaders informed of progress, and felt that this had evolved speedily when the pan-Hampshire model had failed and the Treasury had wanted the Solent combined authority model to be resurrected. There would now be wider consultation before the October Council meeting, and she anticipated that this would then be subject to a further 6 months for parliamentary approval in the Spring. Portsmouth CC was still pushing for business rate retention.

Councillor Stubbs, Deputy Leader, supported the move to transfer some powers upwards that were suitable for this such as buses, highways and some public health functions where scaling up would help for the delivery of outcomes. Major transport schemes already went through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to get regional agreement.

Councillor Jim Fleming as Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation recognised that for transport issues this would have a big impact, although a lot of decisions were already being taken at a higher level and for sustainable transport this was best delivered through a combined authority. There were benefits on working on a wider area such as for the A3 bus corridor which

needed a joined up approach. He supported the plans to go out to consultation.

**The Leader undertook to share the draft scheme with all members and in light of this it was DECIDED that Cabinet:**

**(1) Noted that a Governance Review is currently underway that is looking at governance arrangements across Southampton, the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth in the context of the efficiency and effectiveness of inter-city, inter-authority economic development, regeneration, transport, and devolved central government functions.**

**(2) Agreed that the Leader of the Council be given delegated authority to receive the results of the Governance Review and, in conjunction with the Chief Executive, make a decision on how to respond to this review.**

**(3) Agreed that if the Leader of the Council decides, in response to the Governance Review, that Portsmouth City Council should seek to promote the creation of either a Combined Authority or an Economic Prosperity Board that in conjunction with the Chief Executive she be given delegated authority to approve a draft scheme, prior to a process of consultation over the coming months.**

**(4) Agreed that an update report be presented to Cabinet in the Autumn.**

**34. Consultation on proposed changes in governance arrangements for Hampshire Fire & Rescue Authority (AI 8)**

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE spoke in support of having 2 Portsmouth CC representatives to keep the knowledge to a wider group and therefore advocated the 18 member model.

Robert Parkin, Deputy City Solicitor, introduced his report on behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive, which set out the outcomes of the working group which had been commissioned to examine the future delivery and governance arrangements for the Hampshire Fire & Rescue Authority. Stakeholders had been invited to respond to Councillor Chris Carter's letter (as appended to the report) with the options for either 18 or 10 councillor members (plus the Police & Crime Commissioner in both cases).

Councillor Luke Stubbs, Deputy Leader, felt that in the future these powers may transfer to the Police & Crime Commissioner but at this point he favoured a smaller body. This would have a broader structure and more frequent meetings but would be less expensive for residents. It was noted that there are not corresponding scrutiny arrangements for this body, but there is a sub-committee structure (as set out in Appendix 2 to Councillor Carter's letter).

Cabinet Members hoped that a reduction would encourage a more strategic approach (as seen with the realigned Safer Portsmouth Partnership structure). It was believed that Southampton and Hampshire Councils were favouring the smaller structure.

**DECISION: The Cabinet noted the outcome of the Hampshire Fire & Rescue Authority Governance Review, and would respond that the City Council favours the model of 11 Members (10 councillors plus the Police & Crime Commissioner).**

The meeting concluded at 2.07 pm.

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Councillor Donna Jones  
Leader of the Council