

## **Cabinet**

15 September 2020 – At a virtual meeting of the Cabinet held at 10.30 am with restricted public access.

Present: Cllr Marshall (Chairman)

Cllr Crow, Cllr Elkins, Cllr Hunt, Cllr A Jupp, Cllr N Jupp, Cllr Lanzer, Cllr Russell and Cllr Urquhart

Apologies were received from

Also in attendance: Cllr Barrett-Miles, Cllr J Dennis, Cllr M Jones, Cllr Turner, Cllr Waight and Cllr Walsh

### **29. Declarations of Interest**

29.1 In accordance with the code of conduct the following personal interest was declared:

- Cllr Nigel Jupp as a member of Horsham District Council in relation to item 4, Horsham Fire Station and Fire and Rescue Service Training Centre.

### **30. Minutes of the last meeting**

30.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2020 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

### **31. Horsham Fire Station and Fire & Rescue Service Training Centre (CAB07\_20/21)**

31.1 Cabinet considered a report by the Executive Director Place Services and Chief Fire Officer.

31.2 The report was introduced by Cllr Duncan Crow, Cabinet Member for Fire and Rescue and Communities who outlined the need for the proposal in the context of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and recent HMIC Inspection and the service and community benefits of the proposal.

31.3 Cllr Joy Dennis, Chairman of the Horsham Fire Station Task and Finish Group Committee welcomed the decision and felt that it should proceed at pace.

31.4 Cllr Steve Waight, Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee noted that the operational need for the station and training facility had been required for some time and referred to the financial implications of a do nothing option, and the increase in training requirements.

31.5 Cllr Dr James Walsh, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the decision and asked about the impact on response times for the second appliance at Horsham and about access to the technical and

rescue assets currently contained at Horley. The Chief Fire Officer responded to the questions.

31.6 Cllr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour group asked whether this was the right priority at the current time and whether all effects been successfully mitigated. He noted the annual interest payments required and questioned whether this money could be spent on on-call firefighter crews.

31.7 The Leader thanked the TFG for their deliberations on the proposal and the support for the service investment plans and noted it as a critical decision for the safety of West Sussex residents. He highlighted the commitment to improved resources and training facilities for firefighters, effectively equipping the service and providing resilience into the future.

32.8 Resolved – that Cabinet:

1. Endorses the delivery of Horsham Fire Station and FRS Training Centre at Highwood in Horsham with the allocation of £20.85m and additional design fees of £461,000 from the capital programme to fund the completion of the project
2. Authorises the submission of applications for full planning permission for the project;
3. subject to receipt of planning permission to enter into a construction contract with Willmott Dixon through the Southern Construction Framework and
4. Confirms that the Fire and Rescue assets at Horley and Hurst Road Horsham and part of the site at Worthing, as detailed in the report, are declared surplus to all operational use.

## **32. Q1 Total Performance Monitor (CAB08\_20/21)**

32.1 Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Finance and Support Services.

32.2 The report was introduced by Cllr Jeremy Hunt, Cabinet Member for Finance who highlighted the stark financial reality of the impact of Covid-19 and the significant impact on the economy. The Director of Finance and Support Services, Katharine Eberhart, outlined the effect of Covid-19 on performance targets, and the suspensions or changes to those targets to recognise the impact of the pandemic on performance.

32.3 Cllr Joy Dennis, Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee noted the financial position in the first quarter TPM and recognised the requirement to suspend some performance measures in this context. She highlighted the care market pressures and increase in demand in the Children and Young People's Services portfolio in particular. The Committee recommended that the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee review audit planning to highlight at the earliest opportunity issues in operational control processes.

32.4 Cllr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group noted the impact of Covid-19 on sickness figures due to stress and anxiety and felt the welfare and mental health of Council employees should be a priority for Cabinet.

He noted the impact of Covid-19 on health visits and asked if these were being undertaken virtually, the availability of respite care and mentioned the local concern at the scale of tree-felling due to Ash Dieback.

32.5 Resolved – that Cabinet approves the proposed amendments to the performance indicators set out on pages 40 to 43 to reflect the suspension of a number of performance measures resulting from Covid-19 and new and amended targets for Children, Young People and Learning.

### **33. Appointments to Outside Bodies (CAB09\_20/21)**

33.1 Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance.

33.2 Resolved – that Cabinet approves:

1. The addition of the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group to the County Council's Outside Bodies list.
2. The appointment of Cllr Roger Elkins to the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group for the remainder of the County Council term (May 2021).

### **34. West Sussex County Council Response to Covid-19**

34.1 Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive. The report was introduced by Becky Shaw, Chief Executive who highlighted the growing concern caused by the limited laboratory capacity in the South East region for testing. She highlighted the fundamental for testing to enable the effective management of any local outbreak.

34.2 Cllr Amanda Jupp, Cabinet Member for Adults and Health advised that the number of cases in West Sussex had increased, however rates per 100 thousand were low. She added that outbreak management was well organised and that essential guidance regarding hygiene and social distancing should continue to be strictly followed. She hoped the availability of testing would increase in the next five to six weeks but that currently demand was outstripping supply.

34.3 The Director of Education and Skills, Paul Wagstaff, outlined that the return to school had been managed safely and effectively with high levels of pupils attending which were above the national average in West Sussex.

34.4 Cllr Joy Dennis, Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee said that the level of testing was a concern and required in order to keep schools and businesses open. She welcomed the good work undertaken by the Education and Skills directorate to enable a safe environment for children to return to school.

34.5 Cllr Andrew Barrett-Miles, Chairman of the Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee welcomed the update and congratulated the efforts of the Highways directorate for their work now and into the future.

34.6 Cllr Bryan Turner, Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee noted the TFG underway considering the varying responses to the pandemic. He highlighted the commitment to staff in the health and care sectors and thanked them for their hard work. He raised the national pressures on testing capacity, and finally noted the importance of clear and factual messaging regarding and local outbreaks.

34.7 Cllr Steve Waight, Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee noted the better response times in the service due to an increased number of available retained firefighters and the impact on some inspection work.

34.8 Cllr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group suggested a more up to date picture of cases would have been useful and said that West Sussex residents were being put at risk due to capacity issues, and asked whether this encouraged more movement and increased public health risks. He commented on the vulnerability of teaching staff.

34.9 The Leader summarised that laboratory testing capacity was the biggest challenge for the Council at the current time, and that this made it difficult to properly grasp the extent of local cases. He advised the issue had been raised with Members of Parliament and in other appropriate public health forums to lobby for West Sussex.

34.10 Resolved – that Cabinet note the update and discussion, including comments from scrutiny chairman and minority group leaders in the council's response to the covid-19 pandemic.

### **35. Date of Next Meeting**

35.1 The next meeting of Cabinet would be held on 20 October 2020.

The meeting ended at 1.07 pm

Chairman