

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2023 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

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

In Attendance: Councillors Austin, Everitt, Garner, Keen, M Saunders, Whitehead and Wing

887. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Pugh.

888. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

889. 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 12 January 2023.

890. 2023/24 BUDGET & 2023-27 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Cabinet had another discussion on the Council budget proposals for 2023/24 and 2023-27 Medium Term Financial Plan that were considered by Cabinet. These were largely the same as the ones presented at the Cabinet meeting on 12 January 2023. The key points were cabinet's recommendation of net spending by £3.5million or 19% of the budget. This was a significant increase at a time when the Council was facing the same cost increases as everyone else on fuel transport and pay. This decision was also being made in an economic environment where inflation was at a 40 year high. Cabinet was pleased to note that the proposals presented contributed to a balanced Council budget.

Cabinet also considered the recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel that came from their meeting held on 17 January 2023. The recommendation was asking Cabinet to "consider recommending to Council the inclusion in the 2023/24 General Fund Revenue Budget of a £35,000 allocation the appointment of a 3rd officer for the home energy services team who will provide a cold buster service, to be wholly funded from our existing Better Care Fund allocation."

Cabinet was asked by the finance Portfolio Holder to agree option 3 in the Cabinet report which advised Members to defer making a definitive decision on the matter until a further report was brought back to a future Cabinet meeting. This was because this issue had not been raised during the budget making process which saw 19 Star Camber sessions being held where various priorities were presented for consideration.

Councillor Yates spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

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

To defer any decision about the Cold Buster Service, until an assessment of the broad options for the use of the Better Care Fund is considered within a separate report to a subsequent Cabinet meeting. This will result in the budget being presented in its current form for approval to Full Council at its meeting on 9 February 2023.

891. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER - (THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL) NO. 5 (ATHELSTAN & ETHELBERG ROAD)

Cabinet considered the report on the proposed Public Spaces Protection Order and noted that Thanet District Council was committed to improving the environment and improving community safety. Directly relating to this commitment was the Council's ability to address anti-social behaviour and related complaints. A remedy to reducing the impact of behaviours affecting communities was the implementation of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). A PSPO was an order made by the Local Authority if it was satisfied on reasonable grounds that two conditions were met. These were:

1. That activities being carried out within a public place have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality or it is likely they will;
2. That the effect, or likely effect, of these activities is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature, such as to make the activities unreasonable.

The proposed PSPO area covering Athelstan & Ethelbert roads, including the 195 metre alleyway between the two had been responsible for 7% of all fly-tips in Thanet (from December 2020 to December 2021 data), and 32% of all FPNs issued in Thanet were in relation to offences on Athelstan Road. The PSPO seeks to ensure that households, landlords and agents take equal responsibility for the placement of waste, to reduce anti-social noise and to close off the alleyway between the two roads with gates.

During the public consultation on the proposal, of the 80 people from the community who responded 92% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals for this PSPO. It was being proposed that this order gives discretion and flexibility to officers to exercise enforcement of these provisions where it was believed to be having a detrimental effect. This PSPO (the 5th in the district) would be in place for a maximum 3 years as per the law, but would be reviewed to ensure it was effective in its approach in tackling issues that affect businesses and the public.

Councillor Keen and Councillor Austin spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor Kup proposed, Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Cabinet agreed to:

1. Exercise its powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to introduce a Public Space Protection Order;
2. Delegate any minor amendment of the PSPO to a Service Director.

892. NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING WATER SUPPLY AND TREATMENT

Cabinet discussed the notice of motion and Members were advised that the quality of bathing waters around Thanet was a critical part of the district's appeal to visitors and tourists and an essential part of the local visitor economy. There were 13 designated bathing waters in Thanet and data about water quality was last published in

November 2022. The results were published against raised standards for two bacteria types and showed that Thanet has 8 beaches rated as excellent.

Cabinet noted that the notice of motion presented to Council was fundamentally flawed in that the evidence demonstrates that over the last few years bathing water quality had been improving. That said, Members also noted that there were still instances of sewerage release, mainly as a result of an ageing network of combined sewers, combined with periods of heavy rain. During these incidents approximately 90% of the content was rainwater and surface water run-off.

Members acknowledged that there was always room for further improvement. Therefore, although the report was recommending to Cabinet that the motion be rejected, Cabinet would continue to work with statutory partners to drive through improvement. For example, Cabinet was already working with Southern Water and KCC to improve drainage within the district. The project at George Park in Westbrook was a successful example of this and further projects were planned, including at Dane Park in Margate to remove surface water from the network.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1:

Councillor Garner;
Councillor Everitt;
Councillor Wing;
Councillor Austin.

Councillor Ashbee proposed, Councillor David Saunders seconded and Cabinet agreed to:

1. Reject the Notice of Motion; and
2. Support the specific responses to the details of the Notice of Motion as set out in section 2.10, 2.11 and 2.12 to the Cabinet report.

893. NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Members considered the notice of motion that was referred to Cabinet by Full Council on 13 October 2022. Cabinet confirmed the Council's duty to provide good quality temporary accommodation was clear whilst managing the cost of this. Cabinet agreed that it was essential to ensure provision of the best possible service to homeless households. It was for these reasons that Cabinet had already supported the conversion of Foy House in Margate to provide temporary accommodation for 8 households and had proposed a budget including an additional capital allocation of £2.2m, which incorporated the council's 2023/24 allocation of new Homes Bonus, for a further temporary accommodation project in the Council's budget proposals for 2023/24.

The council had also invested in an expanded homelessness prevention service and recommended additional resources for homelessness for 2023/24 to help respond to the growing pressures as a result of the cost of living crises and the increasing costs and difficulty in accessing the private rented sector. Preventing homelessness was both more cost effective and ensured a better outcome for households at risk of losing their home. Cabinet had also reaffirmed its commitment to continuing the council's programme of building new council homes for rent, investing over £8m each year over the coming 10 years. The answer to the pressures on temporary accommodation was not more temporary accommodation, but more permanent

affordable homes. It was for this reason that Cabinet was asked to reject the notice of motion.

Councillor Whitehead and Councillor Austin spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

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

1. Reject the notice of motion, and
2. Support the response to the Notice of Motion on Temporary Accommodation set out in this report.

Meeting concluded: 8.02 pm