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CABINET

10 December 2018 at 5.00 pm

Present : Councillors Mrs Brown (Chairman), Wensley (Vice-Chairman), Bence, Charles, Clayden, Haymes and Wotherspoon.

Councillors Buckland and Mrs Oakley were also in attendance at the meeting.

290. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, representatives of the public, press and Officers to the meeting.

291. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Brown declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 8 [Award of Contract for Insurance Services] as she had a relative that worked for the insurance brokers being used by the Council for this tender exercise – JLT Speciality Limited. Councillor Mrs Brown confirmed that although her interest was Personal and not Pecuniary, she would remain in the meeting for this item but would not take part in any discussion or the vote.

Councillor Wotherspoon also declared a Personal Interest in this item as he was employed by a company – the parent company that was attempting to acquire/purchase JLT Speciality Limited.

292. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chairman confirmed that no public questions had been received.

293. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2018 were approved by the Cabinet as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

294. BUDGET VARIATION REPORT

There was no item for this meeting.

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295. HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY – 2019 TO 2021

The Cabinet Member for Residential Services, Councillor Bence, introduced this item and announced that the Housing and Homelessness Strategy for 2019-2021 set out the Council's vision in terms of how it proposed to work with its partners towards a balanced housing market for the Arun District and ensuring the provision of safe and healthy homes for Arun's residents.

The main purpose of the Strategy was to provide a framework for the Council's housing vision and an evidence base for all the strategic housing work undertaken by the Council and its partners. The Strategy and its accompanying Action Plan had both been designed to make a positive contribution to the health of the local economy by giving residents access to affordable and high quality homes. It was explained that this Strategy combined and replaced three former Strategies being the Raise the Roof Housing Strategy; Arun's Homelessness Strategy; and Arun's Rough Sleeping Strategy. The combination of the three into one document would make it easier for the Council's customers and stakeholders to understand how the Council intended to build on its achievements to address the housing challenges for Arun. Councillor Bence stated that a huge amount of work had been put into creating this Strategy and the Action Plan which he wholeheartedly commended and looked forward to it delivering the objectives outlined.

The Group Head of Residential Services stated that the Strategy had four main objectives – these were to:

- Increase housing supply and improve access to affordable housing
- Prevent and relieve homelessness
- Improve the housing conditions across all tenures; and
- Create sustainable communities to meet the needs of all residents

It was made clear to Members that the Strategy would be delivered through an Action Plan covering the period 2019 – 2021 and that progress against the Action Plan would be reviewed and reported on a quarterly or six monthly bases to the Housing & Customer Services Working Group.

Before inviting debate on the Strategy, the Chairman applauded the Group Head of Residential Services and her team for producing such a clear document with easy to see long-term objectives.

The Chairman then announced that she had received notification from one Councillor that he wished to speak on this item and so she stated that she would invite him to make his statement first before inviting debate on this item.

Councillor Buckland confirmed that he was speaking in his new capacity as Vice-Chairman of the newly formed Littlehampton Armed Forces and Veterans breakfast club. He stated that although he agreed with the Strategy it did not, in his view, stretch far enough in supporting those members of the community who had left the armed forces. In explaining his viewpoint he referred to a local case that he was assisting with in which a local resident had ended up being assisted with his housing needs by SAAFA as he had been refused to be accepted as an urgent case for housing from the Council as he had not resided in the District for a period of more than seven years. Councillor Buckland stated that this needed to be addressed as there were increasingly more members of the public leaving the armed forces with mental health problems, including PTSD, as a result of their service history. He asked if the Council could consider purchasing a residential venue for ex-veterans that could be turned into rooms that they could financially afford. Many were more than capable of looking after themselves and the premises they were living but could not afford private sector rent levels. Councillor Buckland also asked if the Council could consider reducing or removing this seven year stipulation for those who could prove that they had served in the armed forces so that they could receive the priority care they needed.

The Cabinet Member for Residential Services, Councillor Bence, responded confirming that he shared these concerns and that he had very recently requested that all former armed services personnel be able to receive immediate access to the housing register. He outlined that Councillor Chapman, as this Council's appointed Champion on the Armed Forces Community Covenant, had expressed similar concerns and so arrangements had been made to ensure that former armed services personnel received an automatic uplift to ensure that they be categorised in the A register. Councillor Bence also outlined that the Council was proactively looking for suitable accommodation to alleviate the problems explained.

Discussion on this item saw other areas of the Council being applauded for their contribution to the Strategy. These included the Empty Homes Officer, Officers who dealt with Houses in Multiple Occupation and Private Sector Housing. The work in addressing homelessness and rough sleepers was also acknowledged.

In summing up the wide-ranging debate, the Chairman applauded the Strategy and how it very clearly pulled together the varied work that was being undertaken by the Council's Residential Services management team and external partners to deliver the Action Plan and its objectives which cut across the strategic and operational business areas of Residential Services.

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The Cabinet

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL – That

- (1) The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-2021 and its supporting Action Plan be approved; and
- (2) Delegated authority be given to the Group Head of Residential Services, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Residential Services, to make appropriate changes to the Strategy during its life span.

(During the course of the discussion on this item, Councillor Buckland declared a Personal Interest as Vice-Chairman of the newly established Littlehampton Armed Forces and Veterans breakfast club.)

The Cabinet then confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/029/101218), a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

296. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR INSURANCE SERVICES

(Prior to the commencement of the discussion on this item, Councillors Mrs Brown and Wotherspoon re-declared their Personal interests made at the start of the meeting. They confirmed that although their interests were non-pecuniary, they would not take part in the discussion or voting on this item.)

The Cabinet received a report from the Insurance Officer confirming that the Council's current contract for corporate insurance services would expire on 31 January 2019.

With the assistance of brokers, an EU compliant tendering procedure was being undertaken in accordance with the Council's Constitution relating to contracts and purchasing for the award of a contract for the provision of insurance services commencing on 1 February 2019.

To achieve this, delegated authority was being sought for the award of the insurance services contract by the Group Head for Corporate Support in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support.

The Cabinet

RESOLVED

That delegated authority for the award of the insurance services contract by the Group Head for Corporate Support in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support be approved.

The Cabinet then confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/030/101218, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

297. COMMUNITY ADVICE SERVICES CONTRACT

The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, Councillor Clayden, introduced this report and asked Cabinet to consider approving the proposals to commissioning a new Community Advice Services Contract from 1 April 2019.

The Group Head of Community Wellbeing outlined that authority was being sought to procure a universal independent advice contract with the Citizens Advice Bureau from 1 April 2019. The Citizens Advice Bureau had provided a distinctive service to local residents for many years and had transformed the service considerably. It was explained that the new contract specification would reflect the changing nature of benefits advice, particularly in respect of Universal Credit and would reflect changes in the way the services would be delivered to the community. The Group Head of Community Wellbeing explained that although the report was requesting that a two year contract be procured by a single tender, rather than by competitive tender, there was opportunity now for this to be extended for one additional year subject to available funding being confirmed by the Council when approving its 2019/20 budget.

Following some discussion, Councillor Clayden proposed that subject to the funding being made available for this service, that the Council should enter into this agreement but for a three year period from 1 April 2019. This amendment was seconded by Councillor Bence.

As there was no discussion on this amendment, the Cabinet

RESOLVED – That

- (1) Arun District Council (with West Sussex County Council and the other West Sussex District and Borough Councils procures by single tender an independent and comprehensive community advice services and enter into a contract with Central and Southern Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau for three years from 1 April 2019; and
- (2) A funding contribution of £117,020 for this service be provided, subject to Full Council approving the 2019/20 budget, and uplift this sum in line with the consumer prices index calculated on the anniversary of the agreement.

The Cabinet then confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/031/101218, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

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298. TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT TO PATCHING PARISH COUNCIL

The Cabinet received a report from the Group Head of Council Advice and Monitoring Officer which was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support in her absence.

It was announced that Patching Parish Council had a membership of five and had been running with three Councillors for some time. Following the recent resignation of one of the remaining Councillors, the Parish Council now found itself no longer quorate.

Under Section 91 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972, Arun District Council, as the principal authority, could make a temporary appointment to the Parish Council until such time as the current vacancies had been filled by election or co-option.

The report recommended that one of the Angmering & Findon Ward Members be appointed as a Parish Council under the legislation and it was confirmed that Councillor Paul Bicknell had been approached and had agreed to undertake this function on behalf of the Council.

The Cabinet

RESOLVED - That

(1) Under Section 91 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972, Arun District Council as a principal authority under the Act, hereby appoints one District Councillor as a Parish Councillor with the Patching Parish Council until either 7 May 2019, or such earlier date when the vacancies at the Parish Council have been filled, by election or co-option, so that the Parish Council is quorate;

(2) The District Councillor to be appointed is Councillor Bicknell; and

(3) The Group Head of Council Advice & Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to instruct Legal Services to make the Order and confirm this to the Secretary of State.

The Cabinet then confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/032/101218, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

299. SPECIAL OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE – 3 DECEMBER 2018

The Cabinet considered the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Overview Select Committee held on 3 December 2018, which had been circulated separately to the agenda.

The Cabinet firstly considered the recommendation at Minute 284 [Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Working Age)] which set out the reasoning behind why the Council should consider changing its existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme to an income-banded scheme (Option 2) from April 2019.

The Cabinet

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL

That Option 2 [to change the Council Tax Reduction Scheme to an income-banded scheme] be agreed as this Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/2020.

The Cabinet was then alerted to recommendations at Minute 285 [Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Service Strategy – 2019-2023] which asked that the new Information Communications Technology (ICT) Services Strategy 2019-2023 be adopted.

The Cabinet

RESOLVED – That

(1) The Information Communications Technology (ICT) Service Strategy 2019-2023 is adopted; and

(2) The Group Head of Corporate Support be given delegated authority to make any necessary consequential changes to the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Service Strategy as a result of new legislation or alternative practices.

The Cabinet then confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/033/101218, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

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300. ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE WORKING GROUP – 27 NOVEMBER 2018 - MINUTE 27 [EVENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE 2018]

The Cabinet considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Leisure Working Group held on 27 November 2018 and the recommendations at Minute 27 [Events Policy and Procedure 2018].

The Cabinet

RESOLVED – That

- (1) The draft Events Policy and Procedures for 2018 be adopted; and
- (2) Future amendments or revisions, which do not constitute a wholesale change in Policy or procedure, can be made in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services.

The Cabinet then confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/034/101218, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

301. COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

As this was the last meeting of Cabinet in 2018, the Chairman wished everyone present a very happy Christmas and successful New Year.

(The meeting concluded at 5.36 pm)