

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2019 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Rick Everitt (Chairman); Councillors Whitehead, Albon, Duckworth and Yates

In Attendance: Councillors Ashbee, Bailey, R Bayford, Campbell, Currie, Farrance, Green, Gregory, S Piper, Pugh, Rawf, D Saunders, M Saunders and Scobie

602. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received at the meeting.

603. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

604. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Albon proposed, Councillor Yates seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 19 September 2019.

605. CABINET RESPONSE TO PETITION ON SAVE OUR NHS IN KENT JUDICIAL REVIEW

Members were advised that the request contained in the petition to Council had been withdrawn because the petitioners had secured the full funding for the judicial review.

Cabinet agreed that no further action was required.

606. CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF EAST KENT HOUSING

Cabinet expressed its concerns over a period of time about the poor performance of EKH in providing housing stock management services. As a result, Cabinet agreed the terms of an improvement plan, together with additional resources, in January this year. Implementation progress regarding improvement as measured against this plan had been unacceptably slow; in particular the delivery of planned improvements to tenants' homes was too slow and significantly behind schedule.

These concerns were compounded this year, with the emergence of serious failings in the management of resident health and safety at EKH, placing residents at unacceptable and unnecessary risk. These failures led to a further report to Cabinet in July 2019, when it was agreed that a further report would be presented to Cabinet setting out the potential options for the future management of the council's housing stock.

Cabinet considered a range of possible options for the future management of the council's housing stock and agreed that their preferred option would be to bring the service back in house, under the direct management of the council.

Councillor Campbell spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor Whitehead proposed, Councillor Albon seconded and Cabinet agreed the following:

1. That the council's preferred option is to withdraw from East Kent Housing and return housing management services back in-house under direct management of the council, subject to formal consultation with all tenants (and leaseholders, as required) to satisfy the requirements of Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985;
2. To delegate authority to the Chief Executive to make any minor amendments to the consultation documents;
3. That the consultation results be presented to Cabinet for consideration and a final decision in early 2020.

607. EAST KENT HOUSING Q1 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2019/20

Members considered the performance of East Kent Housing (EKH) during the first quarter of the financial year 2019/20. The information provided in the report had also been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, at its meeting on 25 September 2019 and it covered three main areas of performance, which were:

- Performance against agreed key indicators;
- Progress against the Improvement Plan agreed in January 2019; and
- Action in relation to tenant and leaseholder health and safety.

A number of areas of concern, particularly in relation to the delivery of the council's capital programme and the recovery actions linked to tenants and leaseholders' health and safety, were raised in the report and by Members at the meeting. Although the Improvement Plan was set up for an 18 month period, running from 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2020, it was very disappointing to see such slow progress over the first reporting period.

These issues were explored in greater detail in the EKH options report that was also considered separately at this meeting. Cabinet indicated that the continued poor performance in these critical areas added weight to the reasons for the preferred option to return the management of council housing to the council's direct control.

Councillor Campbell spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor Whitehead proposed, Councillor Albon seconded and Members noted the contents of the EKH performance report.

608. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2019-20

The report on the council's performance in the first quarter of the financial year was done using the previous corporate priorities that were replaced by the new corporate statement for 2019-23 on 10 October 2019. There was improved performance for the period under review, with twenty of the twenty eight measures being reported as either exceeding, reaching or within the 5% target and eight below target.

The new administration would be reviewing the council's performance, particularly the areas of concern with a view to improving performance. Between now and March 2020, officers in consultation with Members, would be identifying new targets in line with the recently adopted cross party corporate statement, to run from April 2020. In the meantime the council would continue to use targets set under the previous corporate priorities.

Councillor Campbell spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor Yates proposed, Councillor Albon seconded and Members agreed to note the Council's performance for the period up to 30 June 2019.

Meeting concluded: 7.20 pm