

## **CABINET**

**Tuesday, 16 July 2024**

Attendance:

Councillors  
Tod (Chairperson)

Cutler  
Becker  
Learney

Porter  
Thompson  
Westwood

**Members in attendance who spoke at the meeting**

Councillors Horrill and Lee

[Video recording of this meeting](#)

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### 1. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies received.

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

The following appointments are proposed to replace those made at Cabinet on 22 May 2024:

#### a) Treasury Investment Group

For the 2024/25 municipal year -

- Cabinet Member (with responsibility for Finance) – Cllr Cutler
- One other Cabinet Member – Cllr Learney
- Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee – Cllr Morris
- One other Member from the Administration of the Council from the Audit & Governance Committee – Cllr Power
- Principal opposition group member for finance – Cllr Godfrey

#### b) Winchester Charity School Education Foundation

Councillor Latham (until May 2027)

NB The existing representative is Councillor V Achwal (until May 2025)

### 3. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Porter and Tod declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests in respect of the New Acquisitions/buy backs for Council housing (report CAB3468 refers) due to their role as County Councillors.

Councillor Becker declared an interest in respect of the Housing Revenue Account Nutrient Mitigation Proposal (report CAB3470 refers) as a property owner with a connection to a council sewage treatment works. She did not believe it was a pecuniary interest on this occasion but she left the room during consideration of this report and took no part in the discussion or decision.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ian Tait spoke regarding reports CAB3470 and CAB3468 and his comments are summarised under the relevant minutes below.

Janet Berry spoke during public participation on behalf of the Highcliffe Community Forum for Action as summarised briefly below.

She stated that the Forum would like to be kept informed regarding future proposals for the Bar End depot, noting that the council's website currently stated a decision on the preferred bidder was due at this Cabinet meeting. She highlighted that the Forum was responsible for taking forward the Highcliffe Community Plan which was cited as a major document alongside the Bar End design framework when making future plans for the area. The Forum was keen to ensure that the option of a Community Hub was still considered and would be submitting a petition to the Council in support of this.

Councillor Tod thanked Ms Berry for her comments and advised that the decision on the Bar End depot was now due at Cabinet at a later date. He suggested that her comments could be considered as part of this report and the council was happy to continue discussions with the community on the best ways to ensure access to community facilities.

5. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2024**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held 19 June 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

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

Councillor Learney announced that as part of a pilot scheme, the Council had been allocated a dedicated person by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) to work together to develop the district's local area energy plan. This would help both the Council and SSEN to resource strategic improvements in energy capacity and resilience.

Councillor Thompson announced that following the success of previous events, the next Jobs and Opportunities Fair would take place on 4 September 2024 in the Middle Brook Street centre.

Councillor Becker offered congratulations to the Winchester Sports and Leisure Park which had been awarded an outstanding assessment by Quest (the leading national quality scheme for the leisure industry).

Councillor Becker also provided an update on the council's various grants programmes which had reopened following the recent elections. She stated that engagement sessions with councillors on the grants available would be arranged and availability also promoted through social media and the parish council newsletter.

7. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT NUTRIENT MITIGATION PROPOSAL**  
(CAB3470)

Councillor Becker left the room during consideration of this item and took no part in the discussion or decision.

Councillor Westwood introduced the report which sought approval, subject to individual business cases, to upgrade a further four of the council's own wastewater treatment works (WwTWs) which would result in improvements to water quality and also generate nutrient credits.

Ian Tait spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

He generally welcomed the proposals but raised some concerns as he believed the council's own WwTWs were discharging water with higher levels of nutrient than was acceptable under the Natural England directive from 2019. He stated that the council should address the wider issue and not just relating to the HRA.

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

Councillor Horrill

She welcomed the proposals and the upgrade of the two council owned WwTWs that had already been undertaken. She requested clarification of a number of points, including the priority order of the schemes, how it interacted with the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) mitigation scheme, use of credits to date and staffing resource implications.

Councillor Lee

He stated that recent analysis of the River Meon indicated poor chemical health and emphasised that a wider approach was required to tackle this issue than suggested in the report. He highlighted other methods to reduce harm from nutrients and queried whether PfSH, Natural England and the local nutrient mitigation fund were constraining a more flexible approach. He also raised a number of other detailed points, including querying whether future cross-cutting project reports should be considered by Scrutiny Committee, the impact of plants being situated in the South Downs National Park and the assessment of risks.

Councillor Tod advised that PfSH would discuss deployment of nutrient mitigation schemes at its meeting on 23 July 2024 and there was provision for deputations to be made at that meeting. In response to comments made by Mr Tait, he also emphasised that the report dealt with nutrient overflow and that there was no sewage overflow from existing council owned WwTWs.

Councillor Westwood, the Strategic Director and the Service Lead – New Homes responded to the detailed questions asked by Mr Tait and the two councillors, including emphasising that there was wider work on nutrient mitigation proposals being led by PfSH and that the credits generated to date had not been sold but had been used to further council owned developments.

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. That a capital budget of £400,000 be agreed to upgrade 4 waste-water treatment works (WwTW) to be funded from HRA reserves.
2. That works to individual WwTW works to be delivered subject to the Council's Chief Finance Officer and Strategic Director agreeing the business case and granting authority to spend the budget under Financial Procedure Rule 7.4; and, if credits are to be sold in the market, suitable agreements being secured.
3. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director, S151 Officer and Director – Legal to utilise and/or dispose of (in accordance with market conditions at the time of sale) credits generated from historic and new upgrades in accordance with the following strategy:
  - a) To support the delivery of council housing commissioned by the council.
  - b) To support the delivery of housing where an element of that housing is to be council housing and the approach helps to unlock delivery via credit disposal.
  - c) To dispose of credits to support other council led and enabled activities.
  - d) Disposal of credits to the open market.
4. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director and Director - Legal authority to agree required monitoring and enforcement mechanisms for such arrangements and to enter into legal agreements to facilitate delivery.
5. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director for the procurement of any works or services and that the Strategic Director be authorised to award contracts and enter into all necessary legal agreements with the preferred bidder(s).

8. **HOUSING RETROFIT CONTRACT APPROVAL**  
(CAB3458)

Councillor Westwood introduced the report which sort approval to enter into a contract to retrofit 21 Swedish cottages and up to 150 loft insulation top-ups and associated works.

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

### Councillor Horrill

She stated that there was cross-party support for the retrofit programme and welcomed the proposal to agree an approved contractor. She asked a number of detailed questions on the report including the anticipated impact and provision for tenants whilst works were carried out, whether further detail about the reduction in energy bills was available and what lessons had been learned from the pilot work on five Swedish properties.

### Councillor Lee

He emphasised the urgent need to improve the energy efficiency of homes and believed that the EPC C rating was too low to achieve this within the timescale required. He requested an update on the response to his Council question on 30 November 2023 regarding the sustainable procurement review in the light of the nature emergency. He requested assurances that contracts be flexible enough to allow, for example natural insulation materials, should this become financially viable.

Councillor Westwood, the Strategic Director and the Retrofit Manager responded to the questions raised, including confirming that a bespoke solution for tenants of properties undergoing works would be provided. The Corporate Head of Finance confirmed that the sustainable procurement guide had been reviewed and a new impact assessment would be included within all committee reports to reflect the declaration of a nature emergency.

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

### RESOLVED:

1. That up to £3.25m of HRA capital expenditure in 2024/25 be approved, using the existing retrofit budget, for the retrofit of 21 Swedish cottages and up to 150 loft insulation top-ups and associated works.

2. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director - Services to be authorised to award and enter into a JCT Standard Building Contract to retrofit 21 Swedish Cottages and improve the loft insulation in up to 500 properties with Synergize Ltd.

3. The Strategic Director - Services to be authorised to negotiate and agree contractual terms with the contract appointment.

4. That authority be delegated to the Service Lead: Legal to prepare and enter into all relevant agreements, negotiate the contractual agreements, and see them to completion to enable the successful delivery of the Retrofit Works.

9. **NEW ACQUISITIONS/BUY BACKS FOR COUNCIL HOUSING (LESS EXEMPT APPENDICES)**  
(CAB3468)

Councillor Westwood introduced the report which sought approval to purchase of two properties and to delegate authority to the Strategic Director to approve the purchase of an additional two homes subject to availability and viability to increase the number of council owned homes.

Ian Tait spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

He had concerns that the report did not address the wider issue regarding the lack of affordable housing in the district and reiterated comments he had made at previous meetings regarding the requirement to find land to build a new council housing estate.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Horrill addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

She supported the proposals in principle but requested clarification of various points, including how many properties it was proposed to purchase, whether they were currently houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and what proportion was being funded by the county council.

Councillor Westwood and the Service Lead – Strategic Housing responded to the comments made including confirming that the proposal was to purchase two properties at this stage with two further properties to be purchased at a later stage, subject to availability and viability.

Cabinet moved into exempt session to consider the contents of the exempt appendix (as amended) before returning to open session to consider the report's recommendations as set out below.

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. That HRA capital expenditure of up to £0.680 m be approved for the purchase of 2 properties and associated costs as identified in the exempt appendix (as amended) to report CAB3468, using the HRA new build unallocated schemes budget, subject to each purchase demonstrating a positive net present value including cost of necessary works.

2. That HRA capital expenditure of £ 0.680m be approved for the purchase of 2 properties yet to be identified using the HRA new build unallocated schemes budget, subject to each purchase demonstrating a positive net present value including cost of necessary works.

3. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Head – Asset Management and the Strategic Director with the responsibility for housing

to make offers for the unidentified properties and to complete purchase the 4 properties.

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

RESOLVED:

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

11. **EXEMPT BUSINESS:**

RESOLVED:

1. That in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

2. That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
12	New acquisitions/buy backs for council housing (exempt appendix)	) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers)

12. **NEW ACQUISITIONS/BUY BACKS FOR COUNCIL HOUSING (EXEMPT APPENDIX & AMENDED EXEMPT APPENDIX)**  
(CAB3468)

Cabinet noted that an amended appendix with updated financial information relating to one of the properties it was proposed to purchase had been circulated to all Cabinet and other invited members present.

The Strategic Director provided further information regarding the differences in the information provided and emphasised that there were no consequential changes required to the main report or recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the exempt appendix (as amended) be noted.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.25 am

Chairperson