

CABINET

Wednesday, 11 September 2024

Attendance:

Councillors
Tod (Chairperson)

Cutler
Becker
Learney

Porter
Thompson

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Westwood

Members in attendance who spoke at the meeting

Councillors Horrill and Lee

[Video recording of this meeting](#)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Westwood as noted above.

2. **MEMBERSHIP OF CABINET BODIES ETC.**

As set out on the agenda, Cabinet noted that under the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code, the Council was obliged to advise the Housing Ombudsman of the Council's representative on the governing body who was responsible for complaints. This responsibility fell within the scope of the role of Cabinet Member and it was proposed that the Housing Ombudsman be advised that the Cabinet Member for Housing was appointed to this role.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member for Housing be appointed as the Member responsible for complaints within the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code.

3. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Porter and Tod declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests in respect of various items on the agenda due to their role as County Councillors.

Councillor Becker declared a pecuniary interest in respect of reports CAB3459 and CAB3467 and left the room during consideration of these items and took no part in discussion or decision thereon.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ian Tait spoke regarding reports CAB3459 and CAB3465 as summarised under the relevant minute items below.

Mike Slinn (Kings Barton Residents' Association) spoke in the general public participation session as summarised briefly below.

Mr Slinn spoke in opposition to the proposal (which formed part of the Kings Barton major development planning permission) that the existing Andover Road to be closed. He referred to an email containing further information on his statements which had been circulated to all Cabinet members prior to the meeting. KBRA had organised a petition requesting that the City Council and County Council require Andover Road to remain open as a requirement for the approval of the Sir John Moore Barracks redevelopment which had received over 3,000 signatures. He outlined some of the reasons why he considered the Winchester Avenue route through the Kings Barton development was an unsuitable alternative route for the levels of traffic.

Councillor Tod responded to the points made advising that this issue would not be considered via a petition to Full Council because, as per the Council's petitions scheme, it related to a planning matter and he also clarified that changes could not be made at this stage of the new Local Plan process but any submissions made would be considered by the Planning Inspector following the close of the current Regulation 19 consultation. Councillor Tod further stated that it was the County Council's (HCC) responsibility as highway authority to assess potential traffic implications, but he confirmed that the city council would continue to work with HCC to seek improvements to the roads in Kings Barton and across the city and district as a whole.

5. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held 16 July 2024 and the additional meeting held on 19 August 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

6. **LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Tod provided a brief update on the current situation regarding possible devolution proposals in the region and the potential future role of district councils.

Councillor Becker announced that the "Spaces of Sanctuary" project had been launched which offered a physical and emotionally safe environment where people could seek peace and guidance to address their concerns without fear or prejudice.

Councillor Becker also announced the re-launch of the Winchester Healthy Walks initiative with a new walk in the Winnall area.

Councillor Learney announced that all residents would receive a new waste and recycling bin collection calendar by the end of September together with a letter advising that bin collection days would be changed from 7 October 2024. The collection day changes were part of measures to introduce more efficient routes and accommodate future food waste collection obligations.

Councillor Porter congratulated the Council's Animal Welfare Team for being awarded a double platinum RSPCA "paw prints" award recognising the high quality of service provision.

7. **PARTNERSHIP FOR SOUTH HAMPSHIRE NUTRIENT MITIGATION PROPOSAL**
(CAB3459)

As noted above, Councillor Becker declared a pecuniary interest in response of this report and left the room during its consideration and took no part in discussion or decision thereon.

Councillor Porter introduced the report providing a background to the proposals to work with PfSH to meet the challenges to tackling nutrient pollution. She advised that the report provided detail on the impact and anticipated credit generation.

Ian Tait spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Mr Tait welcomed the proposals to sell surplus nutrient credits but queried whether the estimated revenue from these sales was too low. He also asked why the proposal was for any surplus to be used for other nutrient schemes across the PfSH region rather than being returned to the council. He also sought confirmation that no sewage had been discharged from council owned sewage treatment works (STWs).

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Lee and Horrill addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Lee

He drew attention to acceleration of the climate crisis and the importance of addressing this whilst enabling housing development. He highlighted that nutrient pollution also occurred from other sources such as agricultural run-off, insufficient progress by water companies and individuals and businesses use of harmful cleaning and other products that entered the water system. He supported the proposed improvements to STWs but queried whether any future surplus could be used to target improvements within the Winchester district.

Councillor Horrill

She requested further clarification about how the monitoring of the credit scheme would work and confirmation that the legal and finances resources required could be met within existing resources. She asked for

further information on the water efficiency projects referenced in paragraph 11.17 of the report. Finally she requested clarification on the proposed approach to credits from third parties and how these would be used.

Councillors Porter, Tod and Cutler together with the Strategic Director and the Team Leader Planning responded to the questions raised by public and invited councillors. The response included confirmation that the future monitoring arrangements were being discussed with PfSH and that no sewage had been discharged from council owned STWs. The nutrients credit market was uncertain and it was likely that current prices would reduce in the future and the involvement of PfSH helped mitigate the risks involved.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out in the report and outlined above.

RECOMMENDED (TO COUNCIL):

1. That an HRA capital budget of £900,000 be approved to implement works on plant upgrades funded by and on behalf of Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH).

RESOLVED:

That subject to Council approval of the budget:

2. That capital expenditure of up to £200,000 be approved, funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) via Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH), for feasibility and initial works.

3. That capital expenditure of up to £700,000 be approved, funded by MHCLG via PfSH, for the implementation of works on further plant upgrades following agreed business cases with PfSH.

4. That authority be delegated to Strategic Director and Director – Legal, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Place and the Local Plan, the authority to enter into necessary agreements with Fareham Borough Council on behalf of PfSH in order to receive the grant funds and establish working arrangements to implement the project and sell credits generated.

5. That the procurement of any works or services be delegated to the Strategic Director and that the Strategic Director be authorised to award contracts and enter into all necessary legal agreements with the preferred bidder(s).

8. **RENEWAL PROCUREMENT OF THE COUNCIL ENERGY SUPPLY CONTRACT**
(CAB3467)

As noted above, Councillor Becker declared a pecuniary interest in response of this report and left the room during its consideration and took no part in discussion or decision thereon.

Councillor Tod introduced the report which sought approval to continue using the LASER Energy Framework for the supply of gas and electric to the council for a 4-year period, commencing April 2025.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Lee addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Lee

He welcomed the significant reduction in the council's carbon emissions due to the procurement of green energy but requested further evidence behind the statement about the financial savings achieved by the previous contract. He raised a number of detailed points including a suggestion that the possibility of corporate power purchase agreement be explored to ensure long-term energy from solar farms. He also queried how much of the council's overall energy consumption was "green" and whether it would be possible for an LED display of the council's real-time energy consumption and carbon savings to be installed in the council offices.

Councillor Tod, the Strategic Director and the Energy Manager responded to the questions raised, including confirming that all the energy used by the council was "green" and the idea of a real-time display would be investigated further but were advised that real time displays potentially still had a reporting lag

In relation to paragraph 5.2 of the report, the Strategic Director clarified that the properties listed were not currently supplied by green gas and there could be a financial impact on tenants if this became a requirement. Cabinet suggested that the possibility of introducing green gas in these properties be investigated further and agreed a new resolution six to the report (as detailed below) to facilitate this.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out in the report and outlined above.

RESOLVED:

1. That the procurement of electricity and gas via end user agreements with Hampshire County Council, under the LASER Energy Framework, be approved.
2. That it be agreed that the energy Winchester City Council consumes is purchased in a flexible manner by Hampshire County Council, using the existing energy purchasing strategy of both "purchase in advance" and "purchase within period".

3. That it be agreed to continue to purchase green electricity and green gas as per the existing contracts.

4. That the Strategic Director be authorised to enter into call off agreements via the LASER Energy Framework for the duration of the contract (4 years).

5. That delegated authority be granted to the Service Lead: Legal to execute and enter into all necessary contractual agreement.

6. That it be agreed that a report be presented to Carbon board setting out potential options to deliver green gas to the residents of Danemark Court, Makins Court, Matilda Place, Milford/Gordon Watson House and Whitewings House.

9. **GENERAL FUND OUTTURN 23/24**
(CAB3464)

Councillor Cutler introduced the report and referred to the draft minutes from Scrutiny Committee held 4 September 2024 where the report had been discussed and the majority of questions raised had been responded to at that meeting. He provided a response to the two outstanding queries as below:

- a) The possibility of benchmarking asset management performance would be investigated further;
- b) members would be updated regarding the council's asset position as part of the wider TC24 briefing.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Lee addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Lee

He asked a number of detailed questions on the report and more widely in relation to the council's future financial planning and performance monitoring. These included the possibility of combining financial indicators with non-financial data, future risks impacting on the council's budget and the possibility of investing in green bonds in the future.

Councillor Cutler responded to Councillor Lee emphasising that many of his points would be more relevant to the medium term financial plan report which would be considered by both Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee in November. Councillor Tod also emphasised that some comments were more relevant to the discussion on the new Council Plan which would be considered at both the Policy Committee meetings and Scrutiny Committee prior to Cabinet on 11 December 2024. Cabinet Members were also happy to meet with any councillor to answer detailed questions outside of the meeting.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out in the report and outlined above.

RESOLVED:

1. That the General Fund Revenue Outturn and Capital Programme Outturn be noted as set out in the report.
2. That the transfers to and from the Major Investment Reserve be approved as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report and note the reserves and closing balances at 31 March 2024 (as set out in Appendix 2 to the report).
3. That the revised 2024/25 capital programme be approved as set out in Appendix 5 of the report.
4. That the revised 2024-2034 capital programme be noted as set out in Appendix 6 of the report.

10. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT OUTTURN 23/24**
(CAB3465)

On behalf of Councillor Westwood, Councillor Cutler introduced the report which had been discussed at Scrutiny Committee on 4 September 2024 and the draft minutes published prior to the Cabinet meeting.

Ian Tait addressed the meeting during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Mr Tait made reference to the significant underspend on the housing property acquisition fund in terms of what these monies could have been used for. He raised concerns regarding the proposed sale by Bournemouth Churches Housing Association of a property in St Johns Road which would potentially result in four people becoming homeless. He hoped that the accommodation could be retained for future use as affordable housing within Winchester.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Lee and Horrill addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Lee

He referenced the recent findings of the Grenfell enquiry and sought assurances that fire safety was sufficient in the council's own properties and asked whether the council would consider appointing a clerk of works. He queried the situation regarding liability for councillors appointed as Venta Living directors.

Councillor Horrill

She referenced staffing vacancy levels in the housing department and the potential impact on fire safety measures and the estates programme. She also raised queries in relation to the overcharge on dwelling rents, the significant change in depreciation, the number of repairs and response time and the number of new council homes built in the year together with the number sold under "right to buy". In relation to major council contracts, she

sought assurances that measures were in place to prevent another significant back payment occurring.

Councillor Cutler, the Strategic Director and the Director (Finance) responded to the questions raised including confirming that a clerk of works had been appointed and confirming that action had been taken to address future contract management. A report on the future housing repairs programme would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 20 November 2024. The Strategic Director also confirmed that the council was discussing with Bournemouth Churches Housing Association regarding potential future purchase of properties.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out in the report and outlined above.

RESOLVED:

1. That the HRA Outturn figures for 2023/24 be noted as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.
2. That the Housing capital programme outturn for Major Works and New Build as detailed in paragraphs 11.5 to 11.7 and Appendices 3 & 4 of the report.
3. That the funding of the 2023/24 HRA capital programme be noted as detailed in paragraphs 11.8 to 11.11 and Appendix 5 of the report.
4. That the reforecast capital programme budget of £24.057m for 2024/25 be approved as detailed in paragraphs 11.12 to 11.14 and Appendix 6 & 7 of the report that takes into account potential programme slippage and the reprofiling of expected spend.

11. Q1 FINANCE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING
(CAB3469)

Councillor Cutler introduced the report and referred Cabinet to the draft minutes from Scrutiny Committee held 4 September 2024 where the report had been discussed and the majority of questions raised had been responded to at that meeting. He referenced queries raised in relation to fly-tipping data and treatment of invasive plant species.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Horrill and Lee addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Horrill

She raised queries in relation to the delays in the Passivhaus scheme at Micheldever and whether lessons could be learned for future schemes. She also expressed concern about the increase in council house void turnaround. In relation to the Council Plan, she asked whether the residents' survey results were available. She queried the target for the

delivery of the temporary accommodation strategy and the reasons for the current HRA capital spend rate.

Councillor Lee

He welcomed the new more concise format of the report. He queried whether specific assessments against the council's declaration of both a climate and nature crisis could be included. He also welcomed further consideration of the data on fly-tipping and the treatment of invasive plant species.

Councillor Cutler responded to the questions raised including advising that further consideration of the appropriate monitoring of action against the nature and climate emergency declarations was likely to be included as part of the discussion on the new Council Plan. The Strategic Director also responded to queries raised, including confirming that a report on the temporary accommodation strategy was scheduled for Cabinet Committee: Housing on 5 November 2024.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out in the report and outlined above.

RESOLVED:

That the progress achieved during Q1 of 2024/25 be noted and the contents of the report be endorsed.

12. **FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION BY CABINET**

In addition to the items listed in the Forward Plan, Councillor Cutler advised that the peer challenge feedback report would be considered at Cabinet on 15 October 2024.

RESOLVED:

That the list of future items as set out in the Forward Plan for October 2024 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 9.30am and concluded at 12.15pm

Chairperson