

EXTRAORDINARY CABINET

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 16 February 2017 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Wells (Chairman); Councillors L Fairbrass, Brimm, Crow-Brown, Stummer-Schmertzing and Townend

In Attendance: Councillors Bayford, Campbell, Constantine, Game, K Gregory, Savage and Taylor-Smith

408. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies made at the meeting.

409. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

410. BUSINESS CASE - SINGLE EAST KENT COUNCIL

The Leader briefly introduced the topic for discussion before giving an opportunity to the Deputy Leader to propose amendments to the recommendations.

Councillor Lin Fairbrass proposed, Councillor Brimm seconded and Members agreed the changes to the recommendations so that in instances where the report referred to 'public engagement', it should in all instances read 'consultation and public engagement.'

Members were also advised by the Deputy Leader that an additional document to the report which provided some information on the proposed consultation brief had been tabled at the meeting. The brief would be discussed at a workshop of the CExs and Leaders to be held in the week beginning 20 February 2017 and the consultation approach would be shared at the extraordinary Overview & Scrutiny Panel, Cabinet and Council meetings scheduled for 02 March, 09 March and 22 March 2017, respectively.

The Leader said that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the business case for the merger of the four (originally five) east Kent local Councils that are Dover, Canterbury, Shepway and Thanet. The project was necessitated by the long term challenges faced by the local councils. Working and operating as separate entities, the four local authorities would be required to identify combined additional savings of £60 million by 2025. This challenge would impact negatively on service delivery by these local authorities.

Over the last few years councils have experienced significant budget reductions due to the economic difficulties faced by the national and international economies. This year Thanet District Council is faced with an additional £1 million budget cut by government which has been re-directed to social care services for some local authorities. This ongoing situation called for councils to develop innovative approaches to overcome these challenges.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1:

Councillor Campbell;
Councillor Constantine;
Councillor Bayford;
Councillor Game;

Councillor K. Gregory;
Councillor Taylor-Smith.

Councillor Wells proposed, Councillor Lin Fairbrass seconded and Cabinet recommended that Council resolve:

1. That having considered the business case it becomes the policy of this Council to explore further the abolition of the local government district areas of Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet and the constitution of a new local government district area of East Kent comprising the areas of those districts;
2. That the unspent balance of the £20,000 previously agreed by the Council to fund the preparation of the business case be made available to fund a consultation and public engagement exercise;
3. That the Cabinet be requested to ensure an appropriate consultation and public engagement exercise is undertaken to ascertain views on the proposal set out in 1 above;
4. That a further report be submitted to the Council prior to the making of any submission to the Secretary of state;

And further approved the following:

1. To request that Canterbury City Council undertake a public and stakeholder consultation and engagement exercise to ascertain views on the proposal set out in 1 above that can be taken into account by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in deciding to make regulations under the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016;
2. That the Council will contribute to Canterbury City Council one quarter of the cost of undertaking the consultation referred to in 2 above;
3. That the Leader be requested, to establish the proposed governance structure for the project, as set out in Section 5 (Management Case) in the business case (which is in Annex 1 to the Cabinet report).

Meeting concluded: 6.35 pm