

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 8 February 2022 at 1 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE
Dave Ashmore
Chris Attwell
Kimberly Barrett
Ben Dowling
Jason Fazackarley
Hugh Mason
Darren Sanders
Lynne Stagg

6. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Suzy Horton.

Members agreed to consider agenda item 9 (PCC Budget & Council Tax 2022/23 & Medium Term Budget Forecast 2023/24 to 2025/26) first as the Director of Finance & Resources had another commitment but for ease of reference the minutes will be kept in the original order.

7. Declarations of Interests (AI 2)

Councillor Vernon-Jackson declared an interest in agenda items 8 (Dunsbury Park Tax Site Specific Agreement) and as he is a director of the Freeport and 10 (Oversight and decision making for council companies) as he is a director of Portico. He would leave the meeting for these two items.

8. Record of Previous Decision Meeting held on 11 January 2022 (AI 3)

The record of decisions from the previous Cabinet meeting held on 11 January 2022 was approved as a correct record.

Councillor Vernon-Jackson noted that the time of the Cabinet meetings had been changed to 1 pm accommodate the leaders of the main opposition groups.

9. Vaccinations as a condition of deployment (VCOD) for wider health & care settings (AI 4)

Andy Biddle, Director of Adult Care, introduced the report. Since it had been written the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care had made a statement he was taking steps to revoke the intention to make vaccination compulsory for all health and care staff who have direct contact with people. The council has halted HR procedures in line with guidance in two letters received last week from the Department of Health & Social Care. Theoretically VCOD could still come into force from 1 April 2022, depending on how Parliament votes, which is creating uncertainty. Staff have been told HR procedures have been paused and will be updated when more information is known.

Three items in the statement have not yet been clarified. They indicate there would be discussions with NHS employers and the CQC about the importance of vaccination and whether it would become a condition of employment but it has not been moved formally yet. Mr Biddle will update members if this happens but at the moment VCOD is not going ahead on 1 April.

In response to questions from members, who were aware of staffing difficulties in the sector, Mr Biddle said that so far one member of staff had been affected by VCOD for care home staff; others had been redeployed so that they do not go into care homes. No council staff have been lost yet due to the proposed 1 April mandate. It is not known how many staff have been affected amongst independent providers.

The Cabinet noted the report.

10. Update on Planning Development Management and increase in capacity (AI 5)

Ian Maguire, Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Growth, introduced the report.

Members noted planning applications had been affected by the nitrates issue, Covid and staffing changes. Various initiatives had been tried; however, the backlog of planning applications is improving slightly.

DECISIONS

Cabinet

- 1. Recommended that the report is referred to Council for noting.**
- 2. Approved the creation of a 'bank' of external planning staff utilising flexible contracting to support the capacity of the Development Management team.**
- 3. Approved the use of Corporate Contingency to fund a bank of external planning staff to 31 March 2023. This is anticipated to be around £45,000.**

11. Updated Nutrient Neutral Mitigation Strategy (AI 6)

Ian Maguire, Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Growth, introduced the report.

Members said it was important to note the context of the report in that the city is not a major producer of nitrate pollution as it mainly comes from farm land but it is affected by it and is obliged to be nitrate neutral. There was some concern that the government may later say the measures described in the report are not necessary and the council will have spent £3m. However, they are needed in the meantime so development can proceed.

DECISIONS

Cabinet

- 1. Approved the decision to enter into a proposed agreement with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to provide nitrogen offsetting mitigation for minor third party and PCC development at up front expenditure of £3.75m.**

2. **Noted the details of the updates and approved the Updated Interim Nutrient Neutral Mitigation Strategy as guidance for applicants (See Appendix 1).**
3. **Noted the progress of the work of Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) and government bodies on a wider strategic solution to the nitrate pollution issue affecting house building in the Solent catchment.**
4. **Delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Growth to make any necessary minor amendments to the Updated Interim Nutrient Neutral Mitigation Strategy following the finalisation of the agreement with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and City Development (if required).**

12. LTP East West Active Travel Corridor Phase 3 (AI 7)

Andy Bullock, Active Travel Officer, and Michelle Love, Safer Travel Manager, introduced the report.

Members noted the Travel Corridor was part of the much bigger Local Transport Plan 4 whose aim is to improve active travel, air quality, health outcomes and the safety of cyclists and pedestrians, and to reduce health inequalities. Members welcomed the corridor as currently many cycle paths are narrow and there is low car ownership in the area. They thanked officers for their engagement with residents.

In response to questions from members about including the Horatia House and Leamington House replacements in plans, Mr Bullock said officers are taking a proactive approach in the area, such as improving the safety of the Middle Street junction, but may have to look for further for funding in Phase 4. They will liaise with colleagues as applications come forward.

DECISIONS

Cabinet

1. **Approved the proposed East West Active Travel (EWATC) Phase 3 walking and cycling improvements including, in order of priority:**
 - i. **2-way cycleway along Winston Churchill Avenue north of carriageway**
 - ii. **New 'Floating Bus Stop' on northern side of Winston Churchill Avenue**
 - iii. **2-way cycleway along Winston Churchill Avenue south of carriageway**
 - iv. **Upgrade of Winston Churchill Avenue pedestrian crossing to form toucan crossing**
 - v. **Middle Street pedestrian/cyclist priority at junction**
 - vi. **St James's Road turning head and disabled parking bay redesign**
 - vii. **Wellington Street quieter route**
2. **Noted that the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation will be requested as necessary to review and approve minor amendments to the proposed designs and timescales due to any unanticipated issues raised or changes in costs.**

Councillor Vernon-Jackson left the meeting at 1.35 pm due to his interest in the next two items. Councillor Dowling took the chair.

13. Dunsbury Park Tax Site Specific Agreement for Solent Freeport (AI 8)

Mark Pembleton, Economic Growth Manager, introduced the report, highlighting the number of jobs that could be created: around 26,000 over the 25 years of the Freeport and 53,000 in the supply chain.

Members thanked the team for their work as the agreement will have enormous economic benefits. Portsmouth is an industrial city and has been at the forefront of high technology. The benefits of the agreement will attract advanced industry.

DECISIONS

Cabinet approved a delegation to the Director of Regeneration in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and S.151 officer to negotiate, agree and execute the Site Specific Agreement for Dunsbury Park for and on behalf of the council.

14. PCC Budget & Council Tax 2022/23 & Medium Term Budget Forecast 2023/24 to 2025/26 (AI 9)

Chris Ward, Director of Finance & Resources (S151 Officer), introduced the report.

Members thanked officers for their hard work. Making savings is always difficult but there are very few proposals in the budget that will harm the public. Spending will be invested in projects that will benefit residents such as a new pool in the south east of the city, special needs education, expanding the food waste recycling scheme and retention of the community wardens. Proposals forecast that no savings will be required in 2023/24, which has not been the case for several years.

DECISIONS

Cabinet recommended to Council that the recommendations set out in section 3 of the report be approved.

15. Oversight and decision making for council companies (AI 10)

David Williams, Chief Executive, introduced the report.

Councillor Dowling explained members had examined the process of how the council dealt with companies it owns and there was cross-party agreement to have a clear understandable democratic structure with which the public can engage. It was felt full Cabinet would meet these requirements.

DECISIONS

Cabinet

- 1. Agreed to abolish the constituted shareholder committee reverting the discharge of PCC company shareholder functions (executive functions) to full Cabinet.**

- 2. Agreed that distinct and separate shareholder delegation(s) be provided for each PCC company to be agreed in each separate company paper going forward.**
- 3. Agreed that where the Cabinet has delegated the shareholder functions each company has an obligation to report to Governance & Audit & Standards on a proportionate basis.**

The meeting concluded at 1:45 pm

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE
Leader of the Council