

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2014 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor C. Hart (Chairman); Councillors Everitt, Fenner, D Green, Johnston and Poole

In Attendance: Councillors Bayford, Bruce, Edwards, E Green, King, Moores, Nicholson, Watkins, Wells and Wise

121. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received at the meeting.

122. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

123. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

124. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

Cabinet considered the corporate performance report which showed encouraging progress on most corporate activities. In instances where activities were not on track, remedial action was in progress. Significant highlights cited included:

1. Increased recycling as a result of the new waste & recycling service;
2. A new Housing Allocations Policy was in place;
3. A new on-line housing registration system was working well;
4. Partnership working with voluntary and community sector is increasingly productive;
5. Establishment of an-site team at Manston Airport, and permanent Designated Port of Entry status was granted to Manston.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 24.1:

Councillor Bayford;
Councillor Wise;
Councillor Bruce;
Councillor Wells;
Councillor King;

Councillor Fenner proposed, Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members agreed to note the report.

125. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY - MID YEAR REVIEW REPORT 2013/14

Cabinet considered the Treasury Management report which highlighted the activities during the first half of the current financial year and provided an economic update for 2013/14. The report also set out the Council's capital plans, alongside the latest position

against the associated prudential indicators. Cabinet received confirmation that none of the Prudential Indicators had been breached in the first part of the year, nor were they expected to be breached in the remaining part of the year.

Councillor Everitt proposed, Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members agreed to recommend that Council approved the Prudential Indicators.

126. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2013/14

Members considered the budget monitoring report which provided an update on General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and capital programmes for 2013/14 for the period up to November 2013. The Cabinet Member explained that Managers had been working diligently to identify savings within their service areas to bring the budget back to a balanced position, but the current monitoring reflected a projected overspend for the year of £309.9k.

Cabinet observed that the projected outturn for Operational Services not only reflected the Transeuropa position but also reflected an overall shortfall of maritime income. They said that every effort was being made to find further savings in this area to compensate for this income shortfall but if sufficient savings could not be found, an equivalent sum would be drawn down from the Maritime Reserve to offset the shortfall. Savings had been identified across the other directorates. Managers would continue finding further efficiencies over the remainder of the year to address the projected overspend.

Councillor Wise spoke under Council Procedure Rule 24.1.

Councillor Everitt proposed, Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members agreed the following:

1. To note the projected outturn position for 2013/14 for the General Fund;
2. To realign of budgets in order to reflect those savings already identified;
3. To note the current Housing Revenue Account position;
4. To approve the variations to the General Fund Capital Programme identified in Annex 2 to the report;
5. To note the current HRA Capital Programme identified in Annex 3 of the report.

127. 2014/15 BUDGETS AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2014-18

Members discussed budget proposals that presented a number of savings and income generating initiatives which enabled Council to put forward a balanced budget for 2014/15 with the minimum negative impact on priority services. Savings of £1.2m were required for 2014/15. The proposals identified where these savings would come from. These included savings carried forward from the previous MTFP; savings identified through a review of previous years' outturns; savings in respect of controllable budgets & contingencies and contract savings.

Cabinet agreed that these proposals enabled the Council to present a balanced budget. Cabinet announced that they were also proposing to freeze Council Tax again which meant that there would have been no Council Tax increase for residents since 2010/11. The majority of the expenditure headings for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) had been increased on the same basis as had been used for the General Fund. The proposals included a rental increase of 3.7% for Council dwellings in line with the Government's inflationary rates.

The proposed Housing Revenue Account balance was considered to be sufficient to support the 30 year HRA Business Plan. Cabinet observed that over the past five years the Council had seen a significant reduction in capital receipts from the sale of assets. It was therefore necessary to review the capital programme to ensure sufficient funding was available for existing schemes that had commenced and any new projects that were of the highest corporate priority in order to reduce the pressure on the revenue account.

Councillor Everitt proposed, Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members agreed the following:

1. To recommend the draft Medium Term Financial Plan at Annex 1(of the report) to Council;
2. To recommend to Council the draft General Fund Revenue budget estimates for 2014/15 to 2017/18 and the resulting budget requirement for 2014/15;
3. To recommend to Council that the level of general reserves be held at £2,150k, and specific earmarked reserves be used as identified in Annex 2 of the report;
4. To recommend to Council the HRA budget estimates for 2014/15 to 2017/18 and the HRA service charges as shown at Annex 4 of the report;
5. To delegate the approval of the EK Housing Management Fee to the Director of Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning;
6. To recommend to Council the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Budgets for 2014/15 as detailed at Annexes 5 and 6 to the report;
7. To recommend to Council the draft Treasury Management Strategy (see Annex 3 of the report), as approved by Governance and Audit at its meeting on 11 December 2013;
8. To note the procurement update at paragraph 9 of the report.

128. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Members considered the refreshed Risk Management Strategy that was recommended to them by the Governance and Audit Committee. They acknowledged that risk management was a statutory requirement and an indispensable element of good management which also demonstrated good governance within the Council.

Councillor Fenner proposed, Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members approved the reviewed Risk Management Strategy.

129. EXCELLENT HOMES FOR ALL - KENT HOUSING PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE (PFI)

The Excellent Homes For All (HFA) project has been procured jointly by Kent County Council and five District Councils (i.e. Ashford, Dartford, Dover, Thanet, Tunbridge Wells). The proposed project will provide new supported accommodation for vulnerable people across Kent. It was reported that the majority of the new accommodation will be five schemes of extra care housing for older people. Thanet will benefit from 49 units of

extra care accommodation at the Former Infant School KCC owned site Melbourne Road, Newington.

The project had been in procurement for three years and will be predominantly funded by Central Government through a £63 million grant. In October 2013 Galliford Try Investments was appointed the Preferred Bidder and will be expected to deliver the new housing. It was hoped that the contract for delivery will be signed in April 2014. Construction will then start on the sites immediately and the schemes will start to open in 2015.

Councillor Nicholson and Councillor Wells spoke under Council Procedure Rule 24.1.

Councillor D. Green proposed, Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members agreed the following:

1. To continue to participate in partnership with Kent County Council and the district and borough partners in the Excellent Homes for All Private Finance Initiative Project;
2. To delegate authority to Corporate and Regulatory Services Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing and to sign the Back to Back Agreement to share the benefits and risks of the project with Kent County Council and our District Council partners.

130. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Members considered the Corporate Procurement Strategy that was updated to reflect recent legislation, in particular the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. The proposed Strategy had been subject to external and internal consultation with local business groups, procurement peers and purchasing officers. The feedback received informed the content in the final document. Cabinet indicated that they would like the Council to become a living wage organisation and therefore expected its suppliers to either be living wage organisations or worked towards achieving that standard.

Councillor Fenner proposed, Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members agreed the following:

1. To adopt the revised Corporate Procurement Strategy that will ensure that the document is “fit for purpose”, aligned to business need and reflects current corporate objectives and current legal obligations;
2. To approve that authority be delegated to the Strategic Procurement Manager to amend the strategy to reflect staffing changes and add additional documents to the ‘links to other documents’ section as and when they arise to ensure the document remains current throughout its lifecycle.

131. OVERNIGHT RESTRICTIONS IN LEOPOLD MULTI STOREY CAR PARK

Members considered options on how best to deal with the long standing issue associated with anti-social activities occurring frequently in Leopold St multi-storey car park in Ramsgate. Despite a significant amount of work by the Police and a number of different departments across the Council whilst there had been some success, the fundamental problems still remained.

Cabinet noted; that as the managers of property the Council had a fundamental duty to try and take steps to deal with crime and anti-social behaviour. This involved taking measures to reduce the opportunities for the anti-social behaviour to take place.

Members considered the risks, benefits, costs and savings of four options that were set out in the report. These had been assessed in the context of the low level of overnight usage of the car park, and the wide availability of alternative car parking elsewhere in the town centre.

Councillor Poole proposed, Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members agreed the following:

1. Option 3 set out in the table under 3.1, using the layout in Annex 2 to the Cabinet report;
2. That the partial closure proposals be implemented after 1st April 2014 to coincide with the change of the end of on-street restriction to 6.00pm;
3. That authority to make minor changes to permit arrangements indicated in 4.3.3 of the Cabinet report be delegated to officers to negotiate and implement.

132. PETITION REFERRED TO CABINET BY COUNCIL - FORMER SWIMMING POOL SITE, RAMSGATE

Cabinet considered the petition as requested by Full Council. Members said that due to budget limitations Council was unable to retain a sporting use on the former swimming pool site. The Council had supported a new swimming pool for Ramsgate being built next to the existing sports centre, and the costs of retaining the current building for swimming or other sporting uses were thus considered excessive. In addition, the projected receipt for the site that had been built into the capital budget would be lost.

Cabinet recognised the impact of the loss of parking and had taken steps to deal with this if the Fire Service development proceeded, as well as proposing to invest in improved play facilities in the adjacent park, on top of the current skate park scheme.

Councillor Everitt proposed, Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members agreed to continue with the disposal of the site, and did not propose to retain it for the provision of leisure or community uses. The council will aim to provide alternative parking provision for the recreation ground, which could be also used by third parties, in association with the sale of the site.

133. PETITION REFERRED TO CABINET BY COUNCIL - RUBBISH ON LAND, MARGATE ROAD, RAMSGATE

Members discussed a number of options available to Council in dealing with the complaints raised in the petition. These included the extended powers of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Principal Litter Authority, Thanet District Council, can serve litter clearing notices. There were also the extended powers of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 that made it an offence to 'leave litter' this meant dropping, throwing, leaving or depositing of litter in a public place and causing defacement was a criminal offence, carrying a maximum fine of £2,500.

Councillor E. Green spoke under Council Procedure Rule 24.1.

Councillor Johnston proposed, Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members agreed the following:

1. To receive and note the petition;
2. To receive and note the report;

3. That the Environmental Enforcement Team will work with Tesco regarding this piece of land to try and resolve all the concerns of the residents not just the litter and will take formal action with regard to the litter, by way of the service of a litter clearing notice, if necessary;
4. That the Planning Enforcement Team will investigate the historic planning file to see if there were any conditions on the planning permission with regard to landscaping and maintenance.

134. DESIGNATION OF LAND AT MONTEFIORE AVENUE

Cabinet confirmed its previous position that it was opposed the potential development of this land, and the decision had been made not to proceed with the development. Members said that in line with the Council's Corporate Plan priority 11 to protect and preserve our public open spaces, Cabinet would continue to aim to give as much protection to the future of the land as was possible. Members said that they were aware of other options available to Council.

Councillor Bayford and Councillor Wells spoke under Council Procedure Rule 24.1.

Councillor Everitt proposed, Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members agreed that the area is retained for recreational purposes, and instructed officers to undertake the process necessary to allow an application to go forward to KCC for the registration of the land as a village green.

Meeting concluded: 8.25 pm