

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2017 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Christopher T Wells (Chairman); Councillors L Fairbrass, Brimm, Crow-Brown, Stummer-Schmertzing and Townend

In Attendance: Councillors: Bayford, Campbell, Game, I Gregory, K Gregory and Savage

401. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received at the meeting.

402. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

403. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Crow-Brown proposed, Councillor Stummer-Schmertzing seconded and Members agreed the minutes to be a correct record of the meeting held on 17 January 2017.

404. ELLINGTON PARK

The meeting informed that the council working jointly with the Friends of Ellington Park, submitted a third application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for grant funding in September 2016. This grant was approved by the HLF is to be used to develop the design, business plan, activity plan and undertake various surveys required so the project would be in a position to bid for a Delivery Phase (Stage 2) grant by February 2018.

The approved grant application for £143,700 for the Development Phase funds the total cash costs of £153,700. A sum of £10,000 had been identified from existing revenue budgets over two financial years to match fund the grant.

Councillor Campbell spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor Brimm proposed, Councillor Lin Fairbrass seconded and Members agreed to accept the grant monies being provided by the HLF, associated Standard Terms of Grant, and to commence the project's development phase.

405. TO PURCHASE THE MULTI-STOREY CAR PARKS

Cabinet was advised to agree that the Council buy-out the leases for the Mill Lane, Margate and the Leopold Street, Ramsgate car parks. These leases were 'finance leases' which were put in place, to fund the construction of the two car parks in the 1970s.

Buying out the leases would give the Council full control of the sites, as well as saving the council taxpayers some £50,000 per year for each car park, which would contribute toward the budget strategy. The option to buy out the leases could be exercised in 2017 for Mill Lane and 2020 for Leopold Street.

This was considered to be a viable proposal and Members were asked to note that Cabinet had the final say on the matter without the need to refer the issue further to Full Council.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor K. Gregory;
Councillor Campbell;
Councillor Game.

Councillor Townend proposed, Councillor Stummer-Schmertzling seconded and Cabinet approved the exercise of the options to buy out the leases for the Mill Lane car park, Margate and Leopold Street car park, Ramsgate.

406. BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017-2021

Cabinet acknowledged the observations from the Overview & Scrutiny Panel, including the clarifications that were made as a result of the comments made by the Panel. Members were advised that updates were made to the report that will be considered by Full Council on 09 February 2017.

Councillor Campbell and Councillor I. Gregory spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor Townend proposed, Councillor Crow-Brown seconded and Cabinet agreed the following recommendations to Council:

1. The draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at **Annex 1** to the report;
2. The draft General Fund Revenue budget estimates for 2017-18 to 2020-21 and the resulting budget requirement for 2017-18;
3. A reduction in the grant to minor preceptors as per section 2.7;
4. The General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Budgets for 2017-18 as detailed at **Annexes 2** and **5** (to the report);
5. That Members approve the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy as detailed at **Annex 3** (to the report);
6. The HRA budget estimates for 2017-18 to 2020-21 and the Housing Revenue Account services charges as shown at **Annex 4** (to the report);
7. The level of general reserves be held at £2.011m and the approval of earmarked reserves as identified in **Table 5** of the MTFS and the approval of earmarked reserves as identified in **Table 5** of the MTFS.

407. EXCEPTIONAL HARDSHIP SCHEME

Members were reminded that Council approved the 2017-18 Council Tax Support Scheme on 1st December 2016 and further agreed to receive at a later date, a report in respect of an Exceptional Hardship Scheme. This latter scheme is designed to provide a one-off financial contribution to applicants that can demonstrate exceptional hardship as a result of changes to Council Tax support.

Cabinet and Council had already recognised the inadequate central government funding that had resulted in the need for Thanet District Council, along with councils, to review the Council Tax Support Scheme. Members approved a new scheme that is, jointly, the most generous in Kent.

When put before the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 26th January 2017, Members posed a number of questions which were responded to. They also made comments of observation and this resulted in some changes to the wording of the proposed scheme as follows:

- Page 88, penultimate bullet point, after “Exceptional Hardship awards are designed as short-term help to the applicant only” the sentence should continue “... and will only be made for up to one financial year at a time;”
- Page 89, last bullet point, the addition of the word “reasonable” as follows: “The Customer has not tried all other reasonable means to address the shortfall before making this application;”
- Page 90, sixth and seventh bullet points, should delete the words “fall to” which clarifies the meaning of each point.

Councillor I. Gregory and Councillor Campbell spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor Townend proposed, Councillor Brimm seconded and Members agreed to recommend to Full Council that Council approve the Scheme.

Meeting concluded: 7.45 pm