

COUNCIL

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

Present: Councillors Ashbee, Bambridge, Bayford, Braidwood, Brimm, Buckley, Campbell, K Coleman-Cooke, Crow-Brown, Curran, Dawson, Day, Dellar, Dennis, Dixon, Edwards, Evans, J Fairbrass, L Fairbrass, Falcon, Fenner, Game, Grove, G Hillman, Howes, 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 G Coleman-Cooke, Connor, Constantine, Dexter and I Gregory.

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 12 October 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that Councillor Ken Gregory, a district councillor for over 22 years, had recently passed away. Members stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect then paid tribute to his knowledge, character and dedication to his work.

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5. **PETITIONS**

(a) **Petition regarding Western Undercliff Facilities**

Ms Morgan presented a paper petition containing 1910 valid signatures and an e-petition containing 135 valid signatures as follows:

"We the undersigned petition the council to reinstate our local facilities along the Western undercliff, Ramsgate. It is imperative that we have public conveniences for all. The nearest toilets now are at the top of the cliff, which means it excludes people with disabilities and most parents with small children. We feel that this would increase the usage of the area and encourage tourists."

In accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, the petition was referred to Cabinet without debate.

(b) **Clean Up Cliftonville West Petition - Report Back to Council**

Members noted the report.

(c) **Ramsgate Sprint Revival Petition - Report Back to Council**

Members noted the report.

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**

(a) **Question in Relation to Council Tax**

Councillor Matterface asked Councillor Townend the following question:

“Can the cabinet member explain the circumstances under which letters were sent to those claiming single person discount on their council tax where some who had lost a relative who had never lived at that address were told to prove they lived alone?”

Councillor Townend responded with the following points:

- That a credit reference agency was used to cross reference various sources of information, this information was then cross referenced with Council records before issuing letters.
- If someone had passed away while living outside of the district this information would not have been held on the Council's records.
- The Council had a duty to ensure every occupier payed the correct amount of council tax, all reasonable available tools were used to identify customers who had had a change in circumstances, because sometimes customers forgot to advise the Council when this occurred.
- Lessons had been learnt from several cases and changes had been implemented for future planned reviews. An apology had been offered to customers who were contacted and asked insensitive questions based upon flawed information.
- The review had identified a significant number of customers who were no longer entitled to a discount, and who have now been billed for the full amount.

Councillor Matterface followed up her question by asking whether assurance could be given that no data protection laws had been breached when peoples bank accounts were accessed by the third party contractor employed by the Council to undertake the review.

Councillor Townend responded that he was sure that no data protection laws would have been breached.

(b) **Question in relation to 19 Hawley Square, Margate.**

Councillor Johnston asked Councillor Reverend Piper the following question:

“Housing officers recently gave a very detailed and worrying report on homelessness and increasing waiting list for Social housing in Thanet. Could the Cabinet member for Housing please confirm what efforts he has been able to make to bring 19 Hawley Square back into use for much needed homes?”

Councillor Reverend Piper responded that no effort had been made to bring 19 Hawley Square back into use for homes.

Councillor Johnston followed up her question by stating that she had seen no development following the announcement made earlier in the year that the building was to be taken over by Soho Theatre. Was this still the case or was the building to remain

empty while the Council payed to house some of the District's most desperate people elsewhere?

Councillor Reverend Piper responded with the following points:

- Cabinet had agreed to dispose of 19 Hawley Square and theatre Royal on 20 January 2015 in a meeting chaired by Councillor Johnston when she was leader of the Council.
- A marketing exercise had been undertaken for disposal of the asset, and a preferred bidder had been selected. Heads of terms had been agreed subject to contract and an announcement was expected in the early part of 2018 which should provide a long and successful future for this important local heritage asset.
- Homelessness and affordable homes was an important issue, the Council had committed £30 million to the delivery of 150 new and refurbished affordable homes.
- New homes were desperately needed to address homelessness and the Council would continue to look for opportunities to do more.
- The housing department had been nominated for two prestigious awards in recognition of the excellent work they had done.

(c) **Question in Relation to Council Tax Debt**

This question was withdrawn at the request of the Councillor who submitted it.

8. NOTICE OF MOTION

(a) **Notice of Motion in Relation to Universal Credit**

The motion was withdrawn at the request of the Councillor who submitted it. It would be considered at a future meeting of council in accordance with Council procedure rule three.

9. LEADERS REPORT

During his report the Leader covered the following areas:

- The Council had a duty to balance its budget under continued financial pressure. In 2012/13 the budget was in the region of £21.5million and included central government revenue grants of around £11 million, this could be contrast against the predicted budget for 2020/21 which would be around £16.5 million without any central government revenue grants.
- Thanks were offered to Council staff and Members gave a round of applause in recognition of their hard work. This work had led to the following:
 - Recognition of the excellent work of the Environmental Action Team working in Cliftonville.
 - The Independent Chair of the Improvement Board provided a glowing report for work following the peer review in 2014.
 - The Housing and Finance Institute had awarded the Council national housing business ready status.
 - Mr Hopkins was awarded the Kent Housing Professional of the year 2016 by Kent Housing Group.
 - East Kent Services won the behaviour change award at the MJ Achievement Awards 2017.
 - Visit Thanet had been prolific award winners.
 - The gold award for tourist information provision for 2015/16 from Visit England.
 - 1st in the Southeast and 4th in England for social media activity.
 - Margate Task Force had won a number of awards.
 - DWP Game Changers award winners 2015/16.

- A finalist in the Kent Housing Excellence Awards 2016.
- Runner up in the Chief Constable's Award for Community Policing 2017.
- Acute service line winner at the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust awards 2017.
- Housing department had been shortlisted for two national awards.
- Thanks were offered to all Members for their efforts over the year in representing their constituents.
- The Leader wished everyone a merry Christmas.

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

- It was good to hear all the achievements detailed within the leaders speech.
- There was concern that the disproportionate level of resources that went into cleaning Cliftonville West left the rest of the District with a poorer service. Education of residents was a key part of the solution.
- Broadstairs had experienced an extended tourist season which had led to some bins overflowing when the Council moved to its winter collection service with less frequent emptying of the bins.
- Lots of the rubbish was food packaging from local businesses.
- Council staff deserved praise for their work over the year.
- A headline for the coming year would be the public enquiry into the local plan, the Leader was urged to consider all options available.
- Councillor Bayford wished everyone a merry Christmas.

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

- Mr Carter, Leader of Kent County Council had indicated there maybe a third option to be considered regarding the NHS in East Kent. The QEQM cabinet advisory group should meet to discuss the latest developments. There needed to be strong representation for the residents of the District would who struggle to get to Canterbury or Ashford.
- Councillor Matterface wished everyone a merry Christmas.

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

- He hoped Members would continue to work well together and wished everyone a merry Christmas.

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 report outlined OSP meetings and sub-group meetings since Council last met in September.
- Three Draft Local Plan Working Group meetings had taken place in advance of the OSP meeting on 21 November at which panel members tabled a number of points of concern for consideration. Despite these points of concern, no formal proposal or amendments were tabled from the Panel. As a result, the Chairman proposed the recommendation in the report. Following a vote, the proposal was lost by a margin of nine votes to one.

11. FLEXIBLE USE OF CAPITAL RECEIPTS - UPDATE STRATEGY 2017/18

It was noted that in accordance with council procedure rule 17.6, a recorded vote would be taken on the motion or any amendments and substantive motions.

It was proposed by Councillor Townend and seconded Councillor Bayford, that the recommendation set out in the report be agreed, namely:

“That Council agree the updated Capital Receipts Strategy for 2017-18.”

The Monitoring Officer conducted a recorded vote on the motion as follows:

41 Members voted in favour the motion: Councillors Ashbee, Bambridge, Bayford, Braidwood, Buckley, K Coleman-Cooke , Crow-Brown, Curran, Dawson, Day, Dellar, Dennis, Dixon, Edwards, Evans, J Fairbrass, L Fairbrass, Falcon, Game, Grove, Hillman, Jaye-Jones, Larkins, Parsons, Partington, L Piper, S Piper, L Potts, R Potts, Rogers, Rusiecki, D Saunders, M Saunders, Savage, Shonk, Stummer-Schmertzling, Taylor, Taylor-Smith, Tomlinson, Townend and Wells

0 Members voted against the motion.

8 Members abstained from voting on the motion: Councillors Brimm, Campbell, Fenner, Howes, Johnston, Martin, Matterface and Venables

The motion was carried.

12. FEES AND CHARGES 2018/19

It was noted that in accordance with council procedure rule 17.6, a recorded vote would be taken on the motion or any amendments and substantive motions.

It was noted that there was a typographical error on page 16 of the agenda, which should read ‘Disposal of Cremated Remains’

Subject to this correction, it was proposed by Councillor Townend and seconded by the Leader that:

“Council approve the Fees and Charges as listed in Annex 1 of the report, with the exception of the parking charges in respect of the Royal Harbour and Cannon Road car parks, Ramsgate.”

The Monitoring Officer conducted a recorded vote on the motion as follows:

46 Members voted in favour the motion: Councillors Ashbee, Bambridge, Bayford, Braidwood, Brimm, Buckley, Campbell, K Coleman-Cooke , Crow-Brown, Curran, Dawson, Day, Dellar, Dennis, Dixon, Edwards, Evans, J Fairbrass, L Fairbrass, Falcon, Fenner, Game, Grove, Hillman, Howes, Jaye-Jones, Larkins, Martin, Parsons, Partington, Lynda Piper, S Piper, L Potts, R Potts, Rogers, Rusiecki, D Saunders, M Saunders, Savage, Shonk, Stummer-Schmertzling, Taylor, Taylor-Smith, Tomlinson, Townend and Wells.

3 Members voted against the motion: Councillors Johnston, Matterface and Venables.

0 Members abstained from voting on the motion.

The motion was carried.

13. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Members were asked to approach the Leader if they wished to volunteer to sit on either Action with Communities in Rural Kent, or Parking and Traffic Regulation Outside London outside bodies.

14. 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 one seat is removed from the Licensing Board and the Conservative group loses that seat and one seat is removed from the Governance and Audit Committee and the Conservative group loses that seat.”

NOMINATION OF MEMBERS TO SERVE ON COMMITTEES

Councillor Bayford, Leader of the Conservative Group advised that Councillor Taylor-Smith would be removed from the Governance and Audit Committee and Councillor Savage would be removed from the Licensing Committee. Councillor Taylor-Smith would also replace Councillor Bambridge on the Planning Committee.

15. DREAMLAND CINEMA, MARGATE. FUNDING FOR A DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT COMPLIANT LIFT

Members noted the report.

Meeting concluded: 8.05pm