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COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2017 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bambridge, Dawson, Day, Dexter, Grove and Howes.

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 7 September 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PETITIONS

No petitions had been received by the Council in accordance with the petition scheme.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

No questions had been received from the press and public in accordance with council procedure rule number 13.

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

It was noted that no questions had been received from Members of the Council in accordance with council procedure rule 14.

8. NOTICE OF MOTION

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:

- Central Government and the main opposition parties were in agreement that there was a need for accelerated house building.
- The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had launched a consultation on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.
- The Chief Planning Inspector had indicated that a local plan submitted after 31 March 2018 would be subject to a different method of calculating housing numbers. This could result in an increase of 3000 more houses than currently calculated for the local plan period.
- The Council had won the prestigious Housing Ready initiative from the Housing and Finance Institute.
- Currently there was no evidence to suggest the existence of a viable aviation solution at the former Manston Site.
- Following the failure to merge the four East Kent Councils, an additional £2million of saving were required to balance the budget for the coming financial year.
- Thanks were offered to Mr Kenyon former Director of Community Services, for his work over the last two years. Mr Kenyon had left the Council to undertake a leadership programme aimed at aspiring Chief Executives.
- Dreamland would exit Administration at the end of October. Over half a million people had visited since it reopened on 26 May 2017.
- The compulsory purchase order compensation had been agreed for the Fort Road Hotel, this would allow the Council to consider options for disposal of the asset.
- A meeting had been planned with the East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust's (EKHUFT) Chief Executive regarding the Sustainability Transformation Partnership (STP) and the Canterbury Hospital Campaign, however the Chief Executive and Chair of Governors had both left their roles before this meeting could take place. Interim managers were now in place and the Council awaited further developments.

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

- It was good to hear of Dreamland's success. The Dreamland project had been initiated when the Council was led by the Conservative group.
- Despite the 31 March 2018 deadline, it was important that the Council agreed a local plan that was right for the District. DCLG consultation was underway which proposed that the number of houses in local plans submitted within the last five years could be subject to recalculation and increased by up to 40%.
- If a DCO of the former airport site went ahead it would override the Council's local plan. The current plan for the former airport site was a poor proposal; the site should be separated from the local plan.

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

- Central Government was dictating to local Councils the number of houses to be built through the local plan process,

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

- The following two questions remained outstanding from previous Council meeting.
 - Was the usage of the Thanet Campus site restricted to educational purposes?
 - What was the status of the Store 21 site in Margate High Street that was owned by the Council?
- Council planning officers and Members of the Planning Committee would need to keep abreast of any changes to the National Planning Policy Framework following completion of its consultation process.
- There were concerns at the prospect of more land for housing and the need for accompanying infrastructure such as schools, roads and hospitals.

- Why had the decision to dispose of the Fort Road Hotel not been subject to a scrutiny review despite being called in by Members?
- A meeting of the Cabinet Advisory Group formed to monitor EKHUFT, had been cancelled at short notice. It would need to be reinstated in light of recent proposals.
- Labour Kent County Council Councillors had voted against a 15% members allowances increase, they had pledged that this increase would go to local causes.
- The introduction of Universal Credit had caused people problems; and the automated help line could cost up to 55p per minute. All Members should have attended a Universal Credit workshop hosted by the Department for Work and Pensions.

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

- A response would be provided to Councillor Matterface regarding the Thanet Campus and Store 21.
- Speaking as a hospital governor, the Leader advised that there were no plans to down grade accident and emergency provision at the QEQM hospital.
- The implementation of Universal Credit appeared to be causing significant problems, it had been suggested that a holiday period was needed to reconsider the system.

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:

- The OSP had not met since the last meeting of Council. The Community Safety Partnership Working Party had met on 28 September and the Corporate Performance Review Working Party had met on 4 September.
- The next OSP meeting was 24 October; it would consider a report following completion of the work of the Dreamland Project Review Group, and a presentation from the Leader regarding the Council's next steps as a result of the rejection of East Kent Merger proposition.
- A scrutiny review of the disposal process regarding the Fort Road Hotel was not deemed necessary at this stage, however proceedings would be closely monitored and a review would be undertaken in future if appropriate.

11. MEMBERS TRAINING STRATEGY

It was proposed by Councillor Crow-Brown, seconded by Councillor L Fairbrass and Members agreed to approve the Member Training Strategy.

12. BOUNDARY REVIEW

It was proposed by Councillor Bayford, seconded by Councillor Matterface, and after being put to the vote, Members agreed that:

'The Council invite the Boundary Commission to conduct an electoral review, and that the decision on the proposed number of Councillors be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with Councillors Matterface, Wells and Bayford, and informed by a members briefing to be held next week (week commencing 16 October 2017).'

Meeting concluded: 7.55pm

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