

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held on 22 January 2020

Present

Councillor Patrick (Mayor)

Councillors Jenner, Inkster, Patel, Thain-Smith, Robinson, Bains, P Bains (Deputy Mayor), Bowerman, Briggs, Branson, Carpenter, Crellin, Davis, Guest, Hart, Howard, Hughes, Keast, Kennett, Lowe, Lloyd, Milne, Pike, Raines, Rennie, Robinson, Satchwell, Seal, Scott, Smith, Thomas, Turner, Weeks and Wilson

41 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Francis, Shimbart and Wade.

42 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

43 Minutes

Proposed by Cllr Satchwell and seconded by Cllr Seal, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 November 2019 were signed and agreed as a correct record.

44 Mayor's Report

The Mayor drew Council's attention to her amended report, which had been published as a supplementary item and superseded the report contained within the agenda.

There were no questions for the Mayor in respect of her published report.

45 Appointments

Council noted the following casual change to committee appointments made by the Leader since the last meeting of Council:

- (i) Operations and Place Shaping Board – Cllr Rennie appointed to a vacant seat.

46 Public Questions under Standing Order 13.4(f)

No public questions had been received under Standing Order 13.4(f)

47 Cabinet/Board/Committee Recommendations

(A) Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

Councillor Pike presented a recommendation to Council arising from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18 December 2019.

Proposed by Councillor Pike and seconded by Councillor Lloyd it was RESOLVED that the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2024 be adopted.

(B) Council Tax Support Scheme 2020/21

Councillor Bowerman presented a recommendation to Council arising from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18 December 2019.

Proposed by Councillor Bowerman and seconded by Councillor Smith it was RESOLVED that the 2019/20 Council Tax Support Scheme is retained for 2020/21 but with the following amendments:

- (i) the Allowances and Premiums used in determining entitlement for working age claims are changed as set out in paragraph 4.3 (i) of the report;
- (ii) the Non-Dependant deductions used in determining entitlement for working age claims are changed as set out in paragraph 4.3 (ii) of the report; and
- (iii) That the necessary amendments are made to the Council Tax Support Scheme document and that it is then published in accordance with Local Government Finance Act 1992 Section 13A(2)

(C) Council Tax Empty Homes Premium

Councillor Bowerman presented a recommendation to Council arising from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18 December 2019.

Proposed by Councillor Bowerman and seconded by Councillor Branson it was RESOLVED that the level of Empty Homes Premium on dwellings that have been unoccupied for more than two years, be applied as follows:

- (i) From 1 April 2020, 100% premium in addition to the full council tax charge for each dwelling unoccupied and unfurnished between two and five years, and 200% premium for dwellings unoccupied for more than five years;
- (ii) From 1 April 2021, 100% premium in addition to the full council tax charge for each dwelling unoccupied and unfurnished between two and five years, 200% for dwellings unoccupied between five and ten years, and 300% for properties unoccupied for more than ten years; and

(iii) That in co-ordination with the Private Sector Housing Team, owners of dwellings that would be affected by the above changes are contacted during 2020, to encourage occupation and are informed of the changes to the level of premium.

48 Leader's Report

The Leader had nothing to add to his published report.

49 Cabinet Lead Reports

Cllr Bains updated that the Supporting Families Project would be managed by Hampshire County Council from April and she thanked all of the departments who had worked hard to engage with the most troubled families in the Borough.

Cllr Bowerman advised that the training session on Nutrient Neutrality had been videoed and once edited would be available to Councillors to view.

Cllr Pike wished Mr James Clark, Manager and Registrar of Portchester Crematorium well in his retirement. Since the Crematorium opened in 1958 it had only had three managers. Mr Clark had started his career at Portchester Crematorium in 1983 and became Manager and Registrar in 1989.

50 Cabinet Leads and Chairmen's Question Time

At the invitation of the Mayor, the Cabinet Leads took questions from Councillors in connection with their published reports.

51 Questions Under Standing Order 23

Questions received under Standing Order 23 and their related responses are set out below:

Question 1 from Councillor Davis to Councillor Pike

With the continuous call for more and more housebuilding – can you report how many households in the Borough of Havant pay a “maintenance charge” to maintain their public grass, gardens, play areas, etc?

Response: We do not monitor exactly how many new homes have communal parts and so which pay a “maintenance charge” as we do not monitor the number of new builds that take place in this way. However, there will be a large number of homes which have been in existence for decades which this applies to. It would be impossible to ever be certain over this figure and be resource intensive to investigate the matter.

Question 2 from Councillor Davis to Councillor Pike

What percentage of the whole of the Borough of Havant do these households represent?

Response: This is unknown as the total number of homes is not possible to calculate.

Question 3 from Councillor Davis to Councillor Pike

Do all new building housing estates now have “maintenance fees/charges”?

Response: It is not an absolute necessity. However, for any development with S106 agreements, usually developments of more than 11 new homes, this is standard.

Question 4 from Councillor Davis to Councillor Pike

Can you explain why they pay this “maintenance charge” and pay a full council tax? Should their council tax not be reduced since Norse SE will not be required to maintain their state?

Response:

Maintenance charges are common across the country – this is not something specific to Havant Borough. These charges are payable by property owners to help fund the provision of services and carry out repairs and maintenance on the development the property is part of. It will fund the management and maintenance of common parts such as open space, playgrounds, sewers, drainage systems, roads and street lighting.

These charges arise out of obligations under Section 106 agreements and is often the case for new developments. This particularly applies to larger schemes however can apply to smaller schemes with communal areas, such as a communal hallway in a block of flats.

This started to come forward early in the millennium as Local Authority budgets became increasingly stretched and the additional maintenance of infrastructure in new developments would have exacerbated this, particularly if using non-standard materials. However this is not restricted to infrastructure that would be adopted by local authorities, measures such as sewers are often also managed through maintenance charges.

Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that this could create issues for the future. As such, our Pre-Submission Local Plan includes a specific policy on ‘Future Management and Management Plans’ (IN5). This looks for new infrastructure to be adopted by the relevant body in the first instance. If this is not the case, then the management of that should be set up in best practice way, giving new residents of that development a meaningful voice in the management of it and the charges that would be rendered as a result.

Whilst Norse South East are not likely to be maintaining open spaces or play sites, they will be collecting refuse and recycling for example and there are a huge amount of other services which Havant Borough Council and Hampshire County Council provide. Those who choose to live in places where there is a maintenance charge are just as much part of our Borough as anyone else.

Ultimately though, council tax is not calculated on the basis of the level of service that properties get – it is on the rateable value of the property. This is not within the Council’s gift to change.

Question 5 from Councillor Davis to Councillor Pike

Does this council receive any monetary benefit from these maintenance contracts?

Response: We receive a one-off small figure (generally £650) to cover costs in making sure that the management agreement is set up correctly and covers all of the communal parts of the development. However, the Council has had to step in when the system has broken down on occasion. This is one of the issues which has led to the approach proposed in the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

Question 6 from Councillor Francis to Councillor Wilson

Following the lead of most other Councils, could we make a formal statement in the near future regarding the climate emergency and declare the measures we are taking to work towards carbon neutrality? The next Council Meeting might provide the opportunity for this to be worked towards and agreed.

Response: On 22 May 2019, Havant Borough Council made a statement recognising the need for harmful emissions to be addressed.

HBC is already making a difference with the roll-out of Electric Vehicle charging points in council-owned car-parks, and in facilitating domestic retrofit for our residents with an active group of installers. The current HBC Energy Strategy is also due to be refreshed in 2020.

We will be proposing in our Corporate Strategy for the next municipal year that this Council creates an action plan that brings together all the environmental initiatives either underway or being considered. We will look to involve all Councillors who wish to be involved in this work.

Question 7 from Councillor Francis to Councillor Hughes

Is it not time that we followed the lead of other Councils and organised the collection of food waste for anaerobic treatment which could be a source of electric power, removing the carbon waste when food is tipped and providing a source of revenue? Some Councils are providing electricity for new homes from this source. Portsmouth have a trial scheme up and running. We might join with them to reduce start-up costs. I understand that one banana skin can produce the power to recharge two electric phones.

Response; Thank you for the question. Just under 50% of local authorities across England offer a variety of food waste collection services. As the Waste Collection Authority, we do not have the infrastructure to collect food waste, nor does HCC, as the Waste Disposal Authority, to dispose of it. Equally, there is no AD facility in Hampshire that has capacity to process the waste collected in the county. Until the Government Waste Strategy is determined and rolled out and the impact assessed, which could have significant financial implications for this authority, I have no intention in recommending any investment in alternative measures. I would rather focus on increasing the recycling rate across the borough and reduce the contamination by ensuring only the correct plastics which make up

80% of all contamination are placed in recycling bins and will have financial implications for this authority if we don't do something about it.

In terms of the Portsmouth City Council pilot in Drayton and Milton, food waste that would have previously provided 'wet waste', an essential element of energy recovery at the incinerator facility in the city is now being transported by road to an AD plant in Bournemouth. Additional sources of 'wet waste' may have to be brought into the city to compensate for this loss should it be rolled out across the city.

52 Urgent Questions Under Standing Order 23

No urgent questions had been submitted under Standing Order 23.

53 Notices of Motion

No motions had been submitted.

54 Calendar of Meetings 2020/21

Proposed by Cllr Lowe and seconded by Cllr Davis it was RESOLVED that the draft Calendar of Meetings for 2020/21 be approved.

55 Acceptance of Minutes

Proposed by Cllr Keast and seconded by Cllr Satchwell it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of Committees held since the last meeting of Council be received.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 5.57 pm

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Chairman