

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2013 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor C. Hart (Chairman); Councillors Everitt, Fenner, D Green, Johnston and Poole

In Attendance: S Hart, King, Moores, Watkins and Worrow

52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received at this meeting.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

54. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

55. EQUALITY POLICY PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Equality Act (2010) came into effect in Autumn of 2010 and includes in its provisions a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies to have due regard, (when exercising their functions) to the following three main aims:

- 1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- 2 Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it by:
 - i. removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their characteristics;
 - ii. meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics;
 - ii. encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.
- 3 Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it by:
 - i. tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people with a protected characteristic and others.

In producing the draft Equality Policy document for public consultation, a pre-consultation exercise was undertaken in February 2013 with key stakeholders that included voluntary community sector organisations, staff unions and other partners. The Cabinet Member for Business, Corporate and Regulatory Services and lead Member for Equality and Inclusion were consulted.

Councillor Worrow spoke under Council Procedure Rule 24.1.

Councillor Fenner proposed, Councillor Johnston seconded and Members:

Approved the release of the draft Equality Policy and Action Plan methodology for public consultation as defined within paragraph four of the Cabinet report.

56. ADOPTION OF CLIMATE LOCAL KENT

The Climate Local Kent Commitment was signed by the Chair of the Kent Forum at the Local Government Association conference in September 2012. In line with the Thanet District Council commitment to the green agenda as reflected in the Council's priority 6 in the current Corporate Plan, Cabinet was asked to adopt the wider Climate Local Kent Commitment.

Councillor Poole proposed, Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members agreed:

1. To adopt the Climate Local Kent commitment set out in Annex 1 of the report in the context of the Kent wide targets listed in Annex 2 to the report. Actions in support of the targets will be taken forward as specific projects, and these will be agreed separately through the appropriate processes;
2. That as an additional local target Cabinet supports the aim to replace the lighting installations in our multi-storey car parks and main buildings by LED lighting where this is appropriate and safe to do, and where the investment is covered by energy and maintenance savings.

57. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The current Corporate Plan 2012-16 that was approved in April 2012 identified 33 corporate projects whose implementation is in progress. Twenty four projects were on track with the remaining nine reported as being behind or at risk of falling behind schedule. All in all, good progress had been made against the priorities in the Plan.

There were some major highlights to note which included the following:

- Two new cremators and a new abatement system had been installed and commissioned at the Crematorium;
- Solar panels had been installed at the Council offices;
- The Housing Strategy had been adopted by the Council;
- Improvements had been made to the Ramsgate Port and Harbour through Interreg Patch funding;
- The Council tax discount scheme had been approved;
- The Margate flood and coast protection scheme was almost complete;
- Regarding the affordable housing project in Ramsgate – 6 units had been purchased so far;
- Housing allocations policy had been out to consultation;
- One property had been added to the list of assets of community value;
- The 2013/14 Community Safety Plan was being developed.

The Council had to second some officers from the Food Hygiene Inspection Team to Manston Airport on a short term basis, to inspect food being imported into the country.

This was because the Airport had been designated as a food port of entry and required an appropriate staff complement to carry-out food inspections.

Councillor Fenner proposed, Councillor Johnston seconded and Members agreed:

To note the Council's performance and agreed the remedial actions listed in the Corporate Performance Report, in Annex 1 of the Cabinet report.

58. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO END OF JANUARY 2013

The Budget Monitoring report as at end of January 2013 showed a balanced budget position against the General Fund. Savings had been identified particularly in Operational Services which would contribute towards the redundancy costs that related to the restructuring of the waste collection service. Additional income and savings of £292,000 had been identified for the Housing Revenue Account due to rental income, savings on the repairs budget and apportionment of pension costs.

Cabinet Members expressed their concern regarding the request to write off debts in excess of £20,000. Sue McGonigal, CEx advised Members that these were technical write offs of irrecoverable debts as there was little realistic chance of recovering the debts. Leaving the debt in the financial statements would risk Council getting a qualified audit report as Council may be deemed to have included in their financial statements spurious income.

Officers would continue to pursue the recovery of those debts and if they were to be recovered at a later date, they would be brought back into the financial statements as income. Cabinet Members requested for an additional report explaining what efforts had been undertaken by Council to recover the debt from Mr X.

Councillor Everitt proposed (subject to the advice given by the CEx), Councillor C. Hart seconded and Members agreed the following:

1. To note the projected outturn position for 2012/13 for the General Fund;
2. To note the virement of £80k from the contingency budget as detailed in paragraph 5.1 of the Cabinet report;
3. To note the projected outturn position for 2012/13 for the Housing Revenue Account;
4. To note the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme and approve the Housing Revenue Account capital programme virements as per the table in Annex 4 of the Cabinet report;
5. To note the General Fund Capital monitoring and approve the virements identified in Annex 5 to the Cabinet report;
6. To note that the New Homes Bonus allocation for the Dalby Square project will now be drawn down over the life of the project rather than in year one;
7. To approve the debt write offs identified in the Cabinet report;
8. That an additional report be brought back to Cabinet detailing measures that had been taken to recover the debt owed by Mr X.

59. NOTICE OF MOTION REFERRED BY COUNCIL - PROPOSED STREET LIGHTING POLICY, KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Cabinet Members were concerned with Kent County Council proposals to switch off street lights for some parts of the Thanet as part of a County wide strategy. The main

concern was around community safety for Thanet residents and the impression created as an entry point into the country if such proposals were to be implemented.

There was a suggestion by Cabinet Members that other options for making savings that included the use of energy saving lights and better design could be explored. They said that it would also be helpful if a proper public consultation was carried out to create wider awareness of such proposals.

Councillor Everitt proposed, Councillor Johnston seconded and Members agreed the following:

1. That Cabinet would like to add their disquiet to the proposal by Kent County Council to switch off some of the street lighting in Thanet;
2. That the CEX writes to Kent County Council and request for additional information regarding the arrangements for progressing the proposal for switching off some street lights in Thanet;
3. That the CEx in her letter invites Kent County Council to engage Thanet District Council in discussion regarding this proposal to switch off street lighting in some parts of Thanet.

60. REPRESENTATION ON AN EXECUTIVE APPOINTED OUTSIDE BODY - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (RURAL COMMISSION)

Members considered the nomination to replace Councillor Grove as the Thanet District Council representative on the Local Government Association (Rural Commission).

Councillor C. Hart proposed, Councillor Poole seconded and Members agreed:

That Councillor Johnston be the new nomination to the Local Government Association (Rural Commission).

Meeting concluded: 7.45 pm