

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 28 July 2009 at County Hall, Lewes.

15. PRESENT - Councillor Jones (Chairman)
Councillors Bentley, Elkin, Glazier, Lock, Maynard,
Reid, Mrs Stroude and Tidy

The following members spoke on the items indicated:

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|----------------------|---|-----------------|
| Councillor Belsey | - | item 20 |
| Councillor Daniel | - | item 25 |
| Councillor Ensor | - | item 20 |
| Councillor Scott | - | item 18 |
| Councillor Sparks | - | item 19 |
| Councillor St Pierre | - | items 20 and 22 |
| Councillor Thomas | - | item 18 |
| Councillor Tutt | - | item 18 |
| Councillor Webb | - | item 18 |
| Councillor Whetstone | - | item 27 |

16 MINUTES

16.1 RESOLVED – to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2009 as a correct record.

17 REPORTS

17.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

18 RECONCILING POLICY AND RESOURCES – STATE OF THE COUNTY 2009

18.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive.

18.2 On the motion of Councillor Reid (duly seconded) it was RESOLVED – to

(1) note the context in which the detailed planning for 2010/11 and beyond will be carried out including:

- the national and local policy context and current policy steers (appendix 1 of the report)
- the results of recent consultation (appendix 2 of the report)
- the national and local financial context (appendix 3 of the report)
- performance issues (appendix 4 of the report)
- identified strategic risks (appendix 5 of the report); and

(2) agreed the following key medium term planning principles:

Policy

- a) Planned Council tax increase for next 4 years (is: 3%, 2.5%, 2.5%, 2.5%)

- but “0%” for tax payers increase in 2011/12 and 2012/13 if special grant received

b) The Council’s priorities need to be reflected in policy steers (including focus on Community Transport, sense of ‘Place’ and Activities for young people). However, important to also bear in mind: the balance between ‘Universal’ services and services for the vulnerable; key service risks; capital commitments and overall affordability.

c) Specific services funded by specific grant must ‘flex’ with future specific grant changes; i.e. they must plan to consume their own smoke!

d) We must provide a 4 year plan to deliver a sustainable and well managed service offer.

Financial Planning

e) Given the relative certainty in 2010/11 grant allocations but that the current Comprehensive Spending Review ends after 2010/11, – we need to plan on “1+3” basis where year 1 is 2010/11 and the “+3” is the 3 years 2011/12 to 2013/14. It will be vital not to waste year 1 in planning for the following three years.

f) Given the prognosis for the national public finances, it would be prudent for the Council to plan for a 10% cash reduction in formula grant (and specific grants) over the 3 years 2011/12 – 2013/14.

g) Early indications of short and medium term cash limits but starting with 2010/11 is important.

Key Allocation Criteria

h) Above average unit costs and other financial benchmarking will be taken into account in resource allocation.

i) We must maximise efficiency and low impact savings so as to minimise front line savings impacts. That means we must maximise efficiencies across the council as well as service specific opportunities including through scope for shared or collaborative working.

Outline Next Steps

j) Each Portfolio Member, and ultimately Cabinet as a whole, will need to be satisfied that their Policy Steers still fit the economic realities and political priorities.

k) Provisional service cash limits for 2010/11 will be discussed over the summer and confirmed in September 2009.

l) Indicative cash limits for the ‘+3 years’, i.e: 2011/12 to 2013/14, to be published by December 2009 and confirmed in February 2010.

m) All services to challenge the choices informing

- (i) their current service offer, Value For Money, real customer impact and value, scope for innovation, scope for reduction;
- (ii) how procured and delivered including scope for collaboration;
- (iii) how managed.

and as part of that challenge:

- In respect of services spending above average, the appropriate portfolios to present plans by end of 2010/11 at the latest to bring spend down to 'average' of counties over the soonest feasible time frame.
- Support services in all departments across the Council have to bring forward plans again the end of 2010/11 to show how 10% can be saved – in cash terms – over the next 3 years.
- All services to model how they would manage a 10% reduction in their specific grants over the latter 3 years (i.e. 2011/12 to 2013/14) – on the assumption the specific service has to consume its own smoke.

n) Further task and process definition, consultation and communication details will be considered at future meetings.

Reason

18.3 To achieve the development of a sound medium term financial strategy.

19 RECESSION: UPDATE ON IMPACTS AND ACTION

19.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive.

19.2 On the motion of Councillor Jones (duly seconded) it was RESOLVED – to

(1) note the latest information about the impact of the recession in East Sussex and the progress in relation to the agreed action plan as set out in appendix 1 of the report;

(2) note the findings from the Residents' Survey and agree the identified action as set out in appendix 2; and

(3) note the findings from the Business Survey and agree the identified action as set out in appendix 3.

Reason

19.3 To note the update on the agreed action plan to mitigate the impact of the recession in East Sussex on businesses, individuals and communities.

20 GOVERNING BODY CLERKS

20.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee and a report by the Director of Children's Services with observations on the Scrutiny Committee's report.

20.2 On the motion of Councillor Elkin (duly seconded) it was RESOLVED – to

(1) note and welcome the report of the Scrutiny Committee; and

(2) to recommend the County Council to welcome the main recommendations set out in the report and to approve the response of the Director of Children's Services to the recommendations and their implementation.

Reason

20.3 The Scrutiny report contains a valuable insight into how governors, clerks and headteachers view the role of clerks. Implementation of the recommendations will result in service improvements with the development of a centrally managed clerking service.

21 BUDGET MONITORING 2009/10

21.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

21.2 On the motion of Councillor Reid (duly seconded) it was RESOLVED – to note the latest monitoring position on the revenue and capital budgets.

Reason

21.3 Management action is being taken to address areas of concern.

22 BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE: READINESS TO DELIVER

22.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Children's Services.

22.2 On the motion of Councillor Elkin (duly seconded) it was RESOLVED – to agree that the Building Schools for the Future Readiness to Deliver should be submitted to Partnership for Schools subject to the following sentence being added to paragraph 3.6.3 'There is a clear recognition in schools and colleges of the value of learning taking place outside as well as inside the buildings'

Reason

22.3 Following consultations with a range of partners and stakeholders there has been strong support for the Readiness to Deliver documentation and agreement is required to submit the documentation to Partnership for Schools.

23 INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES: ANNUAL REPORT AND OPINION

23.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources

23.2 On the motion of Councillor Reid (duly seconded) it was RESOLVED – to note the internal audit service's opinion on the Council's control environment;

Reason

23.3 To note the Internal Audit opinion on the adequacy of the Council's control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

24 INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY 2009/10 AND ANNUAL PLAN

24.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

24.2 On the motion of Councillor Reid (duly seconded) it was RESOLVED – to endorse the Council’s Internal Audit Strategy 2009/10 and Annual Plan

Reason

24.3 To approve the Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan which sets out how the Council will meet its statutory requirements for internal audit.

25 PARTIAL REVIEW OF REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH EAST – PROVISION FOR GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOW PEOPLE

25.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Transport and Environment

25.2 On the motion of Councillor Tidy (duly seconded) it was RESOLVED – to authorise the Director of Transport and Environment to submit representations on the Partial Review:

(1) supporting the proposed requirements for net additional permanent pitch provision for gypsies and travellers and travelling show people for 2006 -2016; and

(2) supporting the principle of delegating back to Local Authorities responsibility for determining the appropriate level of provision for transit and temporary stopping purposes based on local assessment of need.

Reason

25.3 The targets for additional pitch provision is supported. They broadly seem to reflect the public consultation response and would comfortably meet the locally assessed need in the East Sussex area. Making adequate permanent site provision is an essential building block in the work to minimise unauthorised encampments and meet local need. No numerical targets for transit provision are proposed as there is insufficient robust evidence to justify any. The Partial Review’s approach of assessing transit site requirements and making provision locally is also supported.

26 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

26.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.

26.2 On the motion of Councillor Reid (duly seconded) it was RESOLVED – to recommend the County Council to approve the changes to the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in paragraphs 2.5 to 2.7 of the report and included in the revised Strategy set out in appendix B.

Reason

26.3 The proposed changes will have a significant impact on the investment income received and a minimal and acceptable impact on risk. Exposure to future risk continues to be minimised through proactive and constant review of the treasury management policy.

27 ASHDOWN FOREST TRUST

27.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources

27.2 On the motion of Councillor Reid (duly seconded) it was RESOLVED – to note the report and the Trust’s Income and Expenditure Account for 2008/09 and Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2009.

Reason

27.3 To note the final accounts for the Trust for 2008/09

28 ITEMS TO REPORT TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL

28.1 The Cabinet agreed that items 5, 7, 13 and 14 should be reported to the County Council.

[Note: The items being reported to the County Council refer to minute numbers 18, 20, 26 and 27]