

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2018 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor David Saunders (Chairman); Councillors Ashbee, Bambridge, Bayford, Braidwood, Buckley, Campbell, G Coleman-Cooke, K Coleman-Cooke, Connor, Constantine, Crow-Brown, Curran, Dawson, Day, Dellar, Dennis, Dexter, Dixon, Edwards, J Fairbrass, L Fairbrass, Falcon, Fenner, Game, I Gregory, Grove, Hayton, Jaye-Jones, Johnston, Martin, Matterface, Messenger, Parsons, L Piper, S Piper, L Potts, R Potts, Pugh, Rogers, M Saunders, Savage, Shonk, Stummer-Schmertzing, Taylor, Taylor-Smith, Tomlinson, Townend and Venables.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Hillman, Larkins and Wells.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman and agreed, that the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 10 May 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members stood as a mark of respect as the Chairman presented Councillor Falcon with the Past Chairman's Badge.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PETITIONS

(a) Proposed clinical waste charges

Ms Clarke was unavailable to present the petition, however Members noted that the following petition, containing 36 valid signatures, had been received:

"We the undersigned petition the council to change the proposed charges for clinical waste and sharps collections, as it discriminates against the sick in the area and is unsafe for the area."

In accordance with the council's Petition Scheme, the petition was referred to Cabinet without debate for report back to the Council within three ordinary meetings.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

(a) Question No. 1 From a Member of the Public – Clinical Waste Collections

Mr Norwood asked Councillor Taylor-Smith the following question:

“Could you tell me why the clinical waste collection has deteriorated? Collections that used to take two weeks, now take three to six. The explanation I was told, that it’s due to an increased number of users, seems barely credible.”

Councillor Taylor responded with the following points:

- There had been no general deterioration of the overall clinical waste service however an increase in demand for sharps box removal had led to some people having to wait a little longer.
- The sharps clinical waste collection service had now fully caught up and were taking bookings at one week in advance, which was back to the normal service.
- The Council now had over 4,000 registered customers who regularly used the clinical waste collection service and were committed to maintaining customer satisfaction for this important service.
- If uptake of the service rose again, the council had the flexibility to add an extra collection day to meet the demand.
- More information would be available following the completion of a benchmarking exercise of the service.

(b) **Question No. 2 From a Member of the Public – The Local Plan**

Mr Wright asked the Leader the following question:

“Please can you outline the potential risk to Thanet tax payers if the local plan is found unsound?”

The Leader responded with the following points:

- A significant delay could result in further intervention by the Minister. The cost of any external work resulting from intervention would have to be borne by the council.
- If there was no intervention, there would still be significant cost to the council in reviewing and updating the evidence base. This could quite easily cost several tens of thousands of pounds.
- Without an adopted Local Plan, there was a significant risk that the council could not demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. If this occurred, the council would lose the ability to refuse housing applications in undesirable locations, or could face an increased risk of losing planning appeals and consequently a greater risk of costs being granted against the council.
- It was likely that the Council would have to plan for the higher number of homes expected under the Government’s new housing need methodology;
- With the loss of control over new development, there was a greater risk that development would take place on a more unplanned basis and without the provision of key infrastructure to support the developments, such as roads, schools and health facilities.
- New policies relating to Local Green Space, energy and water efficiency, and internal space standards could not be applied.

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(a) **Question No. 1 from a Member - Regarding Housing**

Councillor Constantine asked Councillor Game the following question:

“Can Councillor Game tell me how the Conservative administration are planning to manage our current housing crisis? How many families with children are impacted by the need to move into temporary accommodation? What are you planning to do to curb and manage the costs associated with providing temporary accommodation?”

Councillor Game responded with the following points:

- Homelessness was a national crisis. The Local Government Association had reported that there were 120,540 children living in temporary accommodation with their families that had been provided by local authorities. This represented a 37% increase since 2014. This crisis was driven by a severe shortage of affordable homes to rent and the increased cost of the private rented sector.
- The council currently (as at Monday 9 July 2018) had 168 households placed in temporary accommodation. Of this number, 71 households were families with children, all of whom had self-contained accommodation, including 11 families in council owned flats or houses. There were currently no families with children in temporary hotel accommodation.
- Overall the council's use of hotel accommodation had significantly reduced since January 2018, from 51 households at the start of the year to 26 households by 30 June 2018.
- The council continued to invest in building new homes, and would invest £30,000,000 to deliver 150 new homes by 2020. It was expected that 20 new homes would be completed, and work commence on a further 49 homes, in the current financial year.
- The council had set aside £1,600,000 for new temporary accommodation to help reduce the overall cost of homelessness to the council, and were currently looking for a suitable site for this development.
- Since the implementation of the new Homelessness Reduction Act on 3 April 2018 the council had supported 187 households with personal housing plans, and successfully prevented 92 households from becoming homeless in the first place. The council had strengthened the housing options team to provide these services and improve the effectiveness of homelessness prevention.
- The council had launched a new incentive scheme to encourage private sector landlords to make homes available for households in need. Since April the council had provided financial assistance to 42 households to help them access private sector homes.
- The work that had been completed to prevent homelessness, construct new homes and support people living in temporary accommodation had improved the outcomes for homeless people and reduced the costs of homelessness for the council.

Councillor Constantine followed up her question by asking if the Local Plan should be revisited to reflect the urgent need for social homes, of which Stone Hill Park have promised more than 400, as the key imperative?

Councillor Game responded that the Local Plan was still being worked upon. She wished extended an invite to Councillor Constantine to meet with the Head of Housing and the Housing Options Manager to discuss what could be done to reduce homelessness.

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:

- The council's enforcement clamp down had continued with 1071 fixed penalty notices issued in six months up to May for littering, spitting and dog fouling offenses. There had also been three successful prosecutions for fly-tipping in the past two months. A new anti-litter campaign would soon be launched.
- The council had successfully prosecuted six rogue landlords resulting in over £23,000 of fines.
- In June the council targeted alcohol related anti-social behaviour, raising awareness of the Alcohol Control Public Space Protection Order.

- State of the art CCTV control room had now opened with a network of high definition cameras.
- A programme of investment in smart bins was underway. They had the ability to alert the Council when they were nearly full and were hoped to help address issues connected to overflowing bins.
- The Fort Road Hotel had been sold at auction for £360,000.
- Cabinet approved the transfer of Birchington Memorial Ground and land at Alpha Road to Birchington Parish Council, and the transfer of the Old Look Out at Broadstairs into community management.
- The District had seen a 19% increase in the visitor economy.
- The Winter Shelter statistics had been published in May following its second successful year. Thanks were offered to the 107 volunteers who had donated 4560 hours to the project.
- The government wished to have no rough sleepers by 2027 and had initially made £30,000,000 of funding available. The council successfully obtained £367,000 of this funding.
- The housing team recently achieved 'Highly Commended' for two of the shortlisted entries at the National Municipal Journal awards.
- Kent as a whole has seen a rise in traveller incursions over the last 12 months. The Council was looking at solutions to make unauthorised access on to land at Jackey Bakers more difficult.
- The new council website had been launched on 30 April. Since then it had received 82,000 visits and feedback had been positive. The Society of Information Technology Management had listed it as one of their recommended websites for best practice.
- The Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission had launched its conclusions in the 2050 Vision, the council was considering the detailed report.
- The 2019 Turner Prize would be hosted by the Turner Contemporary. This would further raise Margate's profile nationally and internationally.
- Democratic Services were holding public sessions to encourage more candidates to stand as Councillors. The sessions would explain the role of a councillor and the support they would receive.

Councillor L Fairbrass as Deputy Leader of the Independent and UKIP Group made the following points:

- The Leader did not mention the Local Plan in his report. When presenting the options for Council on 19 July the Leader must give due consideration to the legal and expert advice available to him. Failure to do this could lead to the loss of the relative financial stability achieved by the council over the last few years and would be symptomatic of the type of decision making made when the council was labelled toxic and dysfunctional in 2014.
- The new Landlord incentive scheme was to be welcomed and hopefully would help to address the growing number of households facing homelessness in Thanet.

Councillor Reverend Piper as Leader of the Thanet Independent Councillors Group made the following points:

- He appreciated the Leaders efforts to keep the other political groups updated on his activities and aspirations.
- The housing team deserved congratulations for further recognition of their good work.
- Traveller incursions were on the rise and highlighted holes in the council's capability of prevention. Many residents wanted the council to take action to make the district more secure, particularly in Dane Valley and Jackey Bakers.
- Travellers and recalcitrant locals using motorbikes and all terrain vehicles in parks were a blight on the community and must be stopped.
- There was also concern about the lack of grass cutting as the seeds of some grass could be dangerous to dogs.

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

- The council took traveller incursions and other types of misuse of public spaces very seriously. The council would come forward with proposals to address the issue. Members of the public were also encouraged to contact the police if they saw any criminal activity.
- The Leader offered to raise the issue of grass cutting with the appropriate department.

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

- While taking a hard line on littering was good, there were multiple reports of dropped rubbish by council operatives during waste collections that did not get picked up, can this be addressed?
- It was good that the CCTV monitoring had been kept locally as knowledge of the local area was important.
- Could the Leader elaborate on the number of smart bins installed, and where they were located? Ordinary bins needed emptying more often as overflowing bins was an increasing problem.
- How many road sweepers with brooms did the council have? A traditional road sweeper on foot with a broom and litter picker was sometimes required when streets were full of parked cars.
- It was good that an organiser was already in place for the Winter Shelter project.
- The Leader was invited to attend a session at the GAP Project to see the work they were doing. The Chief executive had recently visited, and her visit was very appreciated.
- The number of women sleeping rough and homeless families was worrying, especially when they were placed in emergency accommodation out of the area. What was being done to obtain more funding for more social housing?
- Consideration could be given to the house in a box scheme.
- Congratulations were offered to the housing team who were always helpful and go above and beyond the call of duty.
- The prospective councillor event was welcome, it would be supported by a number of Members of the council. The Member Training Group had involvement in planning the event and thanks were offered to democratic services for their work with the group.

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

- The national average percentage of rough sleepers that were women was 10%, however in Thanet the percentage was around 25%. Part of the funding from government would be put towards a hostel for women rough sleepers.
- The Leader would take up Councillor Matterface's offer to visit the GAP Project.
- The council had been looking at the house in a box scheme.

10. CHANGES TO COMMITTEES, PANELS AND BOARDS – 2018/19

PROPORTIONALITY

The Leader proposed, Councillor L Fairbrass seconded and Members agreed option one as detailed at paragraph 2.5.1 of the report, namely;

"That the Thanet Independent Councillors Group lose a seat on the Planning Committee and the UKIP and Independent Group gain that seat. That the Thanet Independent Councillors Group also lose a seat on the Licensing Board and that seat is given to the Conservative group."

NOMINATION OF MEMBERS TO SERVE ON COMMITTEES

Group leaders advised of the following changes to sit on committees: as summarised in the table below.

Committee/Group	Current Position	New Position	Change to Nominations
Planning Committee			
TIC Group	4 seats	3 seats (remove nominee)	Cllr Shonk removed
UKIP & Ind. Group	3 seats	4 seats (new nominee needed)	1 seat TBC
Planning Committee Sub			
Conservative	5 vacant seats	5 vacant seats	Cllr M Saunders added Cllr Bambridge added Cllr Dexter added Cllr Taylor-Smith added 1 seat TBC
UKIP & Ind. Group	3 seats	4 seats (new nominee needed)	Cllr Crow-Brown removed Cllr Stummer-Schmertzing added 1 seat TBC
Licensing Board			
TIC Group	4 seats	3 seats (remove nominee)	Cllr Brimm removed
Conservative Group	5 seats	6 seats (new nominee needed)	Cllr Bambridge added
BEAWP			
TIC Group	Cllr Brimm	New nominee needed	1 seat TBC
Joint Transportation Board			
Conservative Group	n/a	n/a	Cllr Parsons removed Cllr M Saunders added
Standards Committee			
UKIP & Ind. Group	n/a	n/a	Cllr L Fairbrass removed Cllr Townend added

Councillor Rev. Piper advised Members that Councillor Edwards would be the Opposition spokesperson for Operational Service for the Thanet Independent Councillors.

11. **CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES FOR SCRUTINY**

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman and Members agreed the amended constitution as attached at Annex 1 to the report.

12. **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS**

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman and Members agreed the amendments to the calendar of meetings for the remainder of 2018/19 as set out at Annex 1 to the report.

13. **MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2018/19**

It was proposed by the Leader, seconded by Councillor Savage and Members agreed the Thanet District Council Members' Allowances Scheme 2018/19 be approved.

14. **NOMINATIONS TO NON-EXECUTIVE OUTSIDE BODIES**

Subject to the addition of Councillor Constantine as the council's nominee to the Thanet Volunteer Bureau, and the Youth Advisory Group; it was proposed by Councillor Bayford, seconded by Councillor Savage and Members agreed the nominations to the non-executive outside bodies as shown in the report.

15. STANDARDS HEARING SUB-COMMITTEE - COUNCILLOR BRIMM

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman and Members agreed the recommendation as shown in the report, namely:

"The council censures Councillor Brimm for her behaviour in posting the private home telephone number of a council officer on Facebook, which resulted in Cllr Brimm breaching the following provisions of the Code of Conduct:

- (a) Attempting to intimidate an officer (who was party to an existing Code of Conduct complaint against Councillor Brimm)
- (b) Attempting to bully an officer
- (c) Disclosing information which was of a confidential nature
- (d) Bringing her office into disrepute."

Meeting concluded: 8.00pm