

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2022 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Reece Pugh (Chair); Councillors J Bayford, R Bayford, Kup and D Saunders

In Attendance: Councillors Albon, Crittenden, Everitt, M Saunders and Shonk

832. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Ashbee.

833. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

834. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Pugh proposed, Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 16 June 2022.

835. RAMSGATE FUTURE LEVELLING UP FUND PROJECTS THIRD PARTY GRANTS

Cabinet considered proposals for part of the Ramsgate Levelling Up Fund programme that included the establishment of a physical and digital presence in deprived neighbourhoods to support outreach and training. In Newington, this would provide a commercial training kitchen facility supporting initial skills development and community enterprise in food.

Members were asked to approve the recommendation in the report to provide a grant of up to £500,000 to Newington Community Association for the delivery of this project. The grant would be used to extend the building to allow the creation of a kitchen training facility and make enhancements to the building to create a space where local residents can access the building to discuss barriers to employment and consider new training and employment opportunities.

Councillor Everitt spoke under Council Procedure 20.1.

Councillor Pugh proposed, Councillor Kup seconded and Cabinet agreed the following:

1. To approve the use of Grants which exceed £250,000 to third parties to deliver the agreed Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities funded project:
 - Up to £500,000 to Newington Community Association to deliver the Access to Opportunities Project in Newington Community Centre;
2. The grant agreement is signed under Deed, by the Interim Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer, and the Acting Deputy Chief Executive & S151 Officer, and is witnessed by a Member of the Council.

836. NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND FOR THE LEVELLING UP FUND CLOCK HOUSE PROJECT

Members considered another part of the Ramsgate Levelling Up Fund programme included investment in the Grade II listed Clock House, refurbishing it as a cultural heritage exhibition space and public cafe. The Clock House would provide an important publicly accessible focal point for visitors and residents at the heart of the Royal Harbour, with a new seafront café and space for history and heritage to be exhibited.

Cabinet noted that officers were working with the Ramsgate Society and Historic England to develop a plan for the building, and through engagement with the National Lottery Heritage Fund a proposal had been put together for a funding application to the National Lottery. Members were asked to approve the submission of a Development Phase application to National Lottery Heritage Fund, which forms part of the match funding for the Levelling Up Fund project.

Councillor Albon spoke under Council Procedure 20.1.

Councillor Pugh proposed, Councillor David Saunders seconded and Cabinet the following:

1. To approve the submission of an application for a Development Phase Grant of £322,740 to the National Lottery Heritage Fund;
2. That the Director of Regeneration is authorised to agree the final submission documents, based on approval from the S151 Officer.

837. TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER SERVICES KPI Q4

Members considered the housing performance report for the fourth quarter of 2021/22. During the Q4 period, the council came off the regulatory notice, which was placed on the council in 2019. This reflected the considerable improvements that had been made for landlord compliance. In December 2022 the team put in place an action plan that would ensure they were at an acceptable level by March 2022. They were successful in achieving what they set out to do. This included increasing domestic electrical compliance figures from 74% to 90% and reducing our FRA actions from 488 to 219.

Cabinet was advised that the team's operational performance continued to show improvements, although there were still some areas that required attention to achieve the set targets. The void turnaround time had improved due to recent measures put in place, but there was still some way to go to achieve set targets and the team continues to work with Mears and on internal processes to achieve this.

The final arrears figures for 2021/22 were the lowest since transition and reflect the positive changes made. The team were disappointed that they did not achieve their target of reducing arrears by 1%; but this year had presented a particularly difficult operating environment and where other housing providers may be experiencing an increase in arrears, the team continued to reduce the level of debt.

Cabinet further noted that it was pleasing to see that the performance of the capital programme had improved significantly in comparison to last year. The team spent 78% of the allocated budget, compared to 37% in the previous year, ensuring that the Council's property assets were protected from dilapidation and provided decent homes for residents.

The most significant success from last years programme included the following:

- Completion of all cyclical programmes - for example kitchen and bathroom replacements and window replacements;
- The refurbishment of 7 passenger lifts;
- And the external decorations that have been carried out on the Newington Estate.

There were two planned works projects that were delayed and these included the following:

- Major structural works at Royal Crescent, in Ramsgate;
- Major works and improvements at Churchfields, in Margate.

Councillor Jill Bayford proposed, Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Members agreed to note the report.

Meeting concluded: 7.20 pm