

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2016 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Wells (Chairman); Councillors L Fairbrass, Brimm, Crow-Brown, Stummer-Schmertzing and Townend

In Attendance: Councillors Bayford, Game, I Gregory, Savage, Taylor-Smith, Ashbee, Jaye-Jones, Johnston, Rusiecki, D Saunders and M Saunders

357. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received at the meeting.

358. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

359. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor L. Fairbrass proposed, Councillor Crow-Brown seconded and Cabinet agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 28 July 2016.

360. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT QTR 1 2016-17

Members considered the report which set out the performance of Council services for the quarter ended 30 June 2016. The meeting was informed that this report was in a new format based on corporate priorities and values and had been shared with the Corporate Performance Review Working Party on 23rd August. Some recommended changes to the report by the working party were incorporated.

Members expressed satisfaction with the presentation format of corporate performance information for the council.

Councillor Wells left the Chamber and Councillor L. Fairbrass chaired the meeting (7.15 pm).

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1:

Councillor Bayford;
Councillor Savage;
Councillor Taylor-Smith;
Councillor Game;
Councillor I. Gregory.

Councillor Crow-Brown proposed, Councillor Brimm seconded and Members agreed to note the Council's performance.

361. FINAL OUTTURN 2015/16

Members were advised that the General Fund was subject to a reduced budget and it was an achievement to stay within the budget, although this did require the use of earmarked reserves. The need to use reserves has been highlighted in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Cabinet noted that the most significant items were the cost of settlements regarding live animal exports, which amounted to £1.8million last year, and the need to set aside £2million for potential risks/insurance, largely in relation to the impending Health & Safety Executive prosecution.

Councillor Townend proposed, Councillor Brimm seconded and Members approved the proposed movements to earmarked reserves as outlined in paragraph 2.4 of the Cabinet report.

362. BUDGET MONITORING QTR1 2016-17

Cabinet considered the budget monitoring report for 2016/17. The report forecasted a break-even position with no major variances for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme. Members noted some challenges that the council still faced.

Councillor I. Gregory spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1.

Councillor Wells returned to the Chamber (7.26 pm).

Councillor Townend proposed, Councillor Stummer-Schmertzling seconded and Cabinet agreed:

1. To note the forecast position for 2016-17 for the General Fund;
2. To note the current Housing Revenue Account position;
3. To note the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes and agreed the budget changes detailed as per Annex 1 and Annex 2 (to the report) for the General Fund and HRA respectively.

363. CREATING A RESILIENT FUTURE FOR THANET'S MUSEUMS

An amendment to the report was made at the meeting to Section 2.1.3 of the report (Dickens House Museum) wherein it is indicated that both the caretaker and honorary curator live on the property. The correct position was that only the caretaker lived there.

The vision is to create a sustainable museum service run to the maximum benefit of residents and visitors. This does mean that there are difficult decisions to be made, and we want to make sure that these decisions are made with the best advice and alongside the community.

The Heritage Lottery Fund provided an opportunity to invest in creating a clear plan to achieve this vision. This included the opportunity to resolve issues around Dickens House Museum that had been going on for some time. It also offered an opportunity for creating a state-of-the-art museum for Margate that is the best environment for our heritage collections and opens up a Grade II* listed building, currently in a derelict state.

Council would like to work closely with local volunteers to develop their skills and establish the best management models for the museums. There was support to such efforts from Historic England, Margate Museums Trust, Dickens House, Dickens Fellowship, and Ramsgate Civic Society.

The following Members spoke under Council Procedure Rule 20.1:

Councillor Johnston;
Councillor Bayford;

Councillor Taylor-Smith;
Councillor Savage;
Councillor Game.

Councillor L. Fairbrass proposed, Councillor Stummer-Schmertzling seconded and Cabinet agreed the following:

1. To complete an initial, and any necessary subsequent applications, for up to £250,000 funding from Heritage Lottery Fund through the Resilient Heritage programme in order to undertake a full strategic review of museums, including feasibility studies, business planning, legal advice, and governance reviews;
2. To pursue the potential of establishing a new museum on the Tudor House site incorporating the collections from both current sites of the Margate Museum, and subject to a fully costed business case agrees to the establishment of the same;
3. To establish the Dickens House Museum as a formal Trust and register this with the Charity Commission;
4. To seek the transfer of the Joyce Smith bequest into the new Trust, and seek agreement with the Dickens House Fellowship to utilise the funds in line with the bequest to support the full costs of operating the museum, backlog maintenance, and any necessary feasibility work;
5. To take this opportunity to formally acknowledge and thank volunteers across Thanet whose hard work and dedication are continuing to support the museums.

Meeting concluded: 7.45 pm