

Minutes of the **Cabinet**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held in Upper Guildhall, High Street, Andover
on 10 July 2024 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor P North (Chairman)
Councillor P Bundy
Councillor A Johnston

Councillor M Flood (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor N Lodge
Councillor T Swain

Also in Attendance:
Councillor Z Brooks

82

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Adams-King, D Drew and K North.

83

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

84

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

85

Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

86

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 29 May 2024 were proposed by Councillor P North and seconded by Councillor Flood.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2024 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

87 **Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

There were no recommendations to consider from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

88 **Councillor Engagement in the Local Plan Process**

Consideration was given to the report of the Planning Portfolio Holder which considered the outcome of a review of councillor engagement in the Local Plan process.

Councillors have an important role in the process of preparing, approving and implementing the Council's planning policies. After a review of the current approach following the development of the Council's draft (Regulation 18) Local Plan it was proposed to introduce a structured series of all Councillor 'Planning Policy Group' meetings to provide enhanced opportunities for their engagement and involvement in new planning policy and the production of the next stages of the local plan.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Bundy, seconded by Councillor P North and Cabinet agreed to the following:

Resolved:

- 1. That the review of Councillor engagement in the Local Plan process be noted.**
- 2. That Planning Policy Group meetings, as outlined in section 6.5 to 6.9 of the report, be introduced.**

89 **Productivity Plan 2024**

Consideration was given to the report of the Leader which presented the Council's proposed Productivity Plan which had been developed in response to a requirement from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for all local authorities to share productivity plans.

The plan reflected the Council's corporate priorities and its strategic focus of delivering for communities. It outlined how the Council worked focusing on the foundations of its financial and organisational stability and the outcomes delivered as a result of direct work with communities all of which were key components of the Council's productivity. The Plan also reflected on the importance of partnership working as key to productivity as a result of having clear alignment around shared objectives.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor P North, seconded by Councillor Flood and Cabinet agreed to the following:

Resolved:

That the Productivity Plan annexed to the report be approved for publication and submission to Central Government.

90

Revenue Outturn 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report of the Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder which presented the Council's Revenue outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The report showed a net General Fund expenditure of £3.653M. Following completion of revenue outturn work there was a surplus on the general fund of £1.290M. The reasons for budget variances and proposals for utilisation of the variance were set out in the report.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Flood, seconded by Councillor P North and Cabinet agreed to the following:

Resolved:

1. **That the Council's revenue outturn for 2023/24, as shown in Annexes 1 and 2 to the report, be noted.**
2. **That the transfers to reserves of £423,000, detailed in paragraph 3.19 of the report, be approved.**
3. **That the transfer of £1.290M to the Capital Receipts Reserve, as detailed in paragraph 4 of the report, be approved.**
4. **That the Head of Finance and Revenues be authorised to make necessary adjustments through the Capital Receipts Reserve, should any additional variances be identified in finalising the Statement of Accounts for 2023/24.**

91

Declaration of Ladies Walk Down and Abbotswood Nature Reserve as Local Nature Reserves

Consideration was given to the report of the Climate Emergency and Countryside Portfolio Holder which considered the declaration of Abbotswood Nature Reserve, Romsey, and Ladies Walk Down, Andover, as Local Nature Reserves (LNR) under section 19 and 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.

Abbotswood Nature Reserve and Ladies Walk Down were important sites ecologically, as well as places where the community could take an active role in their management and benefit from contact with nature. Declaration of both sites would add to the network of four existing LNR's managed by the Council at Anton Lakes, Rooksbury Mill, Valley Park Woodland's and Tadburn Meadows.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Johnston, seconded by Councillor P North and Cabinet agreed to the following:

Resolved:

- 1. That the areas of land at Abbotswood Nature Reserve, Romsey and Ladies Walk Down, Andover, as shown edged red in Annexes 1 and 2 to the report, respectively, be declared as Nature Reserves in accordance with sections 19 and 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.**
- 2. That the Head of Community and Leisure be authorised to publish the requisite notice of declaration.**

92

Valley Housing Ltd - Outturn 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report of the Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder which set out the directors' report on activity of the company and the Valley Housing Outturn 2023/24.

The company had twenty-three properties in its portfolio with no additional properties purchased in the 2023/24 financial year. Net profit for the 2023/24 year before tax was £22,413. It was confirmed that there were no changes to the business plan approved by Cabinet in April 2024.

It was recommended that the Head of Housing and Environmental Health be appointed as a third director to bring the company back to the recommended number needed to run the company effectively.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Flood, seconded by Councillor P North and Cabinet agreed to the following:

Resolved:

- 1. That the Directors' Annual Report, as shown in the Annex to the report, be noted.**
- 2. That the appointment of the Head of Housing and Environmental Health as a Director of Valley Housing Ltd, be approved.**

93

Scheme of Delegations to Officers

Consideration was given to a report of the Democracy and Governance Portfolio Holder which sought approval of the Council's Scheme of Delegations to Officers in so far as it applied to the powers and duties of Cabinet.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Lodge, seconded by Councillor P North and Cabinet agreed to the following:

Resolved:

That the Scheme of Officer Delegations, as set out in the Annex to this report, in so far as it applies to the powers and duties of the Cabinet, be approved.

94

Project Enterprise Outturn 2023/24

Consideration was given to a report of the Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder which summarised return on investment made during the 2023/24 financial year from Project Enterprise projects and compared the results with the original business case for each project.

Net rental income from Project Enterprise properties held by the Council throughout 2023/24 was £2.559M. This was £209,000 more than forecast in the approved business cases and was expected to grow in future years as rent reviews increase annual turnover.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Flood, seconded by Councillor P North and Cabinet agreed to the following:

Resolved:

That the outturn position for Project Enterprise investments in 2023/24 be noted.

95

Exclusion of the Public

There was no reference made to the information contained within the exempt annexes and therefore no exclusion of the public was required.

(The meeting terminated at 5.59 pm)