

## CABINET

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet held remotely on Friday 19 March 2021 at 3 pm

### Present

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE (in the Chair)  
Steve Pitt  
Dave Ashmore  
Chris Attwell  
Suzy Horton  
Lee Hunt  
Hugh Mason  
Darren Sanders  
Lynne Stagg  
Matthew Winnington

**35. Apologies for absence (AI 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Andy Biddle, who was represented by Rachael Roberts.

**36. Declarations of interest (AI 2)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**37. Seafront Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (AI 3)**

Stephen Ho, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the report.

Members made the following comments:

- The Masterplan was an improvement on the previous plan and ensured that the seafront would be open to everyone and provide a good experience, including people with disabilities as it is important for their wellbeing.
- The world has changed since the previous plan, for example, sea defences are now being built, and the economy and the way people travel to the seafront have changed. The sea defences is one of the largest such local authority projects in the country, representing £120m investment.
- The Masterplan has been modified on the basis of consultation so it is important to note the way in which public views have been taken into consideration. The Masterplan contains considerable detail about possibilities, intentions and hopes which will be the subject of further consideration.
- The seafront is constantly evolving against a backdrop of the challenge of rising seas. The Landing Craft Tank and the Hotwalls renovation are examples of developments that help make the seafront world class.

Members thanked Mr Ho and his team for their work.

### DECISIONS

The Cabinet agreed to:

- 1. Note the summary report included in Appendix 1 of representations received during the September-October 2020 public consultation on the draft Seafront Masterplan SPD; and**
  - 2. Revoke the previously adopted Seafront Masterplan SPD (April 2013), and adopt the final version of the Seafront Masterplan SPD included in Appendix 2.**
- 38. Roads in the extension of food waste recycling collections (AI 4)**

Dave Emmett, Head of Waste Disposal, introduced the report.

Members made the following comments:

- The food waste recycling collections are effective in reducing the amount of waste being incinerated.
- It was impressive how quickly the scheme was implemented and it is good to see it extended to communal collections in flats.
- The scheme is popular with residents; they are keen for their roads to be included.
- The scheme is an example of interest and progress in recycling in Portsmouth over the last few years along with other initiatives such as solar panels, planting trees and reducing the use of plastic.

Members requested that the roads included in the food waste recycling collections should be put on the council's website.

The Cabinet noted the report.

- 39. Revenue Budget Monitoring 2020/2021 (Quarter 30) to end December 2020 (AI 5)**

Chris Ward, Director of Finance & Resources, introduced the report, explaining that financial forecasting had been complicated by Covid.

Setting aside Covid there is a forecast underspend of just over £3m. However, Full Council had approved a £12.4m contingency fund in February 2021 so any financial impact of Covid in the current financial year would have a neutral impact on the budget as it would be set against the contingency fund. As the overall position is uncertain because of Covid the report contains budget forecasts ranging from a surplus of £0.8m to a deficit of £5.2m. Whatever the position it will be set against the £12.4m contingency fund. Any residue of the contingency fund will protect the council from the legacy of Covid in the next two to three years.

In response to questions from members as to why funding losses relating to the current year are excluded but occur in later years, Mr Ward explained it is a peculiarity of local government funding. He fully expects there to be business rate and council tax losses in the current year but the financial impact of these losses will not be apparent until the following year. Therefore, there is a deficit position as government support for these losses is around 75% of the amount, not the full amount.

Councillor Vernon-Jackson thanked everyone in the council for keeping services running in a financially responsible manner during the pandemic.

**The Cabinet agreed that:**

- 1. The forecast financial shortfall of between £2.0m & £8.5m across the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account as consequence of the Covid-19 Pandemic, and which relates to multiple years, be noted.**
  - 2. The forecast General Fund outturn position for 2020/21, excluding funding losses relating to the current year but occurring in later years, be noted:**
    - (a) The Base Case forecast of COVID-19 related surplus of £754,200 after expected government funding;**
    - (b) That the Base Case forecast surplus of £754,200 remains uncertain and in a pessimistic scenario could see that rise to an overspend of £5,200,000;**
    - (c) The COVID-19 forecasts do not currently make any provision for additional costs or losses of income / funding that may arise from the national restrictions effective from 5 January 2021;**
    - (d) Non COVID-19 related underspending of £3,000,300;**
    - (e) Taking account of the likely range of COVID-19 forecast overspends, the combined spending for the Council is forecast to be between £3,754,500 underspending and £2,200,000 overspending.**
  - 3. Members note that any deficit or surplus arising as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic will be funded by / transferred to the COVID-19 Deficit Recovery Strategy (i.e. contingency provision) approved by Full Council at the Annual Budget Meeting in February 2021, meaning that the COVID-19 impact on the current year's Budget will be neutral.**
  - 4. Members note that this report was prepared during a renewed period of national restrictions. Due to the wide ranging and rapidly changing implications arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic, the overall financial impact of COVID-19 over the remainder of the 2020/21 financial year and into the medium term remains very uncertain and maintaining headroom within the Revised COVID-19 Deficit Recovery Strategy is vital in order to ensure that the financial resilience of the Council is not compromised and the council continues to remain financially resilient into the medium term.**
  - 5. Members note that in accordance with approved policy as described in Section 8, any actual non COVID-19 overspend at year end will in the first instance be deducted from any Portfolio Reserve balance and once depleted then be deducted from the 2021/22 Cash Limit.**
  - 6. Directors, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member, consider options that seek to minimise any forecast non COVID-19 overspend presently being reported and prepare strategies outlining how any consequent reduction to the 2021/22 Portfolio cash limit will be managed to avoid further overspending during 2021/22.**
- 40. Utilisation of the additional funding for Adult Social Care (AI 6)**  
Richard Webb, Finance Manager, introduced the report.

In response to questions from members, Mr Webb explained that if the £2.8m funding had not been approved Adult Social Care (ASC) would still have had to provide services to residents as part of its statutory duty.

Members noted that if the additional funding had not been approved cuts would have had to be made to non-statutory services such as the Community Wardens or the food waste recycling collections.

The Cabinet noted the report.

**41. Covid-19 Modelling (AI 7)**

Matt Gummerson, Strategic Lead for Intelligence, introduced the report, reiterating the point made in paragraph 3.8 that modelling assumptions are very uncertain and constantly changing. It is more about trying to understand likely patterns of future infections. The pandemic is not over and he felt sure there would be further infections.

In response to questions from members, Mr Gummerson said that local and national evidence suggests that compliance with Covid restrictions has remained remarkably consistent in the third lockdown though this depends on how people understand the rules. However, with increased activity such as 50% people in their normal workplace which is significantly higher than in the first lockdown, there is an increased risk of infection. The risk is balanced against vaccine roll-out and a lower proportion of the population susceptible to infection.

Members thanked residents for their compliance and urged them to check what is permissible at each stage of the roadmap and to accept the offer of vaccination. It was important residents were aware of the current situation so that they were not lulled into a false sense of security.

Councillor Vernon-Jackson thanked members of the Cabinet for their work and the officers who have supported them throughout the year.

The meeting concluded at 4.15 pm.

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Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE  
Leader of the Council