

EXTRAORDINARY CABINET

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 8 June 2021 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

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

In Attendance: Councillors Albon, Austin, Bailey, Dexter, Everitt, Fellows, Garner, Keen, Ovenden, Rogers, M Saunders, Shonk, Towning, Whitehead and Yates

727. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received at the meeting.

728. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

729. MARGATE TOWN DEAL UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

Cabinet considered an update report on the Margate Town Deal and agreed that the Town Deal would play a considerable part in the regeneration of a significantly important coastal town in the South East. This opportunity would help deliver on growth aspirations for the town's residents, businesses and visitors, which are clearly set out in the Margate Town Investment Plan.

Within the Heads of Terms there was an in principle allocation of up to £22.2m out of the initially requested £29m in the Margate Town Investment Plan. Since receiving the Heads of Terms, the Margate Town Deal Board and the project team had been working hard to identify those projects that best met the priorities for the Towns Fund and Margate, to ensure that there was a robust programme of projects that would support the vision for regeneration and levelling up.

Capital investment in developing a Creative Land Trust, refurbishing and redeveloping the Theatre Royal, improvements to Walpole Bay, the Bathing Pool and access to the Bay, including an opportunity to test business ideas relating to coastal wellbeing and access to the sea would help to create jobs, skills and employment pathways. Investment in the Oval Bandstand and Skate Park would provide opportunities to engage the communities living in the most deprived area of Margate, and would aim to engage and support young people in the town.

Improving the public realm, enabling people to move around Margate and Cliftonville more easily would help spread the growth opportunities and improve the look of the town centre and coastal strip in Cliftonville. Investment in some of Margate's heritage assets would also support the future of these much loved buildings and would enable them to grow and take advantage of the town's economic growth.

The programme was now moving into the second stage of its development that involved putting the business cases together to set out a roadmap for delivery. Cabinet looked forward to receiving more detail about the delivery and the progress of the Margate Town Deal Board and the project team over the coming months.

Councillor Garner spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Thereafter Councillor Pugh proposed, Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Cabinet agreed to note the report.

730. RAMSGATE FUTURE INITIATIVE AND LEVELLING UP FUND

Cabinet welcomed the opportunity provided to Thanet by Central Government as a Priority 1 area for the recently announced Levelling Up Fund. The priority for the Levelling Up Fund was to focus resources on areas of deprivation in education and skills, employment, productivity, and to those areas that would need support for economic growth and recovery following the impact of the pandemic. Thanet had some significant hotspots in the district where levelling up, as set out by central government, was needed. Two thirds of the most deprived Lower Super Output Areas were in Margate, and a successful offer from the Ministry of House, Communities and Local Government for the Town Deal would support the Town's levelling up requirement. The other third were in Ramsgate and significant government investment was required to help drive regeneration and job growth.

Members noted that the submission of a bid to the Levelling Up Fund would complement other opportunities that are available to Thanet such as the successful Future High Street Fund bid, Margate's Town Deal offer of up to £22.2m and the Heritage Action Zones. This funding opportunity would support the delivery of regeneration projects in Ramsgate, which would undoubtedly support the whole district's economic recovery and levelling up of its communities.

Communities in Ramsgate want job creation, opportunities for young people, enhancement of the Royal Harbour and investment to support the regeneration of the port of Ramsgate, improvements to the public realm and removing any opportunities for crime. Regeneration of leisure and retail spaces to encourage new businesses was also important to residents. The Ramsgate Levelling Up Bid would help to do some of this, and the wider Town Investment Plan for Ramsgate would include those things that cannot be picked up by the Bid. Whilst £20m in capital was a significant amount, it was worth noting that further work would be needed by all stakeholders to benefit from this investment from central government.

Cabinet further noted that there were a number of things that were required for the Levelling Up Fund. Delivery would need to start within the 2021/22 financial year. All delivery would be required by March 2024. There was up to £20m investment, which was a capital fund and the government was encouraging bids to include a local financial contribution representing at least 10% of total costs. Although the funding contribution does not form part of the Gateway criteria for the fund, there was an expectation that a contribution would be expected from private sector stakeholders, such as developers, if they stood to benefit from a specific project. Cabinet agreed that therefore there would be no expectation that the Council would be underwriting any financial contributions referenced by 10% match in the governments narrative that are required from the private sector.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1:

Councillor Austin;
Councillor Everitt.

After the discussion, Councillor Ashbee proposed, Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Cabinet agreed the following:

1. To approve submission of a Levelling Up Bid to the 18 June 2021 deadline;
2. To delegate authority to Chief Executive and the Leader of Council for final sign-off of the Levelling up Bid;

3. That the Council will not make a financial contribution in any form within the 10% financial contribution encouraged in the prospectus.

731. COST AND FINANCING OF DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCES MATTERS

Cabinet considered the report on the cost and financing of disciplinary and grievances matters and confirmed that it was the responsibility of the Council's General Purpose Committee and its Investigations and Disciplinary Sub-Committee to consider the substance of these matters. The report only addressed the necessary approval of budget required for the costs incurred to date and anticipated possible future costs. Cabinet further noted the concerns of the Director of Finance in regards to affordability of the current proceedings.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1:

Councillor Garner;
Councillor Yates;
Councillor Towning;
Councillor Bailey.

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

1. To approve the expenditure relating to these matters, in accordance with Rule 4 of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules;
2. That a one-off 2020-21 supplementary General Fund revenue budget of £247,000 be retrospectively approved for external legal costs already incurred in relation to on-going disciplinary and grievance proceedings, to be funded from earmarked reserves; and
3. That a one-off 2020-21 supplementary General Fund revenue budget of £486,000 be approved to create a financial provision for future anticipated external legal costs in relation to on-going disciplinary and grievance proceedings, to be funded from earmarked reserves.

Meeting concluded: 7.30 pm