

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2016 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillors Ashbee, Bambridge, Bayford, Braidwood, Brimm, Buckley, Campbell, K Coleman-Cooke, Connor, Constantine, Crow-Brown, Curran, Dawson, Dellar, Dennis, Dexter, Dixon, Edwards, Elenor, Evans, J Fairbrass, L Fairbrass, Falcon, Fenner, Game, I Gregory, K Gregory, Grove, Hayton, G Hillman, Howes, Jaye-Jones, Johnston, Larkins, Matterface, Parsons, Partington, Piper, L Potts, R Potts, Rogers, D Saunders, M Saunders, Savage, Shonk, Stummer-Schmertzing, Taylor, Taylor-Smith, Tomlinson, Townend and Wells.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors G. Coleman-Cooke, Day and Martin.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman and agreed, that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 May 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations were offered to Councillor Roy Potts on his recent election.

The Chairman announced that former Councillor Paul Archard had recently passed away. Members paid tribute to his accomplishments and all present stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Howes, Director of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer, advised that he and Ms Homer the Chief Executive, wished to declare an interest in agenda item 12b as they were statutory officers of the Council.

5. PETITIONS

No petitions had been received by the Council in accordance with the petition scheme.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Mr Bell asked Councillor Crow-Brown, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance Services, the following question:

"When the Court ordered Thanet District Council to pay compensation, the claimants stated their claim at £1.5 million. This has now risen to £4.7 million plus costs estimated at £1.5 million.

Will the Council now conduct an independent, publicly accessible enquiry into the handling of this claim?"

Councillor Crow-Brown responded with the following points:

- An independent enquiry had been conducted by the High Court in 2014.
- The High Court's judgement was publically available on the internet.
- Additional claimants had come forward since 2014, and claims had been settled on the basis of advice received from an independent barrister.
- There was no justification or benefit to be gained in spending further legal time and costs on a publicly accessible enquiry.

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor Savage asked Councillor Stummer-Schmertzling, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise Services the following question:

"In the light of changed economic prospects facing the country and Thanet principally our concern, the work of the Invest Thanet Board becomes increasingly important.

The minutes of the last meeting are still unavailable even though the meeting took place back on 22/4/16. When will these minutes be available?"

Councillor Stummer-Schmertzling responded that:

- The minutes from the Invest Thanet Board meeting held on 22 April 16 would be signed off at the next meeting of the Board, scheduled to take place on 15 July. The minutes would be published shortly afterwards.
- The Invest Thanet Board had been reviewing its activities to ensure future economic challenges were met.

Councillor Savage followed up his question by asking; in the light of economic warnings from the Bank of England and Institute of Fiscal Studies, what was the plan of action to safeguard and improve Thanet's prospects following 'Brexit'?

Councillor Stummer-Schmertzling responded that the Board would meet more regularly in future, which he expected this to help drive things forward.

8. NOTICE OF MOTION

(a) Notice of Motion in relation to Pension Inequality

It was proposed by Councillor Matterface and seconded by Councillor Constantine that:

"Thanet District Council supports the national and local Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) campaign, the campaign for better transitional arrangements for those women born after April 6th 1951 who now find they will receive their state pension aged 66 not aged 60.

According to the 2011 census, there are over 13,000 women between 50 and 64 living in Thanet. We need to ensure all women and their families in the affected age group are made aware of the implications of this change due to the impact on family life and the local economy and wish to send a strong message to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions deploring his department's failure to alert women of the changes"

In accordance with council procedure rule 3.7, Councillor Wells, Leader of the Council provided a response to the motion.

The Leader proposed, Councillor L Fairbrass seconded and Members agreed to discuss the motion.

After discussion, the motion was declared carried.

(b) **Notice of Motion in Relation to the Condemnation of Racism, Xenophobia and Hate Crimes**

It was proposed by Councillor Johnston and seconded by Councillor Fenner that:

“We are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes have no place in our country.

Thanet District Council condemns racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We will not allow hate to become acceptable.

This Council will continue to work to ensure local bodies and programmes have the support and resources needed to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia.

We reassure all people living in Thanet they are valued members of our community.”

In accordance with council procedure rule 3.7, Councillor L Fairbrass, Leader of the Council provided a response to the motion.

Councillor L Fairbrass proposed, Councillor Grove seconded and Members agreed not to discuss the motion.

As Council agreed not to debate the motion, the motion fell.

9. LEADERS REPORT

It was noted that the Leader had not compiled with council procedure rule 2.4, namely;

‘The Leader of the Council will make available in writing the content of his oral report to opposition group leaders no later than the Saturday before the meeting’

As the Saturday deadline had not been met, the Chairman asked Members whether they wished to consider the item. A vote was held and Members agreed that the Leader should present his report.

During his report the Leader covered the following areas:

- The launch of consultation on the council tax reduction scheme.
- A successful prosecution for fly tipping.
- Thanet’s beaches achieved seven blue flag awards.
- Thanks offered to volunteers working to renovate and improve parts of Broadstairs harbour and Ramsgate seafront and roundabouts.
- Attendance of a Thames Estuary Commission briefing.
- Thanet’s bid for Kent and Essex Local Enterprise Partnership monies, the Leader hoped to report on the bid’s success in due course.
- Meeting with police and other partners in preparation for Broadstairs Folk Week.
- Discussed services around rape reporting and mental health services with the new Police Commissioner Mathew Scott.

Councillor Bayford as Leader of the Conservative Party advised that he would not participate in the item as he believed the conditions of council procedure rule 2.4 had not been met.

Councillor Matterface as leader of the Labour Party made the following point:

- There would be an open top bus service in operation between the Boating Pool, Ramsgate and Stone Bay, Broadstairs for the school holidays.

The Leader welcomed the news of an open top bus service.

Councillor Ashbee as leader of the Democratic Independent Group made the following point:

- Recognition of the quality of Thanet's beaches was well deserved; however grass cutting along the district's promenades was needed desperately in places. Residents had asked for a cutting schedule.

The Leader acknowledged Councillor Ashbee's concern and advised that a new cutting rota had recently commenced, and would shortly be available to view on the internet.

Councillor Grove as leader of the Independent Group made the following point:

- It was good to hear of the beach awards, a key asset within Thanet, and of the progress being made within the District. He thanked the Leader for his efforts.

10. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Councillor D Saunders, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (OSP), presented his report and the following points were noted:

- The Panel had agreed to conduct most of its work through its reconstituted sub-committees.
- The Chairman had met with officers to discuss options to make the Committee more effective, and the Chairman supported the proposal to trial new public speaking arrangements at Panel meetings.
- The Panel had requested to be kept abreast of developments regarding Dreamland and awaited the completion of the audit investigation that was expected to conclude in August.
- Thanks were offered for the programme of Member training, particularly in relation to scrutiny.

11. SINGLE DISTRICT STATEMENT OF INTENT

It was proposed by the Leader, seconded by Councillor L Fairbrass and Members agreed the recommendations as shown in the report, namely that:

1. Council consider the proposals and provide views.
2. Provide an additional £20,000 funding from general reserves to support the preparation of a business case.
3. That the formulation of any plan or strategy to implement any proposed merger of the East Kent district councils be a matter of policy framework and be reserved for the consideration of the full Council pursuant to Article 4.01 (a) of the Constitution of the Council."

12. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

(a) Public Speaking at Meetings

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman and Members agreed the recommendation as shown in the report, namely:

"That Council adopts the draft public participation scheme as outlined in Annex 1 of the report and amends the Council's constitution as outlined at Annex 2 of the report."

(b) Modification of prescribed standing orders relating to the dismissal of Statutory Officers

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman and Members agreed the recommendations as shown in paragraph 5 of the report, namely:

- “5.1 That the modifications to the Prescribed Standing Orders relating to staff, be modified as set out in Appendix 1 to this report and be incorporated into the Council’s Constitution
- 5.2 That the Council does not appoint a standing panel to deal with dismissals but appoints a panel on an ad hoc basis as required.”

(c) **East Kent Services delegations**

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman and Members agreed the recommendations as shown in the report, namely that:

“Council approve the proposed amendments to the delegations as shown in the report.”

13. CHANGES TO COMMITTEES, PANELS AND BOARDS - 2016/17

PROPORTIONALITY

The Leader proposed, the Councillor L Fairbrass seconded and Members agreed option 3 as detailed in paragraph 2.7.1 of the report, namely:

“That one seat is removed from the Licensing Board and as a result the DIG group loses its seat on that Committee. That one seat is removed from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and as a result the DIG group loses its seat on that Committee. That one seat is removed from the Governance and Audit Committee and as a result the DIG group loses its seat on that Committee.”

NOMINATION OF MEMBERS TO SERVE ON COMMITTEES

Group leaders advised of changes to their nominations to sit on committees as summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Committee / Group	Previous Position	New Position
Planning Committee		
UKIP	Cllr Leys	Cllr Roy Potts
Licensing Board		
DIG	Cllr Ashbee	No entitlement to a seat
UKIP	Cllr Leys	Cllr Roy Potts
Overview and Scrutiny Panel		
DIG	Cllr Elenor	No entitlement to a seat
General Purposes		
DIG	Vacant	Cllr Ashbee
Governance and Audit		
DIG	Cllr Ashbee	No entitlement to a seat
Governance and Audit Substitutes		
UKIP	Cllr Leys	Cllr Roy Potts
BEAP WP		
DIG	Vacant	Cllr Ashbee
CRWP		
DIG	Vacant	Cllr Elenor

Meeting concluded: 8.55 pm