

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 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, Crittenden, Duckworth, M Saunders, Shonk, Whitehead, Wing and Yates

808. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies made at this meeting.

809. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

810. 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 17 March 2022.

811. ASSET MANAGEMENT - OLD TOWN HALL

Cabinet considered the Old Town Hall report and the meeting was advised that the council wished to seek a tenant for the two-storey building under a new lease agreement. The council would appoint an agent to market the property widely and transparently, to ensure all interested parties have a chance to view, explore its potential and make an offer.

A letting would provide an ongoing revenue stream and help mitigate against its empty property costs. For example, this currently unoccupied building costs the council approximately £13,500 per year in rates, utilities, maintenance and insurance.

A significant amount of renovation work was required to bring the Old Town Hall up to standard and these renovations costs would be reflected in any lease deal to be agreed. These costs could either be reflected in the initial lease price asked, or by offering a rent-free period in the first year, or a reduced rent over one or two years; if required and was subject to negotiation.

The following Members spoke under council procedure 20.1:

Councillor Keen;
Councillor Yates;
Councillor Whitehead;
Councillor Duckworth.

Councillor Pugh proposed Councillor David Saunders seconded and Cabinet agreed the following recommendations:

1. To let the property via a commercial lease, detailed as option 1 in the cabinet report;

2. To give delegated authority to the Director of Property, in consultation with the Principal Surveyor to market the premises and negotiate Heads of Terms for a lease

and;

3. To give delegated authority to the Director of Law and Democracy to sign all documents necessary to give effect to the disposal.

812. TOWN CENTRE PARKING REVIEW UPDATE

Members discussed the motion that had been proposed by Councillor Crittenden and adopted by Full Council on 12 January 2022. The motion to Council observed that the growth of town centre residential developments throughout the District were putting pressure on residential and visitor parking, to the detriment of both residents and visitors.

Cabinet was advised that whilst it was within the Local Plan, in accordance with National Policy and consistent with climate change targets, that parking facilities would not be required or expected for residential development planning applications within town centres, this did not take into account the needs of workers, especially keyworkers, or residents with disabilities, who genuinely need access to their own transport. Few of those most affected were in a position to pay for resident parking schemes or annual season tickets for car parks. The result had been increased pressure on what limited parking was available in the streets surrounding town centres and beyond.

Thanet District Council recognised these challenges and was therefore committed to undertake a district wide impact assessment of increased pressures on both on and off street parking in all town centres arising from the expansion of town centre residential development. This would take into account relevant factors such as access to electric vehicle charging, public transport links, cycle storage and pedestrian safety (especially at night).

This review would be conducted in consultation with KCC, ward councillors, other stakeholders (e.g. public transport providers) and the public, in order to develop solutions that supported the community, recognising the need for some groups to have access to safe personal transport due to either work conditions or disadvantage. The review would also consider disabled parking provisions across the district. A well evidenced strategic review of parking across the district would help develop a district wide parking strategy.

The following Members spoke under council procedure 20.1:

Councillor Austin;
Councillor Wing;
Councillor Crittenden;
Councillor Whitehead;
Councillor Yates.

Councillor Saunders proposed, Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Cabinet agreed to adopt recommendation 3.1 (cited in the options section of the report) and agreed to undertake a well evidenced strategic review of parking across the district and then develop a district wide parking strategy.

813. MARGATE LEVELLING UP FUND: THIRD PARTY GRANT

Members considered the report on the Margate Levelling Up Fund and were advised that in June last year Cabinet approved the decision to submit a Levelling Up Fund bid to central government to enable EKC Group to deliver the Margate Digital campus. In

October 2021 the bid was successful and the council was awarded £6.3m to enable delivery of this project.

The Council was the accountable body for the Levelling Up Fund, and as such had an agreement with central government to deliver the project, as outlined in the funding submission. However, it would be the responsibility of EKC Group to deliver the digital campus, as they were the experts in the field of education.

This funding would enable the delivery of a state of the art digital skills and training provision in the town centre, which would undoubtedly support the whole district's economic recovery and levelling up of its communities, both in terms of training opportunities and pathways, as well as increasing footfall in the high street.

EKC Group would be provided with the money through a funding grant agreement which would include the conditions required by the Council, for monitoring and evaluation of implementation progress as well as the expectations in relation to delivery of the project.

Councillor Yates spoke under Council Procedure 20.1.

Councillor Pugh proposed, Councillor Kup seconded and Cabinet agreed the following:

1. To approve the use of Grants which exceed £250,000 to third parties to deliver the agreed Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities funded project:
 - £6,306,078 capital grant to the EKC Group, to deliver the Margate Digital project, identified in the Margate Levelling Up Funding bid;
2. That each grant agreement is signed under Deed, by the Director of Law and Democracy, and the Director of Finance and S151 Officer, and is witnessed by a Member of the Council.

814. MARGATE TOWN DEAL: PROJECT GRANT TO THIRD PARTIES

Cabinet discussed the report on the Margate Town Deal, project grants to third parties. The discussion confirmed that £22million had been allocated from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities that will be delivered by third parties.

The Margate Town Investment Plan included all those projects that would be delivered under this grant, and officers had been working with the Town Deal Board and delivery partners to progress the Green Book compliant business cases, in order to draw down the funding. The business case for the Creative Land Trust was completed last year and central government has awarded the funding for that project.

Trustees were currently being interviewed, and the Charity Commission has awarded the Trust with Charity status. This was an incredibly exciting time for the creative industries in Thanet, and the project brings with it significant opportunities for economic growth for the area. A capital sum of £6m was allocated to the development of the Creative Land Trust, with up to £900,000 in revenue to support participation and engagement for people in the district to engage with the creative sector, with a particular focus on building capacity and providing employment pathways.

Three more business case summary documents had since been submitted to central government which included the Coastal Wellbeing Intervention. As part of this programme of projects GRASS Cliftonville CIC was intending to deliver a project at the Oval Bandstand and Gardens.

In July 2021 the Council transferred the Oval Bandstand to GRASS Cliftonville CIC. GRASS Cliftonville CIC had developed a robust five year strategy, which set out a clear

commercial strategy to ensure that the new Cliftonville Pavilion was financially self funding on a sustainable basis. The Town Deal Funding would enable the delivery of improved facilities and help to unlock other funding.

In order to enable the Creative Land Trust and GRASS Cliftonville CIC to deliver, Cabinet was asked to agree the recommendations in the officer report.

Councillor Yates spoke under Council Procedure 20.1.

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

1. To approve the payment of Grants to third parties to deliver the agreed Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities funded projects. These grant payments are:
 - £6,000,000 capital grant to the Margate Creative Land Trust to deliver the outcomes identified in the Margate Town Investment Plan;
 - Up to £900,000 revenue funding for Participation and Engagement as part of the Scaling Margate's Creative and Production Intervention, and delivery of the Creative Land Trust;
 - £500,000 capital grant to GRASS for the Oval Bandstand and Gardens project;
2. That each grant agreement is signed as a Deed, by the Director of Law and Democracy and Director of Finance and S151 Officer, and is witnessed by a Member of the Council.

815. EXECUTIVE APPOINTED OUTSIDE BODY - MANSTON SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT (MSE) BOARD

Cabinet support was requested for the Leader of Council's choice of nominee to be appointed to the Manston Skills and Employment (MSE) Board, an Executive outside body.

At its meeting on 14 October 2021 Full Council agreed to add Manston Skills and Employment (MSE) Board to the list of Executive outside bodies and the number of Councillors to be appointed to it, as described at paragraph 1.2 of the Cabinet report.

Councillor Ashbee proposed, Councillor Pugh seconded and Cabinet agreed to nominate Councillor Reece Pugh to the Manston Skills and Employment (MSE) Board.

Meeting concluded: 7.57 pm