

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2015 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: Ashbee, Bayford, Campbell, J Fairbrass, Game, I Gregory, K Gregory, Johnston, Rogers, D Saunders, M Saunders, Savage, Shonk and Taylor-Smith

302. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received made at the meeting.

303. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

304. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS ORDINARY MEETING

Councillor Townend proposed, Councillor Brimm seconded and Members agreed the minutes to be a true record of the meeting held on 22 October 2015.

305. MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Councillor Brimm proposed, Councillor Townend seconded and Members agreed the minutes to be a true record of the extraordinary meeting held on 29 October 2015.

306. ASSET MANAGEMENT - DISPOSAL OF ASSETS

Cabinet was advised that the St Mildred's Hut was disused and in poor and deteriorating condition. No alternative use for the hut had been identified. However, since the publication of the Cabinet report the Westgate-on-Sea Town Council had since asked to meet with Thanet District Council to discuss the future of the hut.

The Garage, Princess Walk, Palm Bay was disused and in dangerous condition and beyond economic repair.

Consideration of the item on Western Undercliff Kiosk, Ramsgate had been deferred to a future meeting of Cabinet to be advised. This was due to new additional information that had just come to light and had been made available to the Portfolio Holder. This element of the report would now have to be re-written in the light of this new information.

Councillor Townend proposed, Councillor Brimm seconded and Cabinet agreed the following:

1. That the sites contained in Annex 1 to the report, were surplus and should be progressed through the disposal framework for freehold sale;
2. In relation to St Mildred's Hut, Cabinet agree that:
 - a. Officers are authorised to meet with Westgate-on-Sea Town Council to explore whether a use for the hut can be identified, and;

- b. If this is not possible officers are further authorised to proceed with demolishing the hut.
3. In relation to Garage, Princess Walk, Palm Bay Members agreed that demolition is recommended.

307. GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING AND CHANGES

Cabinet received an update report on General Fund Capital Programme for 2015/16. Proposals were made in context of the overall Council budget, that certain projects be deferred or removed from this year's programme. Members were advised of an overspend in relation to the Dreamland project. It was then proposed that a re-profiling of funding for this year and future years, in order to ensure there are sufficient revenue reserves to fund liabilities.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 24.1:

Councillor I. Gregory;
Councillor Bayford;
Councillor Johnston.

Councillor Townend proposed, Councillor Stummer-Schmertzling seconded and Cabinet agreed the capital programme changes as per sections 2.5, 3, 4 and 5 to the report and recommended these proposals to Council.

308. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2015/16

Cabinet noted that apart from some one-off costs which will require funding, the overall General Fund position is to break even and the forecast for the year is in line with budget performance to date. Cabinet considered some proposed Housing Revenue Account adjustments.

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

1. To note the projected outturn position for 2015/16 for the General Fund;
2. To note the projected Housing Revenue Account position;
3. To a transfer of £73,424 from the Major Repairs Reserve as per para 7.2 to the Cabinet report;
4. To an increased revenue contribution of £341K from HRA balances for the Empty Property programme as per para 7.2 to the report;
5. To note the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes and approve the budget virements detailed as per Annex 2 to the report.

309. BUDGET STRATEGY 2016-17

Members received a report that provided the framework for setting the Council budget proposals for 2016/17. The strategy approach was outlined that provided assumptions to be considered in setting the budget for next financial year and for the medium term financial planning. One of the key issues in the report was the fees and charges policy proposal that set the basis for the actual fees and charges recommendations to Council.

All these assumptions would need to be viewed in the national financial context when considering the 2016/17 budget and this could be viewed as being extremely challenging.

It was anticipated that the Government was going to reduce public sector spending and this will have a direct impact on the funding for local government, which would be announced at a strategic level in the Comprehensive Spending Review. Members were informed that more detailed budget proposals will be finalised in January 2016 for consideration by Full Council in February 2016 once the Chancellor has announced the Spending Review on 25 November 2015.

Councillor Bayford briefly spoke under Council Procedure Rule 24.1.

Councillor Townend proposed, Councillor Lin Fairbrass seconded and Cabinet agreed the following:

1. The approach being used to develop the budget estimates for the General Fund;
2. The Fees and Charges Policy;
3. The financial risk assessment for the General Fund Revenue Account that will be used to inform the setting of reserves for 2016-17, and the associated impact on the levels and types of reserves held;
4. The General Fund capital budget proposals for 2016-17 to 2019-20 as detailed in Annex 1 to the Cabinet report;
5. The approach being used to develop HRA budget estimates for 2016-17 to 2019-20;
6. The Housing Revenue Account Capital Budgets for 2016-17 to 2019-20 as detailed in Annex 2 to the Cabinet report.

310. FEES & CHARGES 2016/17

After adopting the Fees and Charges Policy, Cabinet then considered the proposals for the fees and charges schedule for 2016/17. Members acknowledged that although it was always difficult to propose any increase in charges, these proposals were proportionate with the scale of the overall budget challenges and Cabinet was mindful of alternatives which would involve cuts in services. The proposed increases had also taken into consideration the interim responses council had so far received from the public consultation on the budget proposals for 2016/17.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 24.1:

Councillor Campbell;
 Councillor Rogers;
 Councillor Fairbrass on behalf of Councillor Leys;
 Councillor Shonk;
 Councillor K. Gregory;
 Councillor I. Gregory.

Councillor Townend proposed, Councillor Wells seconded and Cabinet agreed to recommend the proposed Fees and Charges for 2016-17 as set out in Annex 1 to the report, to Full Council.

Meeting concluded: 7.58 pm