

CABINET

23 May 2022

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held at the Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea on Monday 23 May 2022 at 6:30pm.

Committee Members present: Councillors D.B. Oliver (Leader), S.M. Prochak, MBE (Deputy Leader), C.A. Bayliss, T.J.C. Byrne, K.M. Field, H.L. Timpe and J. Vine-Hall (remote).

Other Members present: Councillors K.M. Harmer, C.A. Madeley (in part) (remote), C.R. Maynard (remote) and P.N. Osborne (remote).

Advisory Officers present: Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Environmental Services, Licensing and Community Safety (in part), Head of Neighbourhood Services and Democratic Services Manager.

Also Present: 10 members of the public via the live webcast.

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The decisions made under PART II will come into force on 6 June 2022 unless they have been subject to the call-in procedure.

CB22/1. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2022 as a correct record of the proceedings.

CB22/2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A.K. Jeeawon and K.P. Dixon and the Chief Executive.

CB22/3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made.

PART II – EXECUTIVE DECISIONS – subject to the call-in procedure under Rule 16 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules by no later than 4:00pm on 1 June 2022.

CB22/4. STRAY DOGS CONTRACT

(6)

The Council's current stray dog control service was carried out by a private contractor, Animal Wardens Ltd for a cost of £36,000 per annum and was due to expire in March 2023. The report gave details of the Council's obligations with regard to stray dogs and the remit of the current contract.

Cabinet was asked to consider the following two options for the continuation of the service beyond March 2023:

- i. Work with Hastings Borough Council (HBC) and the East Sussex Procurement Hub (ESPH) to procure and appoint a new contractor based on a similar specification which had proved successful during the last 15 years, both operationally and economically.
- ii. Carry out the service in-house by employing three dog wardens directly to provide a 24-hour service. This would require the Council to have an additional contract with a kennels and make arrangements to rehouse dogs, not reunited after seven days. This would present risks to the Council if kennels could not be procured at an economic cost over three to five years. This option would be cost prohibitive as well as operationally less efficient.

Approval was sought for option (i), to tender the stray dog control contract this year, as the contract expired in March 2023 as the most cost-effective way of providing this statutory service. The procurement would be undertaken by the ESPH and would include Hastings, Rother and Wealden Councils, with a view to expand this to other East Sussex authorities. The 2022/23 budget included provision for expenditure of £40,000 on this service. It was noted that the increase in dog ownership as a result of the pandemic and the shift to home working, coupled with the return to work movement and the current economic situation would likely lead to an increase in stray dogs; a new contract on the existing terms was therefore recommended and represented excellent value for money.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) officers work with Hastings Borough Council to jointly procure and appoint a stray dog contractor with an estimated annual cost to Rother District Council of £40,000 and Wealden District Council of £40,000, for a term of three years with an option to extend for a further two years; and
- 2) delegated authority be granted to the Deputy Chief Executive to undertake all necessary actions to appoint a contractor.

CB22/5.
(7)

BEXHILL SPLASH-DECK OUTFALL PIPE, SOUTH CLIFF

Members were advised that one of the Council owned outfall pipes on Bexhill beach adjacent to the splash-deck at South Cliff required repair due to extensive corrosion that had resulted in leaks, damage to the splash-deck concrete and a resident's garden. Outfall pipes channelled rain-water runoff out to sea from local streets, via underground pipes often under seafront assets such as the promenade, splash-deck, and residential properties. It was noted that the pipe had been in good working order in 2016.

East Kent Engineering Partnership (EKEP) coastal engineers, who worked in partnership with Rother District Council on projects of this nature, first reviewed the outfall pipe in early 2021 and concluded that it

had reached the end of its design life. The estimated project costs at that time were £100,000 and capital funds were set aside. Since that time, labour and material costs for construction projects had risen significantly and strata investigations had revealed a more challenging job than originally considered. EKEP was in the process of procuring a suitable contractor to complete the work and the tender response had indicated that the cost of the work would now be in the region of £180,000 to £200,000.

In accordance with paragraph G.40 of the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, any capital scheme likely to exceed its approved estimate by more than £25,000 must be reported Cabinet.

To avoid further increases in costs it was recommended that a tender award was made as soon as possible for work to commence in September 2022, once the summer season was over. Members were therefore requested to approve that the capital budget for this project be increased by £100,000 to £200,000; Members were concerned that the issue had first been identified in December 2020 and delays had increased the costs significantly. Whilst the additional costs could be funded from borrowing, which would increase the Council's revenue costs by approximately £3,800, it was likely that borrowing could be managed 'internally'. It was also requested that a proactive survey be commissioned on the second outflow pipe to ensure that it was still fit for purpose.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) additional funding of £100,000 be set aside in the Capital Programme to complete this work;
- 2) a suitable contractor be procured in partnership with East Kent Engineering Partnership to complete the work up to the value of £200,000; and
- 3) the tender award be made as soon as possible for work to commence in September 2022 and the Head of Neighbourhood Services be authorised to take any further necessary action to conclude the works.

CHAIR

The meeting closed at 6:48pm