

CABINET

9 February 2015

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held at the Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea on Monday 9 February 2015 at 11:05am.

Cabinet Members present: Councillors C.R. Maynard (Leader), Lord Amphill, S.D. Elford, A.E. Ganly, Mrs J.M. Hughes, M.J. Kenward (Deputy Leader), P.N. Osborne and R.H. Patten.

Other Members present: Councillors Mrs M.L. Barnes, J.J. Carroll, A.E. Davies, R.V. Elliston, K.M. Field (in part), Mrs B.A. George (ex-officio), B. Kentfield, I.G.F. Jenkins, Mrs E.M. Kirby-Green, M. Mooney, Mrs S.M. Prochak and M.R. Watson.

Advisory Officers present: Executive Director of Business Operations, Executive Director of Resources, Service Manager – Finance and Welfare, Service Manager – Community and Economy (in part), Service Manager – Corporate and Human Resources, Service Manager – Strategy and Planning, Planning Policy Manager, Neighbourhood Services Manager (in part), Contracts Manager (in part), DM & Strategy Principal Planning Officer and Democratic Services Officer.

Also present: 2 members of the public.

Publication Date: 12 February 2015

The decisions made under PART II will come into force on 20 February 2015 unless they have been subject to the call-in procedure.

CB14/59. MINUTES

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2015 as a correct record of the proceedings.

CB14/60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Executive Member Councillor J.M. Johnson.

PART I – RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL – not subject to call-in procedure under Rule 16 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

CB14/61. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2015/16
(7.1)

Members gave consideration to the report of the Executive Director of Resources on the draft Revenue Budget proposals which detailed the financial settlement figures for 2015/16. The budget proposals had also been scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)

on 26 January 2015. A copy of the Minutes arising from the OSC meeting had been appended to the report for Cabinet's consideration.

The Service Manager – Finance and Welfare provided Members with an outline of the budget, the main considerations and constraints that were placed upon the budget setting process along with an addendum report which contained updated estimated business rate income. The following key issues were highlighted and comments noted:

Government Grant Settlement

- The settlement figures were published on 18 December 2014. The amount of Revenue Support Grant and expected retention of business rate income was broadly in-line with the figures announced by the Department for Communities and Local Government in December 2013.
- In 2015/16, the Council was expected to receive 13.6% less funding compared to 2014/15.

Business Rates

- Overall in 2014/15 it was expected that there would be a surplus of £312,500; this was attributed to two main factors, the settlement of rate appeals and an increase in the gross amount of rates collectable.
- Estimated Business Rate income receivable for 2015/16 was forecast at £16,777,647.
- Overall the net income the Council was estimated to retain in 2015/16 was £2,559,098 with an additional income of £403,133, plus a business rate surplus of £125,000 in 2014/15 which meant an overall additional income of £528,133 to be set aside in an Earmarked Reserve.
- The main risks to the Council in terms of retaining business rate income were business premises being built / demolished; changes in the amount of relief and exemptions granted each year; performance of the collection annual rate; and if a major business closed.
- If the estimated income was achieved and was sustainable, the Council could afford to reduce its reliance on the New Homes Bonus grant in the base Revenue Budget.

Impact of the New East Sussex Business Rate Pool

- From 1 April 2015, the Council would become a member of the East Sussex Business Rate Pool. If the Pool saw an increase in business rate income, the associated levy payments would be retained and would be returned to the Council in accordance with the sharing agreement. Members were advised that this funding would be used to support regeneration within the district/county. Cabinet agreed that it would be extremely important to monitor the progress of the Pool, as this had the ability to significantly increase the Council's income.

New Homes Bonus

- New Homes Bonus £1.3m (increase of £300,000 from 2014/15). Members were advised that due to the uncertainties over the future of the grant, that the additional funding would not be built into the

base Revenue Budget and would be used if savings targets for 2015/16 were not achieved.

Council Tax Referendum Limit

- Council Tax and Referendum Limit: The Government had re-affirmed the referendum limit of 2% for 2015/16. If a 1.9% increase (6p per week) was applied, an additional £109,000 of income could be achieved. This was £36,000 more than a 1% freeze grant assuming the Government offered a similar grant for 2015/16 (anticipated to be £73,000).
- If a referendum was held, the cost to the Council would be approximately £60,000 to £70,000. Members were asked to consider recommending increasing the Council Tax to just under the referendum limit. This would generate much needed income, not subject the Council to holding an expensive referendum and would reduce the demand on reducing reserve levels to balance the budget.

A general discussion ensued on the advantages and disadvantages of raising the Council Tax or accepting the Government's Council Tax Freeze Grant. Despite the significant reduction of Government funding and the decision not to increase Council Tax over the last few years, Cabinet commended the Council for its continued efforts to deliver statutory and non-statutory services across the district. During the discussion, reference was also made to East Sussex County Council's recent proposal to raise Council Tax by 1.95% and also the near 2% increase expected from the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)

- CTRS would be carried over into 2015/16.
- Discretionary Reduction in Liability Policy Section 13A(1)(C): Members considered the draft policy, Appendix G to the report which allowed additional discretionary powers to enable the Council to reduce the Council tax liability where statutory discounts, exemptions and reductions did not apply. Cabinet noted that delegated authority was required to decide any award of assistance to individuals in accordance with the policy.

Final Draft Budget 2015/16

The proposed budget without and with a Council Tax increase was attached at Appendix A1 and A2 respectively. The following key points were highlighted:

- Net Revenue Budget: expected to be £11.91m a reduction of £52,000.
- Reserves: the draft Revenue Budget assumed expenditure and service reductions of £551,000 plus an additional income of £287,000 would be achieved from April 2015.
- Reserves: the total predicted earmarked reserves, by the end of March 2016 was estimated to be £8m. The Medium Term Financial Strategy reported to Cabinet early in December, identified a potential funding gap of £3m by 2019/20 unless savings were achieved. Without achieving this level of savings, the amount of reserves would fall to a level where the Council would struggle to

meet its day-to-day cash flow requirements without recourse to temporary borrowing. The minimum level of reserves was considered to be £5m.

Resetting and Service Prioritisation

- Since 2010, the Council had achieved savings of approximately £4m from the service resetting programme and staffing restructure. A further £863,000 of additional savings had been identified through operational budgets. With anticipated further decreased Government funding the use of reserves to support the Revenue Budget was not financially sustainable and consequently further savings would be required in order to achieve a balanced budget in future years.

The Council would be faced with immense financial challenges and substantial savings and increased focus on income generation would be required across the authority in order to maintain a balanced budget.

At the conclusion, Cabinet agreed to recommend accepting the Council Tax Freeze Grant.

RECOMMENDED: That:

- 1) the level of special expenses as set out in Appendix C to the report, be approved;
- 2) a net expenditure level for 2015/16 of £11,909,960 be approved;
- 3) Earmarked Reserves of up to £322,450 be used to support the Revenue Budget and the level of reserves at Appendix D to the report, be approved;
- 4) the Council Tax Freeze Grant be accepted;
- 5) Council Tax for 2015/16 at Band D be set at £161.19 (0% increase);
- 6) additional savings of £33,450 be identified during 2014/15 and any shortfall be met from earmarked reserves in 2015/16 only;
- 7) a contribution of £297,800 from the New Homes Bonus grant receivable for 2015/16 be set aside in the Medium Term Financial Strategy Earmarked Reserves in order to support the Revenue Budget and/or delivery of the Corporate Plan;
- 8) during 2015/16, Officers to bring proposals forward to deliver further savings to meet the projected shortfall of funding from 2016/17 to 2019/20;
- 9) the draft Discretionary Reduction in Liability Policy at Appendix G be approved;
- 10) the Executive Director of Resources or his nominated officer be granted delegated authority to decide any award of assistance to

individuals in accordance with Section 13A(1)(C) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992; and

- 11) the final business rate surplus for 2014/15 and any additional income above the 2015/16 Government baseline figure for Rother, be set aside in Earmarked Reserves for Business Rate equalisation.

CB14/62.
(7.2)

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Treasury Management Statement set out the Council's treasury issues and looked to ensure that the Council met its spending obligations.

The Council was required to receive and approve a minimum of three main reports each year to include:

- 1) Prudential and Treasury Indicators and the Treasury Strategy;
- 2) a Mid-Year Treasury Management Report; and
- 3) an Annual Treasury Report.

These reports incorporated a number of policies, estimates and actuals which were scrutinised by the Audit Committee prior to making recommendations to Council.

The Treasury Management Strategy detailed the Council's capital issues and reviewed the position regarding investments, borrowing strategy, economic outlook and policies on the creditworthiness of counterparties.

The Annual Investment Strategy detailed the Council's investment priorities, promoting security, liquidity and investment return. In order to minimise risks, the Council stipulated the minimum acceptable credit quality of counterparties for inclusion on the lending list.

The strategies proposed, together with the interest rates forecast, were in-line with the assumptions made when preparing the 2015/16 Revenue Budget. It was anticipated that low interest rates would continue to dominate over the following year. Therefore, officers, in conjunction with Treasury Advisors, would be actively seeking to progress and achieve the best returns whilst observing the necessity to secure investment which would mean that returns were likely to remain at minimal levels in 2015/16.

RECOMMENDED: That:

- 1) the Treasury Management Strategy as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved;
- 2) the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2015/16 shown at Appendix A to the report, be approved;

- 3) the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer be authorised to take the necessary action to safeguard the Council's investments in the event of a counterparty being downgraded as outlined in Treasury Management scheme of delegation as set out in Appendix 5 to the report, to the Annual Investment Strategy;
- 4) the Annual Investment Strategy for 2015/16 as set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved as submitted;
- 5) the specified and non-specified investment categories listed in Appendix 3 of the Annual Investment Strategy to the report, be approved; and
- 6) Prudential and Treasury Indicators as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved.

CB14/63.
(7.3)

REVIEW OF COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES 2015

Cabinet gave consideration to the report of the Executive Director of Resources on the Review of Councillors' Allowances. Prior to making or amending its Scheme of Councillors' Allowances, regulations required the Council to take note of the recommendations made by an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).

Councillors' allowances had historically been set for a four year term. However, in January 2013, the IRP recommended that Councillors' allowances be frozen with intent to review the position in the following year. Therefore, the IRP met in October and November 2014 to review the Councillors' allowances for the forthcoming year. Information from the previous review and comparative data, provided by South East Employers, was considered, together with details of the Council's current committees and budgetary position. Being mindful of the continued financial pressures on the Council's budget, the IRP recommended a 2% increase to the basic Councillor and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) for 2015/16 and 2016/17. It was recommended that the SRA for the Chairman of the Audit Committee be set at the same level as the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. No change was proposed for other allowances, plus the general mileage and subsistence rates were recommended to stay in line with HM Revenue & Custom levels. Also a £200 per annum allowance was proposed for the provision of broadband, as the Council was no longer providing this facility for Members. The IRP would reconvene at the end of 2016 / beginning of 2017 to set the allowances for the remainder of the life of the Council.

Being mindful of the continued financial pressures on the Council's budget and the impending East Sussex Boundary Review for the district, Cabinet appreciated the IRP's recommendations but felt that at this time, no increase should be implemented to Councillors' Allowances, apart from an SRA being set at £1,969 for the Chairman of the Audit Committee and an annual allowance of £200 per Member for broadband provision. It was agreed that the IRP should reconvene at the beginning of 2016 to set the allowances for the remainder of the life of the Council. It was also suggested that before the IRP reconvened,

advice be sought and investigations held on the suitability of both the current allowances for Dependents and Childcare to ascertain whether they were reflective of actual costs.

RECOMMENDED: That:

- 1) no increases in Councillors' Allowances for 2015/16 be made at this time;
- 2) the Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Chairman of the Audit Committee be set at £1,969 per annum;
- 3) an annual broadband allowance of £200 per Member be set; and
- 4) the Independent Remuneration Panel be reconvened at the beginning of 2016 to make recommendations on the allowances for the remainder of the life of the Council.

CB14/64.
(8.2)

PROPOSED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director of Business Operations which updated Members on the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule. The report contained the responses to a public consultation held in August/September 2014; some of the responses/comments had been incorporated into the revised charging schedule. Cabinet was asked to consider the amendments and recommend the revised document for a further public consultation period and subsequent submission for independent examination.

From April 2015, the Government would be introducing stricter limits on securing contributions through s106 obligations on planning applications. Therefore, it was important that the Council developed a CIL to secure vital funding for infrastructure to support sustainable development across the district. CIL rates were set out in a Charging Schedule and charged on the basis of £ per sqm on the net additional floor of new developments which exceeded 100sqm, or smaller if it related to the creation of a new dwelling. Payment would be due upon commencement of development, but liability was established upon granting planning permission only after the Charging Schedule had been adopted.

Cabinet noted that 23 responses had been received through the public consultation process; each response along with officers' comments was detailed at Appendix 1 to the report. The main issues arising were clarification on funding and the Regulation 123 List, residential, non-residential and care/retirement home charges, support of an instalment policy and discretionary and exceptional relief policy etc. The responses had been forwarded to the Council's consultants PBA, who had completed a robust viability assessment; a copy of their updated report which included the recommendation of a 'Brownfield'/'Greenfield' approach within Bexhill, alongside their original CIL Viability

Assessment report dated July 2014 were available on the Council's website at <http://www.rother.gov.uk/CIL>.

Taking into account the consultation responses and PBA's updated report and to ease the introduction of CIL to be more aligned with neighbouring authority charges, it was recommended that rates for the broad residential zones were reduced by a proportion, approximately 15% or £15 per sqm (whichever was the greater). Cabinet noted the proposed new Charging Schedule which had been identified within the report and was detailed at Appendix 2. In terms of anticipated CIL receipts, applying the respective charges over the whole plan period to an average 85sqm dwelling, it was estimated to yield £36.9m from residential developments, while the discounted charge would yield an estimated £32.4m over the Core Strategy period scheduled to end in 2028. The Planning Policy Manager advised that the current funding gap was £49m; if the lower rate was accepted, the shortfall in infrastructure funding would need to be found from other sources. It was considered appropriate to review the CIL rates within three years of adoption. Cabinet were also reminded that Parish and Town Councils could receive 15% (or 25% in the case of those Parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan) of CIL receipts for the developments within their parish boundary.

The Council was required to publish a Regulation 123 List which contained the Draft Charging Schedule and listed the infrastructure projects funded by the CIL; a copy of the list (Appendix 2) had been appended to the report.

After discussion, Cabinet approved the Draft Charging Schedule and accompanying documents for a four week public consultation and onward submission to the Secretary of State for Examination; on approval, formal adoption would be late summer/early autumn 2015. Members agreed that rather than use Cabinet's delegated authority, it was proposed that the recommendation be forwarded and considered by full Council at the meeting scheduled to be held on 23 February 2015.

RECOMMENDED: That:

- 1) the Draft Charging Schedule and Regulation 123 List at Appendix 2 be approved for a four week consultation and published alongside the updated Infrastructure Funding Gap Analysis, the consultants' Further Viability Advice and the Statement of Consultation;
- 2) following receipt of duly-made representations, the Draft Charging Schedule and Regulation 123 List be submitted for independent examination; and
- 3) the Executive Director of Business Operations, in liaison with the Portfolio Holder responsible for Strategic Planning including Local Development Framework and Voluntary Sector Liaison, be authorised to propose possible modifications, if necessary, in the light of further evidence during the examination.

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 19 February 2015.

CB14/65.
(6.1) **LEISURE CENTRES CONTRACT PROCUREMENT AND BATTLE SPORTS CENTRE AGREEMENT**

Cabinet received and considered Minute OSC14/50 arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) meeting held on 26 January 2015 when the Committee had considered the Council's Leisure Centres Contract Procurement and Battle Sports Centre Agreement.

Once the current contract with Freedom Leisure for three sites (Bexhill Leisure Centre, Bexhill Leisure Pool and Rye Sports Centre) expired on 31 March 2016, there was a requirement for Rother's leisure centre provision across the district to be operated at nil cost or near to nil cost to the Council; the current subsidy was approximately £370,000. It was not legally possible to extend the contract further and therefore, Cabinet were asked to consider the recommendations proposed for retendering the service to maintain community use at all of Rother's leisure centres. The following procedure(s) were proposed for each site:

- To follow a two stage restricted procurement process.
- Two separate contracts to be issued – Rye Sports Centre: seven year contract with the option to extend by a further three years which would take it past the expiry date (26 April 2023) of the claw back period of the Sport England lottery grant and, the expiry date (22 May 2024) of the licence with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) for the land on which the Sports Centre and Swimming Pool were built; and Bexhill Leisure Centre and Bexhill Leisure Pool: 10 year contract with the option to extend by a further 10 years at nil cost or for the Council to receive a share of surplus revenue. This longer term contract would allow the operator to move into the new leisure centre as and when the corporate project came to fruition. The contract would reflect the need to adjust terms and conditions following any relocation into a new leisure centre.
- To provide a light touch specification using an amended version of the Sport England Procurement Toolkit.
- Contract start date: 1 April 2016.

The OSC had been advised that various licences and agreements were held with ESCC, Rye College's Governing Body and also a lottery grant with Sport England which pertained to the Rye Sports Centre. Cabinet noted that the Rye Sports Centre Advisory Committee had been consulted on the draft specification; several comments had been received and, where possible, these had been incorporated into the finalised specification.

From 15 January 1986, the Council held a shared agreement with ESCC for Battle Sports Centre. The contract allowed either Council to "terminate the agreement" at any time after the expiry of 30 years from opening, if the centre was no longer viable. Rother's contract

obligation was to meet one half of the cost of repairs, maintenance and alterations. Concerns regarding financial risks had been raised with ESCC who proposed that Rother provide a single annual contribution of approximately £8,000 to £10,000 per annum. Cabinet considered the OSC's recommendations of a 2023 termination date and an annual fixed contribution of £6,000 or £45,000 one-off payment and noted that it was hoped that if the £6,000 was approved, that this figure would not be reduced.

After deliberation, Cabinet were supportive of the recommendations submitted by the OSC and agreed that an annual fixed £6,000 contribution be paid to ESCC for Battle Sports Centre.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the draft specification for Rye Sports Centre for the procurement of Leisure Centre Services be approved with delegated authority for amendments being granted to the Executive Director of Business Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder and the Members represented on the Rye Sports Centre Advisory Committee;
- 2) a draft specification be approved for a combined contract for Bexhill Leisure Centre and Bexhill Leisure Pool along similar lines to the Rye Sports Centre specification with delegated authority for amendments being granted to the Executive Director of Business Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder; and
- 3) the Agreement with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) for Battle Sports Centre be amended to incorporate an expiry date of 31 March 2023 and that an annual fixed contribution of £6,000 per annum be paid to ESCC in consideration of this new arrangement.

(Councillors Davies and Ganly each declared a personal interest in this matter in so far as they are Rother Representatives on the Battle Area Sports Management Committee and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

(Councillor Field declared a personal interest in this matter in so far as she is East Sussex Council Council's Representative on the Battle Area Sports Management Committee and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

CB14/66.
(6.2)

KEY PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2015/16

Cabinet received and considered Minute OSC14/49 arising from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) held on 26 January 2015.

A set of 12 Key Performance Targets had been identified and were proposed for 2015/16 against the Council's four Core Aims (an Efficient, Flexible and Effective Council; Sustainable Economic

Prosperity; Stronger, Safer Communities; and A Quality Physical Environment) which had been revised in the Corporate Plan 2014-2021.

Cabinet were supportive of the OSC's recommendations and agreed that the KPIs selected would adequately reflect a review of the Council's performance. They were also supportive of the recommendation to investigate the purchase and installation of an automated answering telephony system. It was also agreed that the Council should consider its use of language and that the terminology used should and could be easily understood by the general public e.g. "channel shift". Members were also advised that any performance indicators that were not on target would be reported to the OSC by exception.

In light of the continuous reduction of Government funding, it was deemed appropriate that the selected basket focused on activities which generated income for the Council, as well as those that concentrated on areas where residents received essential support from the Council.

RESOLVED: That the following corporate Key Performance Indicators and their performance targets for 2015/16 be approved:

- 1) **Measuring the effectiveness of channel shift** – the number of households signed up to receive 'my alerts' / Target: 21,000;
- 2) **Measuring the effectiveness of channel shift** – financial transactions taking place on line (as a percentage of total transactions) / Target: percentage to be set once the final 2014/15 data had been collated and analysed;
- 3) **Measuring the effectiveness of the Council's call handling** – percentage and number of customer enquiries resolved on first contact / Target: 85%;
- 4) **Measuring the effectiveness of the Council's call handling** – percentage and number of customer calls answered and unanswered;
- 5) **Measuring the effectiveness of the Council's revenue collection service** – Business Rates collection rate / Target: 98.2%;
- 6) **Measuring the effectiveness of the Council's revenue collection service** – Council Tax collection rate / Target: 98.5%;
- 7) **Measuring the effectiveness of the Council's car park operation** – Car Park Income / Target: £1,253,100;
- 8) **Measuring the effectiveness of the planning application process** – Planning Applications processed within agreed timeframe / Target: 70% Majors, 55% Minors, 70% Other;

- 9) **Measuring the quality of the Council's Housing Benefits Service** – Processing time for Housing Benefit claims / Target: 18 days;
- 10) **Measuring the quality of the Council's Housing Options service** – Households in temporary accommodation average time spent / Target: 60 days;
- 11) **Measuring the effectiveness of the Council's recycling service – Recycling rate from Household Waste Collections** / Target: 46%;
- 12) **Measuring the effectiveness of the Council's street cleaning services** – Litter levels – the percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having deposits of litter that fall below an acceptable level as an average of surveys / Target: 4%; and
- 13) that the purchase and installation of an automated answering telephony system be investigated.

CB14/67.
(8.1)

FEES AND CHARGES 2015/16

Cabinet gave consideration to the report of the Executive Director of Business Operations that detailed the latest review of the Council's fees and charges for 2015/16 and the proposed recommended increases. Fees and charges were reviewed each year taking into account the increased need to recover the total cost of the services provided, the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, the current annual Retail Price Index (RPIX) and changes in the costs of service provision. The anticipated income from these charges was built into the draft Revenue Budget for 2015/16.

The following points were highlighted and comments noted:

- a) **Parks Activities: Sports Pitches** – due to previous increases there had been some resistance by local clubs resulting in a reduction in the number of bookings taken. The cost of providing sport pitch provision across the district was approximately £65,000. To make this a cost neutral activity was likely to be an unaffordable proposition to the remaining clubs. Therefore, officers were currently investigating with local clubs the potential opportunities for self-management and alternative options if this could not be achieved. However, as the grounds were shared and well used by the general public this was proving difficult to resolve. It was therefore recommended charges be increased in line with RPIX at 2.3%. Members noted that a report on chargeable activities held on Council owned land would be presented to Cabinet later in the year.
- b) **Park Activities: Special Events** – in recent years there had been an increase in the use of parks and open spaces by both commercial and not for profit events. Currently, any event was subject to the same scale of charges, however some not for profit and charitable events had requested a waiver of these charges. To manage these requests more effectively and ensure that appropriate costs were

recovered, it was recommended that the special events scale of charges be updated to differentiate between commercial and charitable or not for profit events. Reductions would apply should charity status be proved. It was also recommended that the cancellation charges for Sports Bookings and Special Events remained in place at rates previously agreed.

- c) Park Activities: Allotments – devolution of allotment sites was progressing; Appendix 3 to the report identified the position from 1 December 2014. It was recommended that the charges for an allotment plot be increased in line with RPIX plus 5%.
- d) Cemetery Fees: it was considered that the higher charges levied in Rother, compared to neighbouring authorities was affecting the take up of cemetery services. However, further comparison of the current charges suggested that a small increase would be appropriate. It was therefore recommended that all cemetery charges be increased in line with RPIX at 2.3%.
- e) Beach Activities: last year's increases did not have a detrimental effect on take up and a waiting list still existed. The service ran on a cost-neutral basis with a growth in income as a result of the introduction of licence transfer fees in 2014/15. To ensure competitiveness, cost effectiveness and safety compliance it was recommended that beach hut fees be increased above inflation by 10% and winch and boat licences be increased by 5%.
- f) Car Parking: as new charges had only been introduced in January 2014, it was recommended that a review be carried out in the autumn to consider the impact and effects of the changes. As Car Parking permits had increased by 12.3% in 2012, it was recommended that an RPIX 2.3% increase only be applied to the dedicated bay permit charges at Gun Gardens and the Strand, Rye, and Western Road, Bexhill. Cabinet agreed it was essential that the Council's charges remained competitive and any under-utilised car parks were effectively publicised to increase and ensure maximum usage.
- g) Bulky Waste Collection Charges: the new Joint Waste Contract with Kier became operational on 1 April 2014. Under the new Contract, charges payable by the Council for ordering bulky waste collections were not at the same levels as compared to the previous contract. It was agreed in April 2014 that in October 2014 service subsidies should be reduced, with ongoing regard to the incidence of fly-tipping. It was recommended no increase be applied to the 2014/15 charges.
- h) Garden Waste Collections: on 30 June 2014, Kier commenced the garden waste service under the new contractual arrangements, with households registering and paying an annual subscription of £25 per bin for the service. The annual charge to the Council currently stood at £31.72 per bin; therefore a subsidy of £6.72 was currently in place. To allow the service to stabilise demand and monitor costs against income it was recommended that the charges be reviewed in autumn 2015.

- i) Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 – following evaluation of costs incurred by the Council an increase in fees was requested.

Members were satisfied that the increases put forward were not considered to be excessive; however, Cabinet were mindful that to maintain income at an effective level a balance had to be struck between covering costs and retaining numbers.

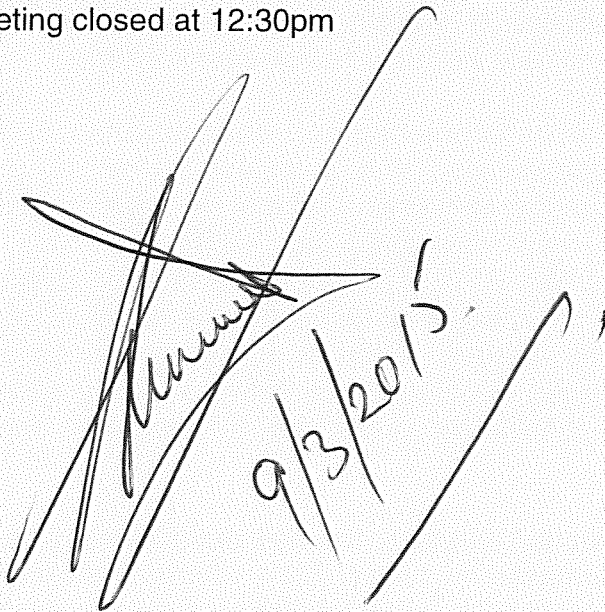
RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the fees and charges shown in the appendices, as submitted, be approved and brought into effect from 1 April 2015;
- 2) the classification of Special Events shown in Appendix 2, be approved; and
- 3) the Executive Director of Business Operations be authorised to publish the necessary Notice of Variation of Parking Charges.

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 12:30pm

cb150209jh

A large, stylized handwritten signature is written over the date '9/3/2015'. The signature is written in dark ink and is somewhat illegible due to its cursive style. The date is written in a clear, handwritten format.