

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2016 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillors Ashbee, Bayford, Braidwood, Brimm, Campbell, G Coleman-Cooke, K Coleman-Cooke, Connor, Crow-Brown, Curran, Dawson, Day, Dellar, Dennis, Dexter, Dixon, Edwards, Elenor, Evans, J Fairbrass, L Fairbrass, Falcon, Fenner, Game, I Gregory, K Gregory, Grove, G Hillman, Howes, Jaye-Jones, Johnston, Larkins, Leys, Martin, Matterface, Parsons, Partington, Piper, 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 Bambridge, Buckley, Collins, Constantine, Hayton and Smith.

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 25 February 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations were offered to those from the Quarterdeck Youth Centre, Margate involved in the Find a Solution Project whom recently won a national youth crime beat award. The Chairman called for an adjournment at 7.05pm of the meeting to allow Members to receive a presentation from those involved in the project.

The meeting recommenced at 7.20pm.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PETITIONS

It was noted that no petitions had been received in accordance with the petition scheme.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was noted that no questions from the press and public had been received in accordance with council procedure rule number 13.

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

- (a) Question No. 1 From a Member in Relation to the Cost to Provide Temporary Accommodation for Homeless and Rough Sleepers

Councillor Matterface asked Councillor L Fairbrass the following question:

'How much is the weekly bill for temporary accommodation for the homeless and other rough sleepers, please?'

Councillor L Fairbrass responded with the following points:

- Between 1 April 2015 and 1 March 2016 the Council placed 144 households, including families, rough sleepers and homeless, in emergency bed and breakfast accommodation.
- The cost of these placements had been £302,710, however a proportion were eligible for housing benefit and a total of £261,889 had been recovered in this way. The net cost of this service to the Council has been £40,820.
- Bed and breakfast accommodation was recognised as not suitable for the needs of many homeless households; however it was often the only option available in an emergency.
- Between 1 April 2015 and 1 March 2016 the Council had successfully prevented homelessness for 284 families.

Councillor Matterface asked a follow up question regarding the frequency of establishment inspections by Environmental Health officers. She thought that sometimes families were put into emergency accommodation that had inadequate facilities.

Councillor L Fairbrass advised that she would make enquires and respond to Councillor Matterface outside of the meeting.

8. **NOTICE OF MOTION**

(a) **Notice of Motion in Relation to Britain's Membership of the European Union**

It was proposed by the Leader and seconded by Councillor L Fairbrass that:

“Due to the negative impact that I believe EU directives such as the agency working time directive and EU procurement rules have on the ability and cost of (Thanet) Council to fulfil its obligations, this council agrees that Britain would be better off outside the European Union.”

In accordance with council procedure rule 3.7, Councillor Stummer-Schmertzling, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise Services provided a response to the motion.

Councillor Ashbee proposed, Councillor Brimm seconded and Members agreed to discuss the motion.

After discussion of the motion and upon Members' request, the Monitoring officer conducted a recorded vote.

27 Members voted in favour the motion: Councillors Braidwood, Brimm, G. Coleman-Cooke, Connor, Crow-Brown, Dellar, Dennis, Dixon, Edwards, Elenor, Evans, J. Fairbrass, L. Fairbrass, Falcon, Hillman, Howes, Jaye-Jones, Larkins, Leys, Martin, Piper, Potts, Shonk, Stummer-Schmertzling, Taylor, Townend and Wells.

16 Members abstained from voting on the motion: Councillors Ashbee, Bayford, K Coleman-Cooke, Dawson, Day, Dexter, Game, I Gregory, Grove, Parsons, Partington, D Saunders, M Saunders, Savage, Taylor-Smith and Tomlinson.

7 Members voted against the motion: Councillors Campbell, Curran, Fenner, K Gregory, Johnston, Matterface and Rogers

The motion was carried.

9. LEADERS REPORT

During his report the Leader covered the following areas:

- Recent speculation regarding devolution proposals and the suggestion of the creation of a supper district covering Canterbury, Dover, Ashford, Shepway and Thanet.
- Announcement of a Thames Estuary Commission with funding to extend Thames Gateway type activity down to the Thanet coast.
- A visit from the Department for Communities and Local Government Minister Mark Francois, who was also the Coastal Communities Fund Minister, he looked at existing projects in the district which had received coastal communities funding.
- Offer of thanks to County Councillor Wiltshire for her work as Youth Action Group Chair, and recognition of her work in reinvigorating local youth services.
- The Sprint Revival event was no longer going ahead this year; however the organisers had mentioned that they wished to hold a bigger event next year.
- A report on the results of soft market testing in relation to Manston Airport would be considered at a forthcoming Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Bayford as Leader of the Conservative Party responded with the following points:

- Suggestions to merge Council's or Council services had been around for some time.
- Announcement of a Thames Estuary Commission was an exciting proposition for Thanet.
- The Quarterdeck success was good, and further Council engagement with young people would be positive.

The Leader replied to Councillor Bayford's comments with the following points:

- The Thames Gateway concept had seen growth that was partly driven through housing developments, however new house builds were a sensitive topic in Thanet which could bring new challenges for the area.

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

- Thanks were offered to Councillor Johnston for her dedication and efforts as the previous leader of the Labour group.
- It would be beneficial to improve consultation between group leaders as she would have preferred to hear about devolution suggestions from the Leader in the first instance.
- Were the car ferry jobs at the port newly created, or a redeployment of existing staff?

The Leader replied to Councillor Matterface's comments with the following points:

- Four of the five Councils mentioned already provided a shared council housing service.
- Roughly half of the car ferry jobs were newly created positions; there would potentially be further opportunities in the future depending on how the service developed.

As Councillor Collins was unavailable, Councillor Ashbee responded with the following for the Democratic Independence Group:

- Agreed that more interaction with young people of Thanet would be a good thing, this could be facilitated through a Youth Council.

The Leader replied to Councillor Ashbee's comments with the following points:

- There was a Youth Council in existence; support for increased engagement with young people was encouraging.

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 next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel would be 26 April, the Panel had not met since the last meeting of Council.
- An update on the position of the application for heritage lottery funding for a professional archivist to assist with the recording and collating of TDC artefacts would be provided to the OSP Chairman.
- The Leader added that he had met with the new Chief Executive of the East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust, who advised that they wished to develop a long term sustainability plan for future health service provision. The QEQM Hospital Cabinet Advisory Group would meet shortly to consider this.

11. AGREEMENT OF COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN FOR 2016-17

It was proposed by Councillor L Fairbrass, seconded by Councillor Crow-Brown and Members agreed:

“That Members approve the focus areas in the Thanet Community Safety Plan 2016/17 as set out in Annex 1.”

12. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

It was proposed by the Leader, seconded by Councillor Townend and Members agreed the recommendation as shown in paragraph 5.1 of the report, namely that Members agree:

“To approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17 as set out in Annex 1, after which it will be published.”

13. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2016/17

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman and Members agreed the recommendations as shown in paragraph 4 of the report, namely:

“That Council agree the 2016/17 member's allowances scheme with:

- a) The change for the index linking of the Dependent Carers Allowance from the National Minimum Wage to the National Living Wage of £7.20 per hour.
- b) The removal of the words “or commercial organisations” from section e) of paragraph 1.20 under explanation of approved duty.”

14. COMMITTEES, PANELS AND BOARDS

PROPORTIONALITY

Councillor Bayford proposed, the Leader seconded and Members agreed option four as detailed in paragraph 4.6 of the report, namely:

“The UKIP group will gain a seat on the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and so will need to add a UKIP Councillor to that Committee. The DIG Group will lose a seat on the Planning Committee and so will need to remove their nomination to that group. In addition the UKIP group lose a seat on the Joint Transportation Board and will need to remove one UKIP Councillor from that Group. The Labour Group will gain a seat on the Joint Transportation Board and so will need to make a new nomination to that Group.”

NOMINATION OF MEMBERS TO SERVE ON COMMITTEES

The Leader advised that he nominated Councillor Martin to sit on the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and wished to remove Councillor Leys from the Joint Transportation Board.

Councillor Matterface advised that she nominated Councillor Constantine to sit on the Joint Transportation Board.

Councillor Ashbee advised that Councillor Collins would be removed from the Planning Committee.

15. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Members agreed to re-instate the Friends of Margate Cemetery Trust to the list of non-executive outside bodies and appointed Councillor Connor and Councillor Tomlinson to be the Council’s representatives.

16. COUNCILLORS REQUEST FOR A PERIOD OF ABSENCE FROM MEETINGS

It was proposed by Councillor Ashbee, seconded by the Leader and Members agreed that:

“A leave of absence be granted for Councillor Collins and Councillor Smith until 14 July 2016.”

Post Meeting Note: The effect of this resolution is to extend the deadline for Councillors Collins and Smith to attend a meeting from the 21 April to the 14 July 2016.

Meeting concluded: 9.00 pm