

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2022 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Ash Ashbee (Chair); Councillors Pugh, J Bayford, R Bayford, Kup and D Saunders

In Attendance: Councillors Albon, Austin, Keen, M Saunders, Shonk, Whitehead and Yates

787. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies made at the meeting.

788. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

789. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Ashbee proposed, Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 16 December 2021.

790. BUDGET 2022-23

Cabinet considered recommendations that came from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting that was held on 18 January 2022. At that Panel meeting, Members discussed Cabinet proposals for the Council Budget for 2022/23. Thereafter the Panel made the following recommendations back to Cabinet:

1. To allocate up to £125,000 from the New Homes Bonus allocation for the capital works required to the Ramsgate Eastcliff and Viking Bay coastal lifts to ensure they are in full working order for the foreseeable future;
2. To allocate the full remainder of the New Homes Bonus allocation as capital to provide additional in-house temporary accommodation;
3. To transfer £200,000 from the risk management reserve to a new climate risk and opportunity reserve.

Members confirmed the planned and cautious approach that was taken, combined with an efficient savings plan that enabled Cabinet to produce a balanced draft budget. Planning Council finances in this way meant the Council was on the right track for balancing the budget in the coming years.

A balanced budget position was supported in-part by the very welcome additional funding that was provided by Government the 2022/23 financial year. However, much of this funding was temporary and therefore careful consideration would be given to its use. Allocating these resources in the most appropriate and prudent way would help ensure that the Council moved into the medium term on the soundest financial footing possible. This was a prudent and responsible approach to use.

The council was committed to the delivery of a strategic response to the temporary accommodation needs of homeless families. Cabinet had already committed £1.6 million to the development of the first temporary accommodation project, providing 8 self-

contained flats, and following the completion of this project, would consider further projects to build a larger and more cost effective portfolio of properties.

This approach will be the best way to secure long-term savings in the costs of temporary accommodation. The relatively small amount available from New Homes Bonus would not be sufficient to deliver a further scheme and its use at this stage to offset the costs of borrowing is considered to be the most prudent option. Cabinet was exploring external funding options and additional future borrowing when a further temporary accommodation option is identified.

The funding required to address the lift issues has been estimated to be in excess of £230,000, in addition to on-going maintenance. As such, Cabinet was considering and pursuing other long-term sustainable funding options for the repair and on-going maintenance of our coastal lifts. With regard to the reserve transfer for climate change projects, the monies that sit in the Risk Management Reserve would be available for such projects as and when needed. Furthermore, Cabinet was also looking in this area for external funding opportunities as well. As such Cabinet did not view it necessary to transfer an amount to a dedicated earmarked reserve.

Accordingly, Cabinet agreed not to adjust the budget to accommodate any of the three recommendations from OSP and was going to therefore recommend the budget to Council for approval in the originally proposed form.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1:

Councillor Yates;
Councillor Whitehead;
Councillor Austin.

In response to comments made and questions asked by Members under 20.1; Cabinet explained that the Risk Management Reserve fund can be used for a broad range of purposes. The governance arrangements and approval processes are the same and can be used in the same way as the General Reserve. This fund could therefore be used for climate emergency projects.

Cabinet further said that the Council was always looking for suitable land for housing development and was currently looking at various sites. However this had to be done in a structured way.

Thereafter, Councillor David Saunders proposed, Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Cabinet agreed that:

1. The 2022-23 General Fund revenue budget be recommended to Council for approval;
2. The 2022-26 General Fund capital programme be recommended to Council for approval.

791. ASSET MANAGEMENT - INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

Cabinet the report on Westcliff Leisure Park which is situated along Royal Esplanade, and comprising two crescent shaped buildings of solid brick construction; surrounding the boating pool in the centre, (Grade II listed). There are seating areas in front of both buildings and a children's play area.

The current tenant at the Boating Pool in Ramsgate would like to sell their business, as the business was struggling to stay open and maintaining the property. The new tenants require a longer-term lease of 25 years as the building requires a lot of investment, as

well as some additional land to the side of the property. This would enable the new tenants to continue to invest and develop the property.

Members were advised that the rental at present was £10,500 per annum and it had been agreed that this would stay at the current rent for the first three years, enabling the proposed tenants to focus their investment in the redevelopment of the buildings. The proposal had no further financial implications to the Council as it did not offer any rent free period, or other lease incentives.

Councillor Albon spoke under Council Procedure 20.1.

Councillor Pugh proposed, Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Cabinet agreed the following:

1. To surrender the current lease agreements with the existing tenant;
2. A new lease with the proposed tenants for an extended term (25 years) at market rent for the premises listed in annexe 1 to the cabinet report;
3. To give delegated authority to the Director of Property to finalise the Heads of Terms for the Lease;
4. To give delegated authority to the Director of Law and Democracy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Estates and Economic Development, to enter into the relevant agreements, on the terms to be agreed;
5. To give delegated authority to the Director of Law and Democracy to prepare and complete the Lease and all other ancillary documents on the agreed terms.

Meeting concluded: 7.34 pm