

CABINET - DRAFT

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet held remotely on Tuesday 3 November 2020 at 12pm

Present

Councillors	Steve Pitt (in the Chair) Dave Ashmore Chris Attwell Suzy Horton Lee Hunt Hugh Mason Darren Sanders Lynne Stagg Matthew Winnington
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Also present during the virtual meeting were Councillor Cal Corkery, who was making a deputation, and Councillors Benedict Swann and Claire Udy as observers.

64. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Paddy May and Chris Ward.

65. Declarations of Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

66. Record of Previous Decision Meeting - 6 October 2020 (AI 3)

The record of decisions of the previous Cabinet meeting held on 6 October 2020 were approved as a correct record.

67. Skills and Labour Market Strategy 2020-2025 (AI 4)

Jane Lamer, Business Manager (Employment, Learning & Skills), introduced the report, explaining that Full Council on 15 October 2019 had requested a specific strategy on skills. Extensive consultation and a significant amount of work had already been done on the strategy before Covid-19. Shaping Portsmouth and partners created the Employers' Skills Survey. The Shaping Portsmouth Business Leaders' Group would take ownership of the action plan to ensure a clear reporting mechanism; the Skills Group would represent businesses. The strategy built on existing good work as well tackling challenges. A response to Covid-19 has been added to the original three themes.

The Chair thanked Jane Lamer and Stephanie Parker (Economic Growth, Skills & Employment Officer) on behalf of the administration for the strategy. As a council Portsmouth did not talk enough about the work it does to develop skills such as literacy and employability. The strategy showed the great partnership working and the "phenomenal" work done to support the business community during Covid-19. The exciting and invigorating strategy would help Portsmouth recover, especially communities who have historically been hard to reach. The strategy should be implemented as soon as possible as issues need tackling now. Cabinet will review the strategy for an update.

Members noted much of the strategy had been in place before Covid-19, for example, apprenticeships and collaborative work. Encouraging aspirations is particularly important in view of the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people; they need to know they can be whoever they want to be.

In response to questions, officers clarified that there are already existing relationships with partners and the mechanism offered by Shaping Portsmouth makes them more collaborative. The strategy as a whole has been a council-wide and very collaborative piece of work. The restructure of August 2020 saw the Employment and Skills team move to Planning & Economic Growth to enable a more joined-up and broader approach to economic growth, employment and skills. Shaping Portsmouth and the Business Leaders' Group will play a major part in implementing the strategy. In difficult and challenging times continuous review, change management and working together are even more important.

The Cabinet noted the information report.

68. Tackling poverty during the pandemic: an action plan for the city (AI 5)

Mark Sage, Tackling Poverty Co-ordinator, introduced the report, noting that the Tackling Poverty Strategy will be refreshed in 2021 together with the Health & Wellbeing Strategy as there are close links with poverty and the wider determinants of health. Covid-19 has exacerbated many issues related to poverty. The strategy is based on six key priorities. The action plan focuses on where additional work needs to be done. Section 7 considers wider issues in tackling poverty, which even if the council cannot address, it should add its voice to help people falling into poverty, for example, free school meals.

Councillor Cal Corkery, Labour spokesperson for Housing & Preventing Homelessness, gave a deputation. Deputations can be viewed on the livestream on the following link:

<https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=126&MId=4581&Ver=4>

In response to comments made in Councillor Corkery's deputation Jane Lamer clarified that government funding for the Kickstart placements covers the national minimum wage, not the living wage. As Kickstart is a specific placement opportunity HR considered it exempt from the living wage. The Chair thought that as the council is a living wage employer the placements must be paid the living wage. Placements had to be treated the same as other employees and some of them had the potential to become long-term. It would also set an example to partner organisations. He therefore proposed an additional recommendation that all Kickstart placements must be paid the living wage in line with the Living Wage Foundation and that the additional cost of employing a Tackling Poverty Support Officer will be met from the Emergency Assistance Grant.

Members thanked Mr Sage and all those who have contributed to the strategy and action plan, which they thought would help reduce poverty in the city. In response to questions, Mr Sage acknowledged the importance of budgeting in income maximisation, especially during Covid-19 when many have suffered major changes in their lifestyle. A large number of online resources, for example, the

Money Advice Service, will be available, and budgeting is a key part of debt advice. Advice Portsmouth offers budgeting sessions but getting the message across is important as past experience has shown that people do not always like talking about money in groups. The Hive are doing work on budgeting along with initiatives like the white goods store and community larder.

Members noted that Covid-19 had "shone a massive light" on existing inequalities and issues such as loneliness. However, the strategy was positive in that it aimed to empower people and not keep rescuing them. Covid-19 has shown the need to maintain a "twin track" of helping people in need but also to enable them to help themselves. Poverty made people vulnerable and it was crucial to stop them falling through the net. The strategy shows key strands which can add capacity when more resources are available.

The Chair thanked Councillor Horton and other members who had helped deliver meals over half-term. Vouchers would be available at Christmas, a difficult time of year for many people. The council is committed to helping vulnerable people. He also thanked Mr Sage for the report and the work done on tackling poverty.

DECISION

The Cabinet

- 1. Noted the ongoing impact of poverty in Portsmouth, and how this has been exacerbated for many households by the impact of the pandemic.**
- 2. Commended the work of council services and partners including Portsmouth HIVE and the wider voluntary and community sector, who have continued to provide vital support and assistance to residents to reduce the impact of poverty during the pandemic.**
- 3. Noted the learning from the resident research and other local data, on how residents have been affected financially.**
- 4. Approved the six priority areas for action outlined in section 4 and the implementation of an action plan to include the elements outlined in section 5.**
- 5. Instructed the Tackling Poverty Coordinator to lead on the coordination, delivery and monitoring of the action plan to address the six priorities, with the Tackling Poverty Steering Group providing guidance, support and scrutiny to delivery.**
- 6. Identified tackling poverty as an essential part of our response to the pandemic for all council services that can contribute to the delivery of the action plan.**
- 7. Approved the creation of a Tackling Poverty Support Officer job placement funded by the Government's Kickstart scheme.**
- 8. Noted the estimated cost to implement the income maximisation campaign, and that the cost of this will be met from the Emergency Assistance Grant.**
- 9. Agreed to lobby central government and relevant regulatory bodies to take action on the policy issues which can help to reduce poverty in Portsmouth outlined in section 7.5.**
- 10. Approved that all Kickstart placements must be paid the living wage in line with the Living Wage Foundation and that the additional cost of employing a Tackling Poverty Support Officer will be met from the Emergency Assistance Grant.**

69. Retention of additional Community Wardens (AI 6)

Colette Hill, Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods, introduced the report.

Councillor Cal Corkery, Labour spokesperson for Housing & Preventing Homelessness, gave a deputation. Deputations can be viewed on the livestream on the following link:

<https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=126&MId=4581&Ver=4>

Members said the wardens were "worth their weight in gold" and were an invaluable asset. They have a visible street presence and are often the first port of call for issues like fly-tipping or anti-social behaviour around the Hotwalls. They have no statutory authority so achieve results through their personality and building up relationships. They are sympathetic and empathetic yet also firm when needed. They have good local knowledge and liaise with other agencies such as the police. They have also helped the homeless and rough sleepers during Covid-19.

Members thanked the wardens for their exceptional service and thanked officers for funding the wardens, who are a non-statutory service. It would be good if there were more wardens, or if temporary posts could be made permanent, though some people might prefer a one-year contract.

DECISIONS:

The Cabinet

1. Approved the proposal to retain 4 additional community warden posts on a permanent employment basis.

2. Approved the proposal to retain a further 4 additional community warden posts for a further extended period until 31 March 2022.

70. Portsmouth International Port - Preparations for the new Border Operating Model post EU transition (AI 8)

Mike Sellers, Port Director, introduced the report, noting that Portsmouth is a high impact port as 66% of its trade is with the EU, and outlined the stages of the Border Operating Model (BOM) and the infrastructure needed at an estimated cost of £20m. The key date is 1 July 2021 when physical border infrastructure has to be in place. Live animals passing through the Port include 9,000 racehorses annually; it is not for animals for slaughter. The port had worked with Kier and Royal HaskoningDHV on a bid to the Port Infrastructure Fund (PIF) which was submitted in the last week of October. The Port had participated in the Skills & Labour Market Strategy and the PIF bid had application shown that the BOM would create 130 jobs.

In response to questions, Mr Sellers said that if there was no PIF funding then this would have implications on ferry business for the port. There would, however, be additional charges for inspecting freight; there are already tariffs on non-EU goods which go directly to shippers. Ultimately, everyone would pay in terms of the cost of goods. It is expected the Port will receive at least some PIF funding, particularly for the Border Control Posts (BCP) which are a legal requirement. If the PIF is

oversubscribed then ports may be asked to contribute. A response is expected in the next couple of weeks. As about 50% of ro-ro freight has to be inspected there would be major implications if the Port does not have the infrastructure to do this. During Covid-19 critical freight trade has still been passing through the Port.

The BOM is a requirement regardless of whether there is a UK / EU deal; the deal is more about tariffs. However, a no deal could have implications on the number of inspections.

If the PIF funding is received, then it is expected this will maintain more of a streamlined operation, particularly if Operation Transmission goes ahead. If it is not received and the infrastructure is not in place, the impact is not so much gridlocked roads but that traders will go elsewhere so there will be less income for Portsmouth and the Port. Mr Sellers acknowledged that trade may move from Dover and the Port has already seen a rise in unaccompanied trailers so there could be an opportunity to increase income from this source.

Members expressed concern about the effect on the council's financial reserves if the PIF funding was not received.

The Chair thanked Mr Sellers for his report and asked him to update the Cabinet if there were any significant changes.

The Cabinet noted the information report.

71. An update on the Aquind Interconnector Project (AI 8)

Ian Maguire, Assistant Director of Planning & Economic Growth, introduced the report, noting that the matter has been ongoing since July 2018 and outlining the deadlines. The March deadline for the end of the examination is inflexible and cannot be changed, even in exceptional circumstances such as Covid-19. Planning officers are working to maximise the benefits whilst minimising the implications for Portsmouth and persuading the Examining Authority scheme to accept conditions. Officers are working with Aquind for the Milton and Eastney allotment holders to be considered "affected persons", which means they do not need to register individually their wish to speak at the virtual hearings because of their rights over the land. Aquind have agreed to amend the order limits in the area to be clearer about their plans. Traffic congestion and disturbance to recreational areas are also key matters. The Examining Authority's website contains all the project documents.

In response to questions, Mr Maguire explained that the "duty to co-operate" is more a statutory duty to deliver the functions of a local planning authority under the Planning Act 2008, which embeds Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects in the planning process. Other partners such as the Secretary of State are obliged to participate in the examination process. Participation gives Portsmouth the opportunity to maximise benefits and minimise harm as much as possible. After the Development Consent Order (DCO) is granted then responsibility is discharged to the planning authority in the local area.

Throughout the process Planning has worked with other local authorities and key bodies such as National Parks and Highways England; there are regular meetings

as a cross-local authority group between each deadline. Areas of commonality are considered; for example, to avoid Portsmouth and Hampshire having two separate transport management plans.

Portsmouth has raised with the Examining Authority the consequences of delayed or lack of approval in France as that would remove the certainty of the project. Officers are taking advice with counsel on this scenario. There is no connection with French planning authorities; there is no similar DCO process.

Officers and members have met over the last two years over Aquind and have been well-aligned in their views. Officers have spoken to individual members over issues such as the impact of a road closure near a school.

Members reiterated their opposition to the project. Interconnectors are not necessarily a problem in themselves but the proposed route goes through a densely populated area when other areas of the south coast are nearer the French end of the route. In addition, power has been taken away from local authorities and the applicants seem to offer very little mitigation for the disruption that will be caused in all areas affected by the project.

Kieran Laven, Planning & Highways Solicitor, advised that the legal team was sending a letter that day to the Planning Inspectorate detailing concerns and responding fully to questions the Inspectorate had asked about the allotments.

The Local Democracy Officer read out a deputation from the Let's Stop Aquind group. Deputations can be viewed on the livestream on the following link:

<https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=126&MId=4581&Ver=4>

The Chair asked officers to respond to the group on technical and procedural points raised in the deputation. The Chair and members thanked Mr Maguire and his team for the work they were doing in trying to find the best outcome for Portsmouth.

DECISIONS:

The Cabinet

- 1. Noted that the Examination of the Aquind Interconnector Project has started.**
- 2. Noted the future timelines for the examination.**
- 3. Agreed that the Council should continue to represent the interests of the people of Portsmouth and maintain its opposition to the proposal.**

72. Fairtrade and Nestlé (AI 9)

David Williams, Chief Executive, introduced the report, explaining that it was an opportunity on how to respond to Nestlé's decision to no longer buy Fairtrade cocoa and sugar, whilst bearing in mind the council's statutory requirements with regard to procurement.

Members noted the cocoa trade was now more competitive and that Cadbury had withdrawn from the Fairtrade scheme in 2016. Although Nestlé's own Cocoa Plan

Sustainable Scheme was approved by the Rainforest Alliance members were concerned how decent wages for workers would be maintained. There was also concern about child labour and the lack of independent judgement in non-Fairtrade approved organisations. If more companies withdrew from Fairtrade the movement as a whole might be jeopardised. Members recommended obtaining full details of what is happening with Nestlé from the Fairtrade Foundation and then deciding if it was appropriate for the council to take action and, if so, what type of action.

DECISIONS:

The Cabinet

- 1. Noted that Nestlé have ceased their partnership with Fairtrade instead using their own Cocoa Plan Sustainable Scheme which is approved by the Rainforest Alliance**
- 2. Considered how, as an organisation committed to Fairtrade, it wishes to respond to this decision**

The meeting concluded at 2.10 pm.

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Councillor Steve Pitt
Deputy Leader of the Council