

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2017 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillors Ashbee, Bambridge, Bayford, Braidwood, Buckley, Campbell, G Coleman-Cooke, Connor, Constantine, Crow-Brown, Curran, Dawson, Dennis, Dexter, Dixon, Edwards, J Fairbrass, L Fairbrass, Falcon, Fenner, Game, I Gregory, K Gregory, Grove, Hayton, G Hillman, Howes, Jaye-Jones, Johnston, Martin, Matterface, Parsons, Partington, L Piper, S Piper, Rogers, Rusiecki, D Saunders, M Saunders, Savage, Stummer-Schmertzing, Taylor, Taylor-Smith, Tomlinson, Townend, Venables and Wells.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors K Coleman-Cooke, Day, Dellar, Evans, Larkins, L Potts, R Potts, and Shonk.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice Chairman and agreed, that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 13 July 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations were offered to Councillor Venables on his recent election.

The Chairman announced that former Councillor Gerry Glover had recently passed away. Members paid tribute to his accomplishments and all present stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PETITIONS

(a) Petition Regarding 2017 Parking Charges

Members noted the report.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

(a) Question 1 from a member of the public regarding the presence of far right hate groups in Thanet

Ms Crawford asked the Leader the following question:

"Will this council condemn the presence of Far Right hate groups in Thanet? The White Lives Matter march last year in Margate -which enabled people to talk blatantly about eugenics outside the Turner Contemporary and the planned Britain First Rally on the 14th October cannot be acceptable in our area."

The Leader responded with the following points:

- The Council condemned the presence of any hate groups, they were not welcome in the District.
- The Council and the Police had a legal obligation to facilitate peaceful protest.
- Resources were in place to deal with any issues that may arise from the rally; however officers did not expect any disorder to take place.

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(a) Question 1 from a Member regarding Rough Sleepers

Councillor Matterface asked Councillor Reverend Piper the following question:

“Could the cabinet member please give me the most up to date statistics for rough sleepers and the insecurely-housed in Thanet?”

Councillor Reverend Piper responded with the following points:

- Thanet had seen a significant increase in rough sleeping in recent years, this mirrored a national trend. At the last annual audit conducted in autumn 2016, there were 33 people rough sleeping in the District.
- A significant cause of the increase in the number of rough sleepers was unaffordable private sector rents.
- In addition to rough sleeping there were 2500 households registered on the housing list who had a housing need.
- In 2016 there were 880 homelessness applications, of which the Council prevented approximately a third from becoming homeless.

Councillor Matterface followed up her question by asking what the Council would do to provide a long term solution to the growing problem of homelessness?

Councillor Reverend Piper responded that the Winter Shelter project would run over the winter period.

(b) Question 2 from a Member regarding Invest Thanet

Councillor Johnston asked the Leader the following question:

“Could the Leader please confirm if anyone has been found to replace the Chair of Invest Thanet?”

The Leader responded with the following point:

- A new Chairman had been identified, and would be made public in the autumn when the other board members would also be confirmed.

Councillor Johnston followed up her question by asking if the Leader could confirm that he would personally attend as many outside meetings as possible where there was an opportunity to put Thanet’s name forward for investment opportunities.

The Leader responded with the following points:

- The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise Services was the main contact within the Invest Thanet Board.
- The Leader had attended multiagency activities across the South East and Kent, and had taken up two national body positions to further raise the profile of Thanet and what it had to offer.

(c) **Question 3 from a Member regarding the proposed Britain First March**

Councillor Constantine asked the Leader the following question:

“What steps has the Council taken to limit the negative impact on the community of Thanet of the proposed Britain First March (October 14th 2017) given that this group is racist and xenophobic and in the light of recent atrocities in London, Manchester Barcelona, Finland, Charlottesville and other places.”

The Leader responded with the following points:

- Kent Police were aware of the protest and would endeavour to minimise any potential disruption to the local community.
- Police had an obligation to facilitate peaceful protest and have experience in planning for, and policing, this kind of event.
- The Council would meet with partner agencies to offer reassurance to the public. In the past, joint briefings had been held for residents and local businesses that had been impacted upon.

Councillor Constantine followed up her question by asking what further steps the Council would take to promote and foster good relations between sections of the community, given its public sector equality duty, and the rise in fear toward one section of our community, ie Muslims.

The Leader responded that the Council had a good track record, which stretched across previous administrations, of fostering good relations throughout the District. He expected this to continue and not be blown of course by a specific event.

(d) **Question 4 from a Member regarding the return of ferry services to Ramsgate**

Councillor Bayford asked Councillor Stummer-Schmertzing the following question:

“Would the Cabinet member for Regeneration and Enterprise services advise as to what progress has been made towards bringing a ferry service back to Ramsgate?”

Councillor Stummer-Schmertzing responded with the following points:

- Additional dredging ensured that the Port was ready for any potential ferry operators.
- A South East Local Enterprise Partnership bid was submitted, which although not successful raised the profile of the Port significantly.
- A Port consultant was appointed to develop business models for potential operators to ‘plug’ into. This was presented to the logistics market, ferry operators, investors and other cross channel ports.
- The Council was part of the Kent Strategic Freight Group.
- The Council had engaged with the whole cross channel market, in the UK and Europe, to spread the word that the Port was open and ready for business.

Councillor Bayford followed up his question by asking what the alternative would be if a ferry service did not return to the Port.

Councillor Stummer-Schmertzing referred Councillor Bayford to an options paper produced in July 2015. This document contained a number of alternative options for the Port.

8. NOTICE OF MOTION

It was noted that no motions on notice had been received in accordance with council procedure rule 3.

9. LEADERS REPORT

During his report the Leader covered the following areas:

- Council staff were praised for their work in accommodating 120,000 visitors to the District over the bank holiday weekend.
- Between 1 April 2017 and 31 August 2017, car parking income had increased by £92,000 compared with the same period last year.
- During August, 63 outlets were inspected by Environmental Health officers to ensure public health, and 284 littering fixed penalties were issued.
- A task force had begun work in Cliftonville West, in collaboration with the A Better Cliftonville community group, to promote responsible tenant and resident behaviours.
- The Council presented its work to address rogue landlords at a London conference in July 17.
- There was cross party support for the continuation of the Winter Shelter programme. Last year 23 of the 25 regular users had successfully found permanent accommodation; those involved were thanked for their effort.
- There had been 42 reports of traveller incidents this year, compared with just five, five years ago.
- The Council was the first in the South East to obtain funding from the migrant impact fund.
- Thanet had more empty homes than any other Kent district, however the Council's action to address this made it the highest performing Council for bringing empty homes back into use in Kent.
- In 2016/17 the Council bought 126 empty homes back into use, and the Council worked in close partnership with Kent County Council's No Use Empty initiative.
- The Chief Planning Inspector had recently indicated that any Local Plan not filed by 31 March 2018 would be subject to a new method of calculating housing numbers. It was important for the Council to adopt a Local Plan by this deadline because, given the national political appetite to build more houses, it was possible that the new calculation method would require more houses to be built in the District than the current method.

Councillor Bayford as Leader of the Conservative Party responded with the following points:

- He welcomed the positive news highlighted in the Leaders report and echoed gratitude to Council staff for their efforts.
- Concentrated visitor numbers in certain areas of the District could give rise to public safety issues. A review to manage the negative impacts of tourism maybe required.
- While it was right to highlight the need to adopt a Local Plan by the 31 March 18 deadline, this should not be used to pressure Members into agreeing a Plan that they were not happy with.
- In addition to the points covered in the report, it was good to note the opening of the Weatherspoon's pub on Ramsgate seafront, it was an impressive transformation of a previously sad looking building.

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

- The Weatherspoon's pub had received a lot of publicity recently. The property had benefited from £4.5 million of investment, and it was hoped that 120-150 new jobs would be created from its opening.

Councillor Matterface as leader of the Labour Party made the following points:

- Manual road sweepers were required in addition to mechanical sweepers as roads that were busy with parked cars could not be mechanically swept.
- Would the anonymous donor that had previously helped to fund the Winter Shelter project do so again this year? Credit should be given to the volunteers and agencies that helped to run the project last year.
- Was a review carried out following the programme last year?
- In addition to empty residential properties, consideration should be given to empty retail units, particularly ones owned by the Council. Was there an update regarding the Fort Road Hotel and the newly closed Store 21 in Margate?

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

- All options would be considered regarding the Winter Shelter project for this year. It was believed that the anonymous donor would assist again.
- A review was carried out following the Winter Shelter project last year, a copy of the report would be sent to Councillor Matterface.
- The Leader expected the Fort Road Hotel to be included in a report on assets that Cabinet would consider in the near future. He offered to look into the closure of Store 21.

Councillor Grove as leader of the Independent Group made the following points:

- It was good to hear of the empty properties that had come back into use through the Council's intervention.
- The seafront at Ramsgate still needed attention, although the opening of Weatherspoon's was good.
- It was frustrating that the legal process required to move travellers from a site was required to restart every time a new vehicle arrived. This could lead to spiralling legal costs for the Council.

The Leader replied to Councillor Grove's comments to note that he shared his frustration regarding the law around the moving on travellers.

10. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Councillor D Saunders, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (OSP), presented his report and the following points were noted:

- Since the last meeting of the Council, the OSP and the Working Parties had met on two occasions.
- The Dreamland Working Party met on 4 July 2017 and the conclusions were included in the Council report.
- A working group, consisting of the entire OSP would hold three workshops to conduct a review of the Draft Local Plan.

11. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2016/17

It was proposed by Councillor Townend, seconded by the Leader and Members agreed the recommendations as shown in the report, namely:

"That Council:

- Notes the actual 2016/17 prudential and treasury indicators in this report.
- Approves the Annual Treasury Management report for 2016/17."

12. CHANGES TO COMMITTEES, PANELS AND BOARDS – 2017/18

PROPORTIONALITY

The Chairman proposed, the Vice Chair seconded and Members agreed option 1 as detailed at paragraph 2.5.1 of the report, namely;

“That a seat be added to the Planning Committee and that seat allocated to the Conservative group and a seat be removed from UKIP group and allocated to the Labour group. That one seat is removed from the Licensing Board and the UKIP group loses that seat, in addition a further seat on the Licensing Board be removed from the UKIP group and that seat be given to the Labour Group. That a seat on the Overview and Scrutiny Panel be removed from the UKIP group and given to the Conservative group. That a seat on the Governance and Audit Committee be removed from the UKIP group and given to the Conservative group. That a seat be removed from the General Purposes Committee and the UKIP group loses that seat. That a seat is removed from the Boundary and Electoral Arrangements Working Party (BEAWP) and the UKIP group loses that seat. That a seat is removed from the Constitutional Review Working Party (CRWP) and the UKIP group loses that seat.”

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

The Chairman proposed, the Vice Chair seconded and Members agreed the proportionality between groups as shown in Members notes, namely;

	TDC Members	UKIP	Conservative	Labour	Indep. Group	Parish/ Town Council
Joint Transportation Board	7	3	3	1	0	1

NOMINATION OF MEMBERS TO SERVE ON COMMITTEES

The group leaders advised of the following nominations to committees:

Committee / Group	Current Position	New Position	Change to Nominations
Planning Committee			
UKIP	8 seats	7 seats	Councillor R Potts removed*
Conservative	5 seats	6 seats (New nomination needed)	Councillor Ashbee nominated*
Labour	1 seat	2 seats (New nomination needed)	Councillor Matterface nominated
Planning Committee Reserves			
UKIP	8 seats	7 seats	Councillor R Potts and Councillor S Piper nominated to fill vacant reserve seats.*
Conservative	5 seats	6 seats (New nomination needed)	1 vacant reserve seat
Labour	1 seat	2 seats (New nomination needed)	Councillor Constantine nominated
Licensing Board			
UKIP	8 seats	6 seats	Councillor Brimm and Councillor Howes removed*

Labour	1 seat	2 seats (New nomination needed)	Councillor Johnston nominated
Overview and Scrutiny Panel			
UKIP	Cllr Martin	New nomination needed	To be confirmed
UKIP	8 seats	7 seats	Councillor Martin and Councillor S Piper removed*. Nomination to 1 vacant seat to be confirmed.
Conservative	5 seats	6 seats (New nomination needed)	Councillor Martin nominated*
Governance and Audit Committee			
UKIP	8 seats	7 seats	To be confirmed
Conservative	5 seats	6 seats (New nomination needed)	Councillor Evans nominated*
Labour	1 seat	1 seat	Councillor Venables nominated to replace Councillor Campbell
Governance and Audit Committee Reserves			
UKIP	8 seats	7 seats	To be confirmed
Conservative	5 seats	6 seats (New nomination needed)	1 vacant reserve seat
General Purposes Committee			
UKIP	6 seats	5 seats	Councillor Hillman removed*
BEAWP			
UKIP	5 seats	4 seats	Councillor Dellar removed*
CRWP			
UKIP	4 seats	3 seats	To be confirmed
Joint Transportation Board			
UKIP	5 seats	4 seats	Councillor Dennis removed*
Labour	No entitlement	New nomination needed	Councillor Johnston nominated

*Nominations advised following the meeting.

13. **REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

It was proposed by Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Crow-Brown and Members agreed the recommendation as shown in the report, namely;

“That Council agrees that Cllr S Piper replaces Cllr L Fairbrass as the TDC representative to the East Kent Housing Board.”

Meeting concluded: 8.05 pm