

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2022 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Jason Savage (Chair); Councillors Hart, Albon, Ara, Ashbee, Austin, Bailey, Bambridge, J Bayford, R Bayford, Boyd, Braidwood, Coleman-Cooke, Crittenden, Currie, Dennis, Dexter, Duckworth, Fellows, Garner, Huxley, Keen, Kup, Ovenden, Parsons, L Piper, Rev. S Piper, Pugh, Rattigan, Rawf, Rogers, Rusiecki, D Saunders, M Saunders, Scobie, Scott, Shonk, Shrubb, Smith, Tomlinson, Wallin, Whitehead, Wing, Wright and Yates

5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following Members:

Councillor Farrance;
Councillor Nixey;
Councillor Gregory;
Councillor Everitt;
Councillor Paul Moore;
Councillor Pat Moore;
Councillor Coleman-Cook;
Councillor Towning.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements made at the meeting.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) Minutes of the reconvened Council meeting of 8 September 2022

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by the Vice-Chair and agreed that the minutes of the reconvened Council meeting of 8 September 2022 held on 13 October 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair.

(b) Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Council of 13 October 2022

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by the Vice-Chair and agreed that the minutes of the extraordinary Council meeting held on 13 October 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair.

9. PETITIONS

(a) Report back on Winter Gardens Petition

Members noted the report.

10. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Both Mr Clements and Ms Cooper-Davis were not in attendance at the meeting to ask their respective questions. As a result those questions would be responded to in writing after the meeting.

(a) **QUESTION NO.1 FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC REGARDING HYDROGEN FILLING POINTS IN THANET**

Ms Gibson asked Councillor Bob Bayford, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Special Projects the following question:

“Hydrogen filling points are required in Thanet. Hydrogen conversion is the affordable and speedy means for the most polluting vehicles (trucks and vans) to become carbon neutral and to help Thanet achieve its commitment to reduce carbon emissions. For this to be feasible we need to have hydrogen filling points. Can the council facilitate this asap?”

Councillor Bayford responded as follows:

Hydrogen is being investigated as an option for heavy goods vehicles in Kent. For example, Ryze in Herne Bay will be the first supplier and distributor of hydrogen in the area. The conversion of larger vehicles to hydrogen is also an option to be considered when deciding upon the route forwards. We will work with KCC and our neighbouring districts to facilitate the installation of technologies which will enable the speedy route to lower emission transport and route to net zero overall.

Renewable electricity, such as wind or solar power, is needed to create green hydrogen through the electrolysis of water; therefore the infrastructure for these large energy suppliers must also be considered.

11. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

As Councillor Everitt had given his apologies the following question was going to be responded to in writing after the meeting.

(a) **QUESTION NO.1 FROM A MEMBER REGARDING TRANSPORTATION OF AGGREGATE AT THE RAMSGATE PORT**

Councillor Wing asked the following question:

“The replacement for berths 4/5 has now been in place for a number of months and is clearly being used by Bretts but can you confirm, when will they be applying to KCC for the fitting of a conveyor system to ensure they can discharge both sand and aggregate from their vessels into their cement batching plant and aggregate business? The lease agreement TDC has with Bretts suggests at Part 4; Improvements, that this work should have been started and completed!

Councillor Ashbee, Leader of the Council responded as follows:

A conveyor has not yet been fitted to the berth and this is solely the responsibility of Brett Aggregates to commission and manage. It is understood that Brett Aggregates are planning the provision of a new conveyor but a programme for installation has not yet been confirmed. As indicated in the Berth 4/5 FAQ's on the council's website, Kent County Council is the planning Authority responsible for Waste and Minerals which includes Brett Aggregates activity, not Thanet District Council.

The question also refers to Part 4 of the lease agreement, which references a requirement for Bretts to undertake improvements within 8 weeks of the date of the agreement. The agreement is dated 31st March 2006 and the improvements referenced

relate to the previous and now decommissioned berth. This requirement therefore has no relevance to the new berth.”

Councillor Wing asked a supplementary question as follows:

Members were advised that the Council was responsible for the transportation of gravel, whilst the berth was still inoperable. Given that these new delays were not caused by the council but by Bretts not having submitted a planning application in time. Could the Leader confirm that the Council was still paying for the transportation of the gravel that was being delivered by lorries? Could the Leader confirm whether the Council was paying for both the gravel and the delivery or just the delivery? Could Members finally have the audit report of Berth 4/5 including the total costs of the berth replacement, including costs of the gravel supplies in full breakdown?

Councillor Ashbee responded as follows:

As per the Independent Monitoring Officer’s recommendation, the audit of Berth 4/5 was currently underway. The provision for the lorries to transport the aggregate was only the Council’s responsibility only to the point where the Council had fulfilled its requirement to provide the berth. As soon as the final commissioning document was signed over shortly, the council would no longer have responsibility for the transportation of the aggregate. Once some high technical engineering details had been resolved, the commissioning document would have the final sign off. At that point the transportation of aggregate would become the responsibility of Bretts. The Leader and Shadow Leader had visited the Berth and found it to be an amazing engineering feat.

(b) **QUESTION NO.2 FROM A MEMBER REGARDING THE TOILET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Councillor Bailey asked the following question:

“The most consistent complaint I hear is regarding the condition and management of Thanet’s public toilets. The Council’s 4-year Corporate Statement includes an objective to:

“Undertake a full and thorough review of our public toilet facilities including providing incentives for businesses to make good quality facilities available to the public.”

Councillor Kup responded as follows:

To my knowledge, there have been toilet surveys; discussions with Town Councils; a Toilet Working Party and money allocated in the budget for toilet refurbishment. I previously enquired about the outcome of the Toilet Working Party in July 2021 but I am still not aware of a published strategy. With only a few months remaining, could you please update me on the progress of this corporate objective, is there a written strategy, what does it look like and when will it be implemented?”

“We know how important public toilets are to Thanet residents and visitors alike and we are currently commissioning condition surveys of all of these facilities, the results of which will help shape the provision and strategy moving forward, this will allow us to explore all opportunities for the provision of this service. In the meantime we are pleased to let you know that we are undertaking a programme of deep cleans of our public toilets during the winter period. This will mean that specific toilets will be closed for one or two days to allow the works to take place. Signs will be displayed on the facilities ahead of each temporary closure.

Deep cleaning is currently scheduled for the following facilities:

Crofts Place, Broadstairs and St Mildreds Bay accessible toilets

Station Road, Westgate and Westbay accessible toilets

Morrisons, College Walk, Margate

East Pier Yard, Ramsgate

The Centre, Margate

Please be aware that there may be unavoidable changes to this schedule.

In addition, we are undertaking external repairs and internal refurbishment to the Harbour Street toilets in Broadstairs; it is anticipated that they will be reopened on 21 December 2022.”

Councillor Bailey asked a supplementary question as follows:

The issue regarding toilets had been ongoing for some time. Why was it taking long for the Council to come up with a toilet management strategy? How could Members have faith that the current survey would lead to the production of the strategy?

Councillor Kup responded as follows:

There was a need to carefully consider the condition of the toilets and find a way of putting them into a condition that was suitable for residents and tourists visiting the district’s beautiful coastline. There had been conversations held by the Council and parish and town councils, which had led to the re-evaluation of the content of the strategy. The process had reached a stage where options were now being considered. It was hoped that the strategy would be published in the new year.

(c) **QUESTION NO.3 FROM A MEMBER REGARDING DEPLOYMENT OF COMMERCIAL BINS IN RAMSGATE**

Councillor Austin asked the following question:

“We all know waste management and recycling are challenging in Thanet. In Ramsgate we established a Litter Forum 5 years ago to link voluntary groups with TDC and RTC to improve street cleanliness and recycling rates.

We’ve consistently requested small street recycling bins, so were pleased in October to hear these would be installed across Thanet. We also heard with approval plans to remove large commercial bins from public areas to address the fly tipping they always attract. So when an army of new commercial-sized bins for both recycling and litter appeared without warning on Ramsgate’s streets recently in place of the small street recycling bins we’d been promised, we were understandably puzzled and disappointed. We can only conclude that TDC policy on managing street waste has changed radically since October – for Ramsgate at least. Could Cllr Bayford please explain our current approach and the rationale for these recent changes?”

Councillor Bob Bayford responded as follows:

“We are currently reviewing the usage of bring sites and accessibility for those residents who are unable to receive a recycling collection from their home. As a result of this we are trialling the implementation of 1100L mixed recycling bins at 16 different locations throughout Thanet, whereby residents and members of the public can recycle bottles, cans, tins and plastics. These locations are strategic based on the location of properties not receiving a recycling collection to make it accessible within walking distance but also to reduce fly tipping.

The 20 jubilee style mixed recycling bins have now been installed which includes 4 in Ramsgate Town, plus a 360L bin housing for mixed recycling to be installed outside Cavendish Street toilets.”

Councillor Austin asked a supplementary question as follows:

Why was there no discussion at all between the council and town and parish councils before the deployment of the commercial bins as this would have been very helpful had the parishes known about this deployment?

Councillor Bob Bayford responded as follows:

Communication between the Council and parish and town councils had greatly improved. The Council's Environmental Services Manager regularly attended the Litter Forum in Ramsgate and the Cabinet Member for that service area had also attended those meetings when available. Waste and Recycling Service was a responsive service. The service regularly received information about usage and failure of bins and litter in those areas where the deployment took place. The council constantly looked at reducing the problem of litter in streets and that is why the commercial bins were deployed in those selected areas across the district. It was not possible that each time the Council made an operational decision, that should be communicated to parish and town councils at all times before it was implemented.

12. NOTICE OF MOTION

(a) Motion regarding the campaign for Thanet to become a Plastic Free Community

Councillor Duckworth proposed and Councillor Albon seconded the following motion:

"Thanet District Council supports the campaign for Thanet to become a Plastic Free Community, reducing the flow of single-use plastic onto our streets and beaches.

Thanet District Council agrees to:

1. Put a Member on the local Plastic Free Thanet Steering Group;
2. Support Plastic Free Communities initiatives in its area;
3. Review the progress already made in the removal of single-use plastic items from its premises and operations, and use the information gathered to create a realistic timeline for completion of the process."

Councillor Duckworth gave a brief background to the motion and made the following points:

- Plastic Free Thanet was a new campaign that was launched on 31 July 2022;
- The campaign aimed at reducing the amount of single use plastic that would normally end up at Thanet beaches and streets;
- The campaign was part of the Surface Against Sewage Plastic Free Movement and was using their five step plan that was adapted for the local context;
- This plan included the following:
 - Engaging Thanet District Council (TDC) to pass a resolution to support for plastic free community status for the district;
 - Recruit Business Champions to work with businesses to remove three items as single use free plastic from their businesses to achieve plastic free champion status;
 - Work with community allies link with litter groups, local charities, arts institutions and schools to educate the community about being plastic free in fun creative ways;
 - Partner community events to run events with a focus on reducing plastic waste;
 - Form a steering group with representatives from the council, local businesses, the creative & cultural sector, local media, South Eastern Railway and Southern Water to meet twice yearly to drive the campaign forward.

Councillor Duckworth presented the following motion in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 3:

“Thanet District Council supports the campaign for Thanet to become a Plastic Free Community, reducing the flow of single-use plastic onto our streets and beaches.

Thanet District Council agrees to:

1. Put a Member on the local Plastic Free Thanet Steering Group;
2. Support Plastic Free Communities initiatives in its area;
3. Review the progress already made in the removal of single-use plastic items from its premises and operations, and use the information gathered to create a realistic timeline for completion of the process.”

Councillor Duckworth proposed and Councillor Albon that the motion be forwarded to Cabinet.

Councillor Albon proposed, Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Members agreed to debate the motion.

Councillor Bob Bayford responded to the motion as follows:

- Thanet District Council supported the reduction of plastic use in society especially single use plastic;
- Council understood the impact single use had on the environment and especially the local beaches;
- Over the past year TDC had run a successful Sustainability Steering Group and a large number of community groups had attended its meetings;
- Officers had worked with these groups to complete projects such as installing new bins to recycle plastic bottles along the coast;
- The Council would like to continue supporting these initiatives within its resources and financial means;
- Plastic cups had been removed from the Council’s meeting rooms and had continued to encourage staff to reduce personal use of single use plastics;
- The council was also considering communicating with its suppliers regarding requesting the reduction of use of these plastics in the Council’s purchases;
- TDC would continue to consider plastic alternatives wherever possible;
- Cabinet would support putting a Member on the local Plastic Free Thanet Steering Group.

During debate Members made the following comments:

- There is a need to know how much it was going to cost the Council by adopting the motion. A financial element to the motion would have helped Members make an informed decision;
- It would be difficult for an individual councillor to come up with a costing for a motion on such a wide ranging topic;
- Members recognised what the Council had already done and this included putting up planning notices with strips rather than cable ties on streets. This was also cost saving;
- Broadstairs Town Council had introduced a similar motion. Ramsgate Town Council were also looking to removing single use plastics within a timeframe and scope of the council’s resources;
- Adoption of this motion would help send a strong signal to the local businesses, schools and residents. It was hoped that this would help shape the behaviour of our local communities in less use of single use plastics;

- Disposable vapes were producing a concerning amount of trash and it was hoped that when this new steering group was set up it would find ways for addressing the clean disposal of vapes;
- This motion was to a large degree and with reference to the Council's operations an extension of the climate emergency motion that was adopted by TDC. This was therefore a sensible motion;
- The council should continue to push the message to stop the use of single use plastics;
- The Council could host an award for Pride In Thanet for a Plastic Free;
- The issues raised in the motion would also be raised at the newly established Youth Council and see what influence young people could have in this discussion.

Thereafter Members agreed that as the motion was regarding an executive function it be forwarded to cabinet in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.7 of Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) of the Council Constitution.

13. **LEADERS REPORT**

Councillor Ashbee, Leader of Council reported on a range of positive stories that demonstrate the work the Council was doing to deliver on the three corporate priorities - growth, environment and communities. The Leader further made the following points:

- Council published the details of all the sites that were being considered following the Call for Sites on Thursday 1 December, as part of the work being done to update the Local Plan. These could be viewed on the Call for Sites webpage:

[Link to Call for Sites webpage](#)

- The Visitor Information Service had been selected as a finalist in the 'Visitor Information Service of the Year' category The Beautiful South Awards for Excellence 2022/23;
- The Council was guaranteed either gold, silver or bronze and our final position will be announced on Tuesday 13 December at a ceremony in Brighton;
- The process to find a new operator for the Ramsgate Open Air Market had commenced. Potential operators would be invited to submit their Expressions of Interest, to be evaluated by a panel at the end of the marketing period. Once a preferred operator had been selected, procurement and due diligence would follow, along with stakeholder engagement;
- Regeneration in the district was progressing with government-funded programmes including the Margate Town Deal and the Levelling Up Fund for Ramsgate;
- A number of new opportunities to join the Council's Regeneration team and help drive some of the programmes forward had arisen. This included five new posts were advertised recently;
- Defra released its Bathing Water Report for 2022 on Wednesday 30 November. The district's thirteen designated bathing waters, eight had been classified as 'Excellent' and five classified as 'Good'. Viking Bay had improved from Sufficient to Good, meaning that all of the district's bays were now classified as either 'Excellent' or 'Good';
- Keeping Thanet's streets clean was a priority for the local communities. To support this, the Council was planning to introduce a PSPO on Athelstan and Ethelbert Roads, to reduce the amount of litter and other ASB in the area which we know has been a persistent issue. A public consultation was currently in progress to give residents the opportunity to comment and was open until Friday 9 December 2022;

- Council launched Sustainable Warmth Grant in November 2022, to help homeowners and tenants to apply for home improvements free of charge if they had both a home with a low energy rating and a net household income below £30,000;
- The Council was also undertaking a programme of deep cleans of its public toilets over the winter. During that time, some toilets would be closed for one or two days to allow the works to take place. Repairs were also being carried out at the Harbour Street toilets in Broadstairs;
- The council had purchased 20 new recycling bins, and the first of these have been installed on Northdown Road;
- The remaining bins would be installed in high streets and town centre locations across the district, by March 2023;
- Feeling safe was important for residents. That's why the Council worked together with some of the local schools on a recent campaign. The Council organised a poster design competition for local pupils in years 7-13 to submit designs to be featured on our eight knife amnesty bins. The eight winners each received a £50 multi-store gift card and their designs would be printed on the bins;
- The Thanet Youth Council for local 14 to 18 year-olds was launched at the inaugural meeting on Wednesday 30 November. Councillor Kup produced a fantastic video to help with the promotion of this and was very pleased with how the first meeting went. Fifteen young people attended and discussed knife crime, public transport, violence against young people, bins and parks;
- A new online engagement platform, Your Voice Thanet, had been launched, as a central hub that would pull together the Council's our public engagement and consultation activities into one easy to navigate place;
- It was hoped that the space would encourage feedback, discussion, engagement and involvement. It offered greater scope for the local community to shape and improve the work that done by Council;
- Thanet had 19 miles of stunning coastline and the district relied on the support of many different individuals, groups and organisations to help maintain and manage such an extensive stretch of coast. A new coastal stakeholder group was being created to provide a forum for local organisations and partner agencies to share information on their initiatives and activities with a focus on the Thanet coast;
- The Leader invited anyone interested to get in touch and said that the first meeting would be held in the New Year.

Councillor Whitehead as Deputy Leader of the Labour Group made the following points:

- The Group welcomed the engagement of Members by officers in the budget making process for the 2023/24 Council budget and thanked the Leader of Council and officers for this engagement;
- The additional funding for the housing services by the government was welcome support;
- The bathing water test results that had been conducted on Thanet beaches and confirmed good quality of the water was welcome news;
- The introduction of the PSPO in Athelstan and Ethelbert Roads was welcome;
- The Group also welcomed the new homes grant and deep cleaning of the toilets around the district;
- The Group was looking forward to the toilet management strategy.

The Leader responded to Councillor Whitehead's comments with the following points:

- Cabinet was looking forward to the clarification by government on what is meant by the term flexibility in housing numbers;
- Cabinet was also looking forward to the toilet management strategy.

Councillor Garner as Leader of the Green and Independents Groups made the following points:

- The Group welcomed the introduction of the PSPO in Athelstan and Ethelbert Roads;
- There was a need for to provide food banks and warm banks for those residents in need;
- The Group welcomed the establishment of the Youth Council.

The Leader replied to Councillor Garner's comments with the following points:

- The Local Plan was a hot topic;
- Cabinet hoped to get more control over housing development in the district.

Councillor Rev. Piper as Leader of the Thanet Independents made the following points:

- The Group felt that flexible must mean fewer houses being developed in the district;
- The Housing team had done well to secure funding for the service;
- The Group was looking forward to the operation of the Ramsgate Market under a new operator;
- The Group acknowledged the good work by the Leader of Council in keeping discussions going between the Council and Southern Water and was looking forward to the results of the discussions.

The Leader replied to Councillor Rev. Piper's comments with the following point:

- Currently there was national housing crisis and the Council needed to build more houses to add to its stock;
- The advice regarding housing numbers that could be developed in the district would be circulated to Members, once it had been received from Government.

14. REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL CHAIR TO COUNCIL

Councillor Rev. Piper, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, presented the report and the following points were noted:

- The Panel was given a briefing by the Leader of Council on the Manston Processing Centre at the meeting on 24 November 2022;
- The Leader's presentation on the effectiveness of the use of cabinet advisory groups in decision making that was meant to be made at the November Panel meeting was moved to January 2023 in order to accommodate the Manston briefing.

Members noted the report.

15. MID YEAR REVIEW 2022-23: TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Councillor David Saunders propose, Councillor Ashbee seconded and Members approved the report and annexes, including the prudential and treasury indicators that were shown in the report and the proposed changes to the 2022-23 Treasury Management Strategy Statement.

16. REVISED MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillor Ashbee proposed, Councillor Albon seconded and Council agreed an amendment to the motion that level of Member declarations for gifts and hospitality remains at £25.

Thereafter Councillor Ashbee proposed, Councillor Pugh seconded and Council agreed to the changes to the Council's Councillor code of conduct as proposed in Annex 1 to the officer report.

17. REVISED COMPLAINTS ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor Ashbee proposed, Councillor Pugh seconded and Council agreed the recommendations from the Constitutional Review Working Party and Standards Board as follows:

1. That paragraph 2.1.1 (Procedure on Receipt of a Complaint), section involving "Investigation Deadline", be amended to 20 days and
2. That the membership of hearing sub-committees continued to include an independent member as the Chair of the hearings.

Meeting concluded: 8.20 pm