

CABINET

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 13 October 2022 at 5.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

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

In Attendance: Councillors Albon, Austin, Everitt, Shonk, Whitehead and Yates

848. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies made at the meeting.

849. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

850. BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23: REPORT NO.1

Cabinet was advised that an overspend of just under £1.8 million against the General Fund revenue budget was anticipated. One of the main factors causing this overspend was the additional demands in the housing service with more homeless placements. In response to this, the Council had reviewed and was delivering its homelessness strategy action plan.

Officers were regularly monitoring the levels of homelessness and the Council would be recruiting more staff and commissioning new services to address the increasing need for support. Other financial pressures were detailed in the report, and included additional agency staffing requirements in the waste and recycling service and also higher gas and electricity costs.

The General Fund capital programme was showing a substantial underspend. This was in part due to the phasing and timing of a number of grant funded projects, some of which were recommended to be slipped into later years of the programme. In the HRA there was a marginal forecast overspend of £119,000 against the revenue budget, whereas within the capital programme it was being proposed that a number of budget variations be made so that the profile of the budget be closer matched to the revised expectations for the timing of future spending.

Councillor Whitehead and Councillor Yates spoke under Council Procedure 20.1.

Councillor David Saunders proposed Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Cabinet agreed the following:

1. To note the following:
 - i. The General Fund revenue budget 2022/23 forecast position.
 - ii. The General Fund Capital Programme 2022/23 forecast position.
 - iii. The Housing Revenue Account position;
2. To recommend to Council that a one-off supplementary General Fund 2022/23 revenue budget of £100,000 be approved for the creation of a fund for coastal projects; to be wholly funded from an external contribution from Southern Water;

3. To recommend to Council that a supplementary General Fund revenue budget of £63,000 be approved for additional resources to support the delivery of regeneration schemes in the district; to be funded from a corresponding increase in the income budget for retained business rates;
4. To recommend to Council that a supplementary General Fund revenue budget of £100,000 be approved for additional resources to support the delivery of property related services; to be funded from the Repairs Reserve;
5. To agree to the 2022/23 Capital Programme budget adjustments and virements, numbered 1 to 8, as set out in section 5.3 and Annex 1 to the cabinet report;
6. To agree to the 2022/23 HRA Capital Programme budget adjustments and virements, numbered 7.4 to 7.6 in the report;
7. To recommend to Council for approval the 2022/23 supplementary capital budget, numbered 9 to 12, as set out in section 5.4 and Annex 1 to the report.

851. APPROVE LEASE ARRANGEMENTS FOR 53-57 HIGH STREET MARGATE, AS PART OF THE MARGATE LEVELLING UP FUND PROJECT

Cabinet was asked to consider the report in order to continue progress on this project. This would ensure the implementation of the Margate Levelling Up Fund scheme in order to deliver a Digital Campus in Margate High Street. Cabinet had already approved the provision of a grant from the Levelling Up Fund to EKC Group and this decision marked a step in gaining approval from Homes England to lease the building to EKC Group for delivery of this project.

Councillor Whitehead spoke under Council Procedure 20.1.

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

1. To give delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration and the Acting Deputy Chief Executive to seek approval for the Heads of Terms as members of the Joint Venture Board between Thanet District Council and Homes England;
2. To give delegated authority to the Interim Director of Property, in consultation with the Principal Surveyor and the Economic Development Portfolio Holder to agree Heads of Terms and enter into the relevant negotiations for a lease with EKC Group;
3. To give delegated authority to the Interim Head of Legal and Monitoring to prepare and complete the lease and all other ancillary documents on the terms to be agreed, and sign all documents necessary to give effect to the lease agreement.

852. FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND UPDATE

Members were advised that the aim of the Future High Street Fund was to renew and reshape high streets with the inclusion of other uses to drive increases in footfall. The Council had been successful in a bid that included the development of a creative workspace in Ramsgate town centre. Unfortunately, due to changing circumstances, the building originally identified to deliver the workspace project in, had been leased to a private business.

The Council had been working hard to identify new sites in order to deliver this project. This was in order to fully utilise the project funding. A change private sector investment in Ramsgate had provided some challenges to the project, although Cabinet was aware

that there was still great demand for creative workspace provision. Members were thereafter asked to note the update.

Councillor Pugh proposed, Councillor Jill Bayford seconded and Cabinet noted the update report.

853. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Councillor Ashbee proposed Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and agree that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for agenda item 7 as it contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Live streaming of the meeting was stopped, the Council Chamber was cleared of members of the press and public and Cabinet went into private session.

854. FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND - CREATIVE WORKSPACE PROJECT UPDATE AND DECISION - CONFIDENTIAL PART

Cabinet was advised that this report linked to the earlier paper about the Future High Street Fund (under minute item 852). This part of the report was commercially sensitive and was therefore exempt from publication in order to safeguard commercial sensitive information.

This report proposed taking on lease arrangements for a key high street asset, which had been long term vacant, and was unlikely to come forward within the coming years. This funding allowed the Council to not only provide the outputs as outlined within the Future High Street Fund application, but also to deliver further outputs due to the increase in space this asset provided.

The Council was also looking at the potential to purchase an asset in the town centre to ensure some legacy from this grant funding.

Councillor Albon spoke under Council Procedure 20.1.

Councillor Pugh proposed, Councillor Saunders seconded and Cabinet agreed the following

1. To authorise the Director of Regeneration, in consultation with the Interim Director of Property to complete negotiations regarding the names site in the High Street, Ramsgate and enter into a sub-lease until March 2027.
2. To authorise the Director of Regeneration, in consultation with the Interim Director of Property to engage with owners of an identified site in the High Street, to purchase the property, negotiating the best deal for the asset. Commissioning the relevant surveys, valuation and technical studies as required.
3. To authorise the Director of Regeneration to develop and commission an appropriate operating model for the project, engaging external legal advice as required.
4. To authorise the Director of Regeneration, in consultation with the Economic Development Portfolio Holder, to finalise the cash-flow with the identified model for delivery working with the S151 officer to ensure the Council is not put at financial risk from the Future High Street Fund project.

5. To note that Officers have submitted a Project Adjustment Form and the revised Economic Case to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for approval, for the Ramsgate Future High Street Fund Project.

Meeting concluded: 5.28 pm