

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2020 at 5.00 pm in Online Viewing Only.

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

In Attendance: Councillors Ashbee, Bailey, R Bayford, Currie, Farrance, Fellows, Game, Garner, Gregory, Hart, Pugh, Rattigan, Rawf, Rogers, Savage, Shrubbs and Towning

656. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received at the meeting.

657. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

658. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Everitt proposed, and Councillor Duckworth seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 23 April 2020.

659. THANET LOCAL PLAN - INSPECTORS' REPORT (REG 25) AND ADOPTION (REG 26)

Cabinet noted that consideration of the draft Local plan proposals were now at the final stages of the work towards the adoption of a new Local Plan for Thanet. The Plan was part of the Council's policy framework and was therefore required to be adopted by a meeting of the full Council, which was now scheduled for 9 July 2020.

The draft Thanet Local Plan was submitted for independent Examination in October 2018. Examination hearings commenced on 2 April 2019 and finished on 18 July 2019. Following the Examination, the Planning Inspectors recommended a number of Modifications to the draft Plan. These proposed Modifications were subject to a public consultation.

The Inspectors had since considered the representations made during the consultation and had submitted their report to the Council, which was attached to the Cabinet report as Annex 1. The Inspectors were required to make a judgement about the "soundness" of the draft Plan. The overall conclusion of the Inspectors' Report was that the draft Plan was "sound", subject to the adoption of the Modifications recommended within their report. The Modifications were attached at Annex 2 of the Cabinet report.

Members considered the final draft of the Local Plan, incorporating the Inspectors' recommended Modifications, which was attached to the Cabinet report as Annex 3. This report recommended the modified Local Plan be recommended to full Council for adoption. The report also recommended that the Landscape Character Assessment be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Councillor Bob Bayford, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel presented a summary of the key comments that came from the Panel meeting on 26 May and confirmed the recommendation in support of the adoption of the new draft Local Plan. These comments were detailed in the published Panel minutes.

Councillor Game spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor Everitt proposed, Councillor Yates seconded and Cabinet recommended the following to Council:

1. Adoption of the Thanet Local Plan, subject to the modifications set out in the Inspectors' Report;
and
2. Adoption of the Landscape Character Assessment as a Supplementary Planning Document.

660. EKH TRANSITION COSTS

Members were advised that since the Cabinet decision on 17 October 2019 to bring the management of council housing stock management in-house, significant amount of "discovery" work had been undertaken across a number of areas by all four partner councils. This was to determine the detailed programme which would need to be put in place to ensure a robust and stable transfer of the housing service back into the Council. One of the more complex areas which had been investigated was the current IT "single system" which was used by East Kent Housing (EKH) and was an integrated Northgate system.

In bringing housing stock in-house, the council had a chance to create a service for our tenants that exemplified best practice across all areas. However to accomplish that there was a need to provide a secure base to operate from in terms of systems management and therefore transitional funding was required to complete this task.

Councillor Ashbee spoke under council Procedure 20.1.

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

1. To approve a 2020-21 only supplementary HRA revenue budget of £187,000 for the transition of the single housing management system to TDC in-house management, to be funded from HRA balances;
2. To approve a recurring 2020-21 supplementary HRA revenue budget of £82,000 for the on-going maintenance and support of the housing management system, to be funded from HRA balances in 2020-21 and incorporated into the budget setting process for 2021-22 and beyond.

661. TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Cabinet agreed that as a landlord, the council had a statutory duty to comply with relevant legislation to protect the health and safety of its tenants and leaseholders. The policies recommended in the cabinet report covered the six principal areas of health and safety compliance, where the council was required to have an adopted policy for the management of:

- Asbestos;
- Water Hygiene;
- Fire Safety;
- Passenger Lifts;
- Gas, and
- Electrical Safety.

It was recommended best practice that these policies were reviewed regularly, and Cabinet was recommended to conduct a formal review every two years. The proposed

policies would be ready for the launch of the council's new in-house Tenant and Leaseholder Service on 1 October 2020. East Kent Housing had been consulted in the preparation of these policies and would be required to deliver services in line with these policies during the intervening period.

Councillor Rogers spoke under Council Procedure 20.1.

Councillor Whitehead proposed, Councillor Everitt seconded and Cabinet agreed the following, to:

1. Adopt the proposed compliance policies as detailed in annexes 1 to 6 to 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 minor operational changes to the policies, as required;
3. Formally review the policies every 2 years.

662. PROCUREMENT OF 11 NEW REFUSE COLLECTION FREIGHTERS

Members were advised that the 2020/21 capital programme included provision for the replacement of a substantial proportion of the council's refuse vehicle fleet. The expected economic life span of a refuse collection vehicle was seven years. This was because of the heavy nature of the work and type of load the vehicles carried. The vehicles to be replaced were purchased in 2013. It would soon be no longer economical to maintain these vehicles and this would leave the council unable to deliver a full household waste service if they were not replaced.

For the efficient delivery of the in-house waste and recycling service, a comprehensive vehicle replacement programme was necessary in order to meet statutory obligations in terms of the collection of household waste as required by the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The option for leasing rather than purchasing vehicles was explored before the current capital programme was approved; however this would have a far higher cost and offered less flexibility to the council as the end user.

Cabinet noted that it was important that the decision to purchase these refuse collection vehicles was expedited due to the long lead time of 40 weeks from placing the contract to receiving the vehicles. Such types of vehicles were always built to order. This lead time had increased substantially as a result of the pandemic which had impacted on the supplier's manufacturing plant. The new open back vehicles had a load capacity of almost 10 tonnes compared with just over 6 tonnes for some of the fleet that they would be replacing. This would reduce the frequency of trips to the disposal site. The new vehicles were all open back which would improve resilience as the whole fleet would be interchangeable.

Cabinet further noted that six of the eleven vehicles to be replaced required extensive body refurbishments eighteen months ago. Those vehicles were now suffering similar wearing problems again. This issue would need to be addressed before a new fleet was delivered and officers were considering interim options. Again it was imperative that the new vehicles were ordered expeditiously to reduce the duration and cost of any interim measures to be put in place and in order to protect the resilience of this statutory service.

Councillor Hart and Councillor Towning spoke under Council Procedure 20.1.

Councillor Albon proposed, Councillor Everitt seconded and Cabinet approved Option 1 in the Cabinet report, which was to commit £2.2m from this year's approved capital programme budget on the purchase of 11No. refuse freighters.

663. SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL'S PLAN FOR RECOVERY

It was reported to Cabinet that since the outbreak of COVID-19, the council had been responding to the crisis caused by the pandemic. As the number of cases of COVID-19 nationally continued to fall, the government was now taking steps to slowly ease the restrictions in place, the Council now also needed to move both the council and the district towards recovery.

Cabinet would be simultaneously working on Recovery in tandem with the Response phase whilst keeping in mind that the situation had the potential to return to Response at any time if there was a second wave of infections. There was also the likelihood that the Recovery would span other Emergency Planning events including the end of the Brexit Transition Phase and that for much of it, staff and partners would be working remotely. It was also worth noting that the sheer scale and breadth of the social and economic impact caused by these circumstances meant that the district (and the country as a whole) would be entering uncharted territory which was hard to predict where it would end up.

As part of this work, Cabinet had put together a document 'Supporting Our Communities - TDC's plan for recovery'. This was a high-level outline of the steps that the Council would take to manage the recovery process. Its focus was around community and organisational leadership. The terms of reference had been developed for each work stream and were attached as annexes to the cabinet report. The other area of focus was the support for the re-opening of the High Street and Beach Management action plans.

Inevitably these plans needed to be adapted to what would be constantly changing circumstances as well as risks and opportunities as they arose. Cabinet would continue to be as collaborative as possible in this exercise. During this crisis the Council had been in discussions with town councils and engaged other elected Members both through the group leaders' meetings and fortnightly Member briefings.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1:

Councillor Garner;
Councillor Game;
Councillor Pugh.

Cabinet noted the proposed approach for the recovery from the consequences of COVID-19.

Meeting concluded: 5.58 pm