

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet held remotely on Tuesday 5 January 2021 at 12 pm

**Present**

Councillors            Darren Sanders (in the Chair)  
                              Dave Ashmore  
                              Suzy Horton  
                              Lee Hunt  
                              Hugh Mason  
                              Steve Pitt  
                              Lynne Stagg  
                              Matthew Winnington

Also present during the virtual meeting was Councillor Udy.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Attwell and Gerald Vernon-Jackson. Councillor Steve Pitt sent apologies as he arrived at 12.50 pm due to a previous commitment. In the absence of Councillors Vernon-Jackson (Leader) and Pitt (Deputy Leader) it was agreed that Councillor Darren Sanders would chair the meeting.

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

Councillor Sanders declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest for agenda item 3 as his mother was one of the residents who was decanted. However, as she was not involved in the consultation he is not precluded from participating in discussion on the item.

**3. Response to the Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel Review into Experiences gathered after the decant of residents from tower blocks (AI 3)**

Paul Fielding, Assistant Director of Housing, Neighbourhood & Building Services, introduced the report.

In response to questions from members he explained that the Panel had considered the policy of only one alternative offer of accommodation. It was always clear to residents that there was just one offer of alternative accommodation. However, the policy was more flexible than it appeared as officers had taken care to understand residents' individual circumstances and needs so in the vast majority of cases the accommodation offered was satisfactory.

Councillor Lee Hunt was disappointed that no members of scrutiny panels or opposition members (apart from Councillor Udy) had requested to attend today's meeting or sent apologies. He thought the report was very good and thanked Councillor Sanders, Paul Fielding and Housing officers for their work.

Councillor Sanders said decants can be worrying and frightening for residents but that safety has to come first. There had been two decants from Horatia House in 13 years. It was good to see that the council can learn from the experience and he requested that Paul Fielding passed on his thanks to all staff involved in the decants.

## DECISIONS

### The Cabinet:

1. **Thanked the Panel for its work in undertaking the review.**
2. **Noted and supported the recommendations of the review, which are listed in section 4 of the report and the response of officers.**

#### **4. Home Energy Support Service (progress update from October) (AI 4)**

Andrew Waggott, Energy Services Team Manager, introduced the report whose aim and highlighted progress against the four key themes.

In response to questions from members he explained that since October the approach has been more modular and graduated rather than a "big bang" launch of services so as to lessen risks from incurring upfront costs and demand that cannot be met. During Covid-19 there would be fewer "blue sky" household energy audits but more targeted approaches, for example, using visits to households to install solid wall insulation as an opportunity to identify energy efficiency measures. To date four local solar PV (photovoltaic) installers have been recruited and added to an approved trader list which will give consumers confidence.

The Environment Centre, based in Southampton, are an environmental charity who have been running for at least ten years and have done a lot of work for Southampton City Council and across the wider Hampshire area on fuel poverty mitigation. The influence of groups like Extinction Rebellion has led to the Environment Centre shifting their focus on to more generic environmental advice and not just fuel poverty. They have a call centre with trained staff and have been appointed on the basis of grant funding of just over £150,000 won by Portsmouth under the Energy Redress Fund.

Solar energy was chosen as a good service to start with as the flagship Switched On Solar Tool is in place. It is anticipated that an approved trader list will be launched and expanded to include routes to other energy efficiency measures such as solid wall installation and air source heat pumps. Funding won under LADS 1A will help the team to treat households with grant funding and if they do not qualify they can be given advice and referred to competent installers. The modular approach to launching services gives officers the ability to tailor sources to demand.

The Home Energy Support Service is flexible enough to respond to lockdown. Demand for "blue sky" audits can be anticipated and will probably be parked for the next three months. The approach can be shifted towards data management as much work with the Switched On Solar Tool is done remotely, for example, by using Lidar and Google Earth. The Tool is called Switched On to match other services.

Members congratulated Andrew Waggott on the award of the EMA (Energy Managers' Association) Public Sector Energy Manager 2020 and the Energy Services Team for being highly commended in the Energy Management Team (Public Sector) category. They thanked officers for the report which is very positive and the right direction to take. Portsmouth is a very progressive local authority when it comes to responding to the climate emergency and should be congratulated on initiatives such as installing LED lights leading to substantial financial savings, appointing climate officers and encouraging solar energy.

Councillor Sanders thought the report showed the way to a kinder, fairer future and could be seen as "the second down payment on the future" (the first being the rehousing of rough sleepers). Everyone has to play a part in making Portsmouth greener. He thanked Andrew Waggott and Meredydd Hughes for their fantastic work and noted that Councillor Vernon-Jackson would like to receive regular updates.

## **DECISIONS**

### **The Cabinet:**

- 1. Agreed that the progress made in widening energy efficiency and renewable energy support is significant, and has the potential to make a positive difference to Portsmouth's climate emergency, when implemented in the way described within this paper.**
- 2. Agreed that the initial installer engagement, and confirmation of securing significant grant funding, shows early promise that a sustainable low carbon jobs and supply chain can be established and enhanced in the Portsmouth area over time.**
- 3. Agreed that officers should continue to develop the business models detailed within the report; and that those services with a cost-neutral financial appraisal, and a clear benefit to the households' energy, be launched when practicable to do so.**
- 4. Recognised that the domestic energy efficiency sector and funding landscape has shifted dramatically over a short period of time; and is expected to continue to do so. The Cabinet agrees that this lends itself to a graduated and modular approach to launching the services described in sections 5 to 9 of this paper; in order to minimise the risk associated with these uncertain market conditions.**
- 5. Agreed that the high-level communication strategy, combined with tools such as the solar model, is appropriate to engage all households within the city with a clear, tailored message around energy efficiency and renewable energy.**
- 6. Instructed officers to continue to explore potential external funding streams, given the changing policy landscape, to secure grants relevant to domestic energy efficiency and renewable generation.**
- 7. Instructed officers to continue to explore the council's ability to provide low-cost loans; for the purposes of households wishing to make energy efficiency or renewable energy upgrades to their homes.**

### **5. Coronavirus Civic Awards (AI 5)**

Lydia Mellor, Events Manager, introduced the report. She confirmed that the Lord Mayor was happy with the proposed Coronavirus Civic Awards.

In discussion the following points were raised:

Members agreed it would be worth contacting the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner to see how their virtual award ceremony was organised as it was very professional. Virtual award ceremonies may be needed for 2022 as well as 2021.

It is right to focus on the response to Covid-19 and the proposed awards are indicative of how Portsmouth has stepped up to the challenges. Portsmouth people are unique and have done each other proud when working for fellow citizens and

pulling together. Businesses and organisations like the Hive are already preparing for the third lockdown and ready to help residents. As in the first wave of Covid-19 there may be "hidden heroes" so it is important to acknowledge everyone. The light at the end of the tunnel can be seen as an opportunity to recognise outstanding contributions.

It is important to acknowledge the achievements of a young person.

It is good that the awards will be independently judged and that all nominees will receive a certificate so that it is not elitist.

The award ceremony should be kept as close as possible to the AGM even though the date could change.

Members thanked Lydia Mellor for her work and also Councillor Sanders for proposing the Notice of Motion at the July 2020 Full Council. They agreed to add the following recommendation to the report:

"Agreed that the Cabinet places on record its thanks to all the people of Portsmouth for the fantastic work they have done during the first, second and third lockdowns and hopes everyone will be able to return to normal in the near future."

## **DECISIONS**

**The Cabinet agreed:**

- 1. That the Lord Mayor presents the outstanding Civic Awards from 2019/2020 at the February 2021 Council Meeting.**
  - 2. To replace the annual Civic Awards with Coronavirus Civic Awards for 2020/2021 only, and that these awards will be presented as part of the Annual General Meeting in 2021.**
  - 3. That at least one of the Coronavirus Civic Awards will be awarded to a young person (up to the age of 19).**
  - 4. The award criteria and process as detailed in this report.**
  - 5. That the Cabinet places on record its thanks to all the people of Portsmouth for the fantastic work they have done during the first, second and third lockdowns and hopes everyone will be able to return to normal in the near future.**
- 6. City Vision (AI 6)**  
David Williams, Chief Executive, introduced the report. He requested that his thanks to all participants for the depth and quality of their input be put on record. He particularly thanked Kelly Nash (Corporate Performance Manager), Charlotte Smith (Assistant Director, Corporate Services) and Councillor Pitt (Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Economic Development).

In discussion the following points were raised:

The City Vision is an aspirational and comprehensive document but how it is handed over to all the partner organisations will be the key to its success. Although the council's role is not to micromanage, all partners need to pledge that the Vision's values will be a constant feature of what they do. If the Vision is

referred to in years to come that will be a measure of success. David Williams said that the Imagine Portsmouth partner board had agreed to bring the Vision before the Cabinet for endorsement. The council will be held to account by the other partners but the Vision is more about the spirit of the city than creating metrics such as key performance indicators.

The direction of travel for the city and the council is reflected in the feedback from focus groups. Around 25,000 people had engaged in council consultations in the past year. The city should be proud of its many achievements, for example, the number of small businesses and progress in environmental issues. The re-launched D-Day Museum is an example of what officers and residents can achieve.

The Vision needs maximum publicity in all sectors to stand a reasonable chance of achieving its aims.

Members thanked officers for the huge amount of work and time they had spent on the Vision. Reaching this point has been a very fulfilling journey, involving a wide cross-section of residents, with a destination for everyone to aspire to. The Vision is a living document that reaches far and wide and is not just for the council but for all the partner organisations. Policies and strategies need to be reviewed to see how they align with the Vision.

Members praised officers, particularly Jo Bennett's team and David Williams, for their rapid response to help families who had been evacuated following an explosion on Whale Island over Christmas.

Members agreed to add the following recommendations to the report:

- thank all the participants in the City Vision process for their hard work and the excellent document
- request Full Council consider the document at the earliest opportunity.

## **DECISIONS**

### **The Cabinet:**

- 1. Formally adopted the new vision for Portsmouth in 2040.**
- 2. Thanked all the participants in the City Vision process for their hard work and the excellent document**
- 3. Requested Full Council consider the document at the earliest opportunity.**

The meeting concluded at 1:26 pm.

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Councillor Darren Sanders  
Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness