

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2018 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber - Council Offices.

Present: Councillor Robert W Bayford (Chairman); Councillors Savage, Game, I Gregory and Taylor-Smith

In Attendance: Councillors: Ashbee, Edwards, Jaye-Jones, L Piper, S Piper and Townend

509. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies made at the meeting.

510. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

511. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Savage proposed, Councillor Gregory seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 14 June 2018.

512. MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Councillor Savage proposed, Councillor Taylor-Smith seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the extraordinary meeting held on 02 July 2018.

513. 2017/18 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN AND ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Cabinet considered the final outturn position for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme for the year ended 31st March 2018 and confirmed that, there were no changes to the outturn position following the audit.

The General Fund net revenue expenditure was in line with budget, and there had been an overall increase in reserves, as a result of the timing of income and expenditure flowing in and out of the business rates equalisation reserve. This was encouraging, after years of having to draw down reserves to fund past decisions.

Members noted that the General Fund capital programme was underspent as capital projects were not progressed as quickly as planned and these had been slipped into 2018-19. Many of these projects had external funding attached to them and this funding remained in place, despite the delays.

The Housing Revenue Account actual surplus was very close to the budget figures. The HRA capital programme was underspent, mainly in the areas of Housing Intervention and New Builds.

Councillor Gregory proposed, Councillor Savage seconded and Cabinet agreed:

1. That the provisional outturn for 2017-18 contained within this report be noted;
2. That the earmarked reserves as outlined in sections 1.6 and 2.8 of the Cabinet report be noted;

3. That the capital programme carry forwards shown in Annex 1 and Table 4 of the report be noted;
4. That the Annual Treasury Management Review of Activities for 2017-18 set out in section 4 of the report be noted.

514. ADOPT NEW ACTIVE THANET STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The core purpose of this proposed framework was to ensure there was a 'new' approach on how best a local authority could tackle the inactivity levels that challenged our local wards. The Council should encourage young children and adults to take part in outdoor activities like playing football and other sports by creating more opportunities for accessing such sporting activities.

This approach would help tackle many of the wider health inequalities that face the district, contributing to wider economic savings, increase resident engagement and participation and reduce long term health conditions by improving the health and wellbeing of the local communities.

Councillor Game proposed, Councillor Savage seconded and Cabinet adopted the proposed Active Thanet strategic framework 2018-2022 to replace the Sport and Active recreation 2015-2019 strategy.

515. ADOPTION OF THE TENANCY STRATEGY 2018

Members were advised that the proposed strategy set out to describe and protect the rights of the council's existing and future tenants. In particular the proposed strategy sought to:

- describe the arrangements for tenants, with different types of tenancies to swap homes,
- set out the things that will be considered when deciding whether to renew a flexible or fixed term tenancy,
- include appeal rights for tenants, and
- describe the council's approach to setting rents.

The council set two different types of rent. Social rents were set based on a government formula, which considered average local earnings and values, and applied to the majority of homes owned by the council. Affordable rents were applied to homes in the council's new build, refurbishment and acquisitions programme.

Regulations allowed for affordable rents to be set at up to 80% of the local market rent. However, rents set at this level locally would not be genuinely affordable for many tenants living on low incomes or reliant on housing benefit or universal credit.

Cabinet therefore proposed to limit our affordable rents to be no more than the relevant Local Housing Allowance (the maximum amount payable to someone in receipt of housing benefit or universal credit for housing costs) for the property to ensure that they were truly affordable for our tenants.

This was illustrated by comparing the current figures for a 2 bedroom property, where the median market rent was approximately £700 per month. A rent based upon 80% of this figure would be £560 per month, whereas a council affordable rent would be £520 per month. Social rents were generally lower than this, with the average social rent for a 2 bedroom flat currently set at £325 per month and for a 2 bedroom house at £360 per month.

The same principle of affordability was proposed for people living in temporary accommodation, with charges linked to the relevant local housing allowance for their accommodation.

The intention of the strategy was to offer tenancies that were suited to the needs of the council's tenants and to support tenants to remain in their home for as long as was needed. The proposals balanced the needs of existing and future tenants of the council and would ensure that decisions about tenancies and rents were taken fairly and openly.

Councillor Jaye-Jones spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor Game proposed, Councillor Savage seconded and Cabinet agreed to:

1. Approve the consultation draft of the Tenancy Strategy attached at annex 1 of the Cabinet report;
2. Delegate authority to the Head of Housing and Planning in consultation with the cabinet member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods to make any minor amendments required to the policy following consultation.

516. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER NO. 3 (ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR)

Cabinet agreed the need for the introduction of new orders that would effectively manage anti-social behaviours (ASB) in areas that were currently experiencing a detrimental effect on the communities due the number of incidents of such behaviours.

Thanet already had two Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) to tackle alcohol related disorder and dog offences that covered the majority of the district. This proposed third PSPO was meant to tackle nuisance caused from anti-social groups and the deliberate misuse of public spaces.

Over half of all reported anti-social behaviour incidents in Thanet were in the following four wards which are:

- Margate Central;
- Central Harbour;
- Eastcliff and
- Cliftonville West.

It was therefore considered appropriate that these locations be the 'designated area' for this PSPO. Once adopted, the new Order would restrict for 3 years the following activities:

- Anti-Social group congregation of two or more persons when causing ASB and;
- Misuse of public spaces (when asked not to do so);
- Causing a deliberate nuisance to commercial premises;
- Using foul or abusive language;
- Excreting bodily fluids.

A public consultation was held between June and July this year, with the majority of consultees being strongly supportive of the proposals. Ward councillors and Ramsgate Town Council were directly consulted and were also supportive of this approach.

The introduction of the new Order would allow both council and police staff to tackle some of these issues which they were currently unable to do under current local arrangements.

Councillor Game proposed, Councillor Savage seconded and Cabinet agreed:

- i) To exercise its powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to introduce a Public Space Protection Order;
- ii) To delegate any minor amendment of the PSPO to a service Director;
- iii) To then approve a Fixed Penalty Notice fine amount of £80 with early repayment of £60.

Meeting concluded: 7.18 pm