

EXTRAORDINARY CABINET

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 11 December 2014 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Johnston (Chairman); Councillors Nicholson, Everitt, D Green, E Green and Harrison

In Attendance: Councillors Alexandrou, Bayford, Binks, Bruce, Edwards, Fenner, Gideon, Grove, C Hart, King, Lodge-Pritchard, Marson, Moores, Poole, D Saunders, M Saunders, M Tomlinson, S Tomlinson, Wells, Wiltshire, Wise, Worrow and Wright

223. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received at the meeting.

224. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Johnston, Leader of Council informed the meeting that she had in the past attended a Save The Manston Airport Group meeting at which she gave a donation to the Group, sat at the top table at the AGM meeting and was entitled to vote. Mr Steven Boyle, Legal Services Manager & Monitoring Officer advised the meeting based on these representations that it was not his assessment that the Leader would be required to avoid voting on the Manston Airport agenda item at this meeting.

225. THANET LOCAL PLAN PREFERRED OPTIONS

Cabinet was advised that Council had to meet its statutory obligations by developing and adopting the Local Plan that set out how Thanet District would coordinate and manage future growth and developments as well as promote regeneration and economic prosperity for the area. The Local Plan was also an important tool for attracting future investment into the District as it provided a vision for how the District would be developed to meet the future demand for housing and employment whilst ensuring the natural, built and historic environment was protected.

The Local Plan had to be prepared in compliance with the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework; whose core principle was “to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs.”

Development of the draft Plan was led by a Cabinet Advisory Group whose membership was cross party. Cabinet commended the work done by the Cabinet Advisory Group and officers who supported the process leading up to the drafting of the proposed preferred options for the Local Plan.

Cabinet Members received a detailed power-point presentation from Mr Ismail Mohammed, Strategic Planning Manager on the highlights of the content of the draft Thanet Local Plan, Preferred Options Document that included the strategic policies, future site allocations and development management policies. The presentation also set out the timeline for the key activities that had been undertaken and that would need to be done leading up to the adoption of an updated Thanet Local Plan.

The meeting noted some amendments that were made to the draft document and were highlighted in an addendum to the report.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 24.1:
 Councillor Bayford;
 Councillor Bruce;
 Councillor Cohen.

Councillor Nicholson proposed, Councillor Johnston seconded and Members agreed the following recommendations:

1. To approve the Draft Thanet Local Plan to 2031 Preferred Options Document and for the Council carry out a six week public consultation on the Draft Thanet Plan to 2031 Preferred Options Consultation and engage with wider local communities;
2. To delegate to the Director of Community Service in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning Services; to make any minor alteration to the approved Draft Thanet Local to 2031 Preferred Options Document that are considered necessary to ensure accuracy, reference and presentation for public consultation;
3. To set-up a Cabinet Advisory Group or Working Group to prepare the Area Action Plan Development Plan Document for the area of Manston Airport and its surrounding environ;
4. That the Draft Thanet Local Plan to 2031 Preferred Options Document (Annex 1) to the report be amended by deleting the section titled "New Primary School, Margate and Policy CM03" (page 189 of the Cabinet agenda);
5. That the Draft Thanet Local Plan to 2031 Preferred Options Document (Annex 1) to the report, insert: Policy H02G - Land at Melbourne Avenue, Ramsgate on page 122 before the section titled Cliftonville and Margate by deleting the section titled "New Primary School, Margate and Policy CM03" (page 189 of the Cabinet agenda).

226. MANSTON AIRPORT

Cabinet consider a report back on the soft marketing exercise that officers had been tasked to undertake in order to determine the possibility of finding an indemnity partner if Council was to opt for CPO route for the Manston Airport site. The meeting heard that the Council had made every effort to work constructively with Party A including making several deadline extensions for submitting the information requested from potential indemnity.

Cabinet noted that the Section 151 Officer and the other statutory officers had reached their conclusions after fully considering what had been put forward and the implications. The method of analysis and the conclusions are also backed by Counsel's Advice. The Council had entered into a confidentiality agreement with Party A which was specifically requested by them.

Cabinet therefore noted the following four points in particular:

1. There was no stage by stage funding for a CPO. Unless the investment was in place, the prospects of a CPO were much diminished;
2. The new ownership of the site made it more difficult to mount a successful CPO argument;
3. The Council wanted to see a thriving, viable airport. Given all the past unsuccessful attempts to do this, a long-term business plan was simply an essential requirement;

4. Neither Government nor the County Council had come forward with any financial support to help the Council deal with this major project.

Cabinet agreed not to put at risk council tax payers' funds and not to adopt an indemnity partner which carried uncertainty.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 24.1:

Councillor Bayford;
Councillor Marson;
Councillor Binks;
Councillor S. Tomlinson;
Councillor D. Saunders;
Councillor Wells;
Councillor Wiltshire;
Councillor Cohen.

Councillor Johnston proposed, Councillor Nicholson seconded and Members agreed the following:

1. That no further action be taken at the present time on a CPO of Manston Airport, on the basis that the Council has not identified any suitable expressions of interest that fulfil the requirements of the Council for a CPO indemnity partner and that it does not have the financial resources to pursue a CPO in its own right;
2. That subject to obtaining written consent from Party A; relevant information is sent to the Minister of State for Transport for consideration.

Meeting concluded: 9.10 pm