

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2023 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, Duckworth, Keen, M Saunders, Shonk, Whitehead and Yates

904. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies made that the meeting.

905. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

906. 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 26 January 2023.

907. MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Councillor Ashbee proposed, Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the extraordinary meeting held on 2 March 2023.

908. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE Q2

Cabinet discussed the corporate performance report and agreed that performance management was a key part of the corporate governance process as it added value by helping to ensure accountability of the performance of the council's services against the corporate objectives. This helped to encourage enhanced accountability and continuous improvement. This report set out, as part of the council's corporate performance process, 39 key performance indicators which were monitored to provide an indication of how the council was performing.

The update report did not look at every aspect of the Council's services and the data the Council collected, but provided an overview of progress against the council's key corporate priorities. The data for most of the corporate indicators is now available to view [Council website](#) at any time. It had been agreed that a six monthly report of the Council's Corporate Performance would be shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Cabinet to provide an opportunity to more closely review the direction of travel of the key service areas. This would allow sufficient time for actions and issues to be resolved between committee meetings and as the data for the corporate performance indicators was now available to view on the website at any time.

The report presented identified the data as at the end of Quarter 2 (July - September 2022). The data was captured within a new format to provide the public with clear and easy to access information on how key services were performing. Detailed graphs were also included to give a wider view of the direction of travel for each indicator. The Leader of Council thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for their

engagement and feedback surrounding the performance report at their meeting in February 2023. The intention was to return to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel after the election, setting out the position as at the end of Quarter 4.

Councillor Whitehead spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor Ashbee proposed, Councillor Saunders seconded and Cabinet agreed to note the latest performance for Quarter 2 (July-September 2022).

909. TLS KPI Q1 2022/23 - HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT

Cabinet discussed the 2022/23 housing performance report and observed that overall the tenant and leaseholder service team had maintained a steady performance in Quarter 2. As in Quarter 1, there were areas that were still requiring improvement and were being worked on by the team. The team was disappointed that the position for electrical safety had not notably improved. The Council had procured an additional contractor to assist with this and the contractor was expected to start during Quarter 3. Mears had also taken on another contractor to help meet demand.

Gas compliance remains at 100%. Gas Calls customer services statistics had dropped, but this was to do with the low amount of returns skewing figures rather than performance. The gas contract was coming to an end this month, therefore the return rate of surveys was something the Housing team would be picking up with the new contractor. The responsive repairs contractor, Mears continued to perform well, even though customer satisfaction had dropped. The score was still very high at 90%, and the quality of workmanship was also confirmed through a programme of post inspections.

A new set of key performance indicators had been agreed as part of the extension of the Mears contract to March 2025 and should help to drive up performance. The turn around times on void properties fell again in Quarter 2. Mears had since employed more subcontractors to provide additional resources in this area so there was an expectation for improvement over the second part of the year.

Finally, Cabinet also observed that rent arrears increased during Quarter 2 which was a reflection of what had been happening nationally. It was reassuring, however, that even though arrears increased, there had been a reduction, when compared to the same period last year and the year before.

Councillor Whitehead spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor Jill Bayford proposed, Councillor Saunders seconded and Cabinet agreed to note the contents of the report.

910. MARGATE WINTER GARDENS UPDATE AND DECISION

Members considered an update report on the Winter Gardens and noted that Cabinet last considered the Winter Gardens in September 2022. At that meeting, Cabinet confirmed the Council's commitment to the future of the Margate Winter Gardens. Cabinet also agreed on a number of specific actions designed to prepare for a marketing campaign to identify a suitable operator or commercial partner for the future. Cabinet remained fully committed to finding a suitable partner organisation that has the experience and expertise to remodel, refurbish and reopen this important heritage venue and provide it with a long-term sustainable future.

In September 2022, the Council published a timeline for this work and the Leader of Council was pleased to be able to report good progress against this timetable and the actions that were agreed in September. The Council had also completed the necessary structural survey work and the update report provided information about the condition of the building and the estimated cost of essential works. Work to complete detailed survey drawings of the building had been progressed and the searches and studies needed to inform decisions about the future.

Following an open Margate tender process the Council appointed specialist consultants, Counterculture Partnership LLP to complete a review of Thanet's evening and night time economy, with a focus on the role of the Winter Gardens. Work to complete this study had begun, with a focus on research to consider the food and beverage, cultural, and accommodation offers, Conference and Exhibition spaces and other venue opportunities in Thanet. This work would be used to inform the marketing campaign and the identification of an operator or commercial partner.

During December 2022 and January 2023 the Council ran a public engagement exercise, using the Your Voice Thanet platform. During this time there were 167 participants and 130 questions posted, demonstrating the strength of public feeling about the Winter Gardens in the area.

This feedback was going to be used to update the Frequently Asked Questions on the council's Margate Town Deal web pages. The next stage in this critical project was the appointment of a specialist agent to support the council with a professional marketing campaign and with the evaluations of proposals from potential operators of commercial partners. The Cabinet report recommended a procurement process to identify a suitable specialist agent and provides information about the scope of this work. It recommended a further report to the cabinet once this work was completed.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure 20.21.

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

Cabinet agreed that:

1. A specialist marketing agency is appointed, as set out in section 4 to the report;
2. The Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Economic Development, approves the marketing particulars for the Winter Gardens and the evaluation matrix to be used to assess operator and/or JV submissions;
3. A further report be considered by Cabinet following the completion of the marketing and evaluation exercise, setting out detailed proposals.

Meeting concluded: 7.39 pm