

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SEVENOAKS

Minutes of the Meeting of the Sevenoaks District Council held on 21 February 2012 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Orridge (Chairman)

Mrs. Morris (Vice-Chairman)

Abraham, Mrs. Ayres, Ayres, Ball, Bosley, Mrs. Bosley, Brookbank, Brown, Butler, Ms. Chetram, Clark, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Cook, Cooke, Mrs. Davison, Davison, Mrs. Dawson, Dickins, Eyre, Firth, Fittock, Fleming, Gaywood, Mrs. George, Grint, Hogarth, Horwood, Mrs. Hunter, London, Ms. Lowe, Maskell, McGarvey, Mrs. Parkin, Pett, Piper, Mrs. Purves, Raikes, Mrs. Sargeant, Scholey, Miss. Thornton, Towell, Underwood and Walshe

Apologies for absence: Mrs. Bayley, Edwards-Winser, Ramsay, Searles, Miss. Stack and Williamson

47. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2011

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 29 November 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

48. TO RECEIVE ANY ADDITIONAL DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS OF BUSINESS INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING.

The declarations of interest made by Members at meetings held between 8 November 2011 and 8 February 2012 were received. No additional declarations were made.

49. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported that this would be Tricia Marshall's final meeting with the Council as, after thirteen years, she would be leaving Sevenoaks District Council in March to take up a position as Director of Resources at Canterbury District Council. Members thanked Tricia Marshall for all her work at Sevenoaks and wished her well in her new role.

The Chairman also proposed that following Items 5(a) – Treasury Management Strategy 2012/13 and 5(b) – Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2012/13, subject to the recommendations being approved, Item 6(a) – Budget and Council Tax Setting be considered.

50. TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

No petitions were received.

51. MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE CABINET AND/OR OTHER COMMITTEES:

(a) Treasury Management Strategy 2012/13 (Cabinet – 9 February 2012)

Cllr. Fleming moved and Cllr. Mrs Davison seconded the recommendation of the Cabinet held on 9 February 2012 that Council approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement set out in the report with the exception that the minimum long term credit rating in the 2012/13 creditworthiness policy be reduced to A. In moving the recommendation the Leader of the Council thanked the Finance Advisory Group and the Performance and Governance Committee for the work they had undertaken in developing the Strategy. The report set out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

Resolved: That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement set out in the report, with the exception that the minimum long term credit rating in the 2012/13 creditworthiness policy be reduced to A, be approved.

(b) Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2012/13 (Cabinet – 9 February 2012)

Cllr. Fleming moved and Cllr. Mrs Davison seconded that Council approve (a) the summary of Council Expenditure and Council Tax set out in Appendix C of the report; (b) the 10 year budget 2011/12 to 2021/22 set out in Appendix A of the report, including the growth and savings proposals set out at Appendix B of the report, and that where possible any variations during and between years be met from the Budget Stabilisation Fund; and (c) any changes in the taxbase and collection fund and other minor variations be transferred to/from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve.

The report set out the proposed budget and required level of Council Tax for 2012/13 and detailed changes to the draft budget since the Cabinet meeting on 8 December 2011. The proposed net expenditure budget was £13.443 million. This would envisage no Council Tax increase on 2012/13, with the District's council tax remaining at £181.89 for a Band D property for the year. In moving the recommendation, the Leader reported that the Council was in year two of its 10 year budget. The £47,000 gap in the budget had now been met and, due to an increase in the council tax base, the Council would be making a contribution of £52,000 from the Revenue Budget to the Council's Reserves. Investment income remained depressed and the Council would face further challenges in future years with a requirement to deliver further savings in 2012/13 and 2013/14. The 10-year budget had placed the Council in a strong position to meet the challenges however, difficult decisions would still have to be taken in future years.

Cllr. Walshe moved and Cllr. Mrs Purves seconded the following amendment:

“Delete or reduce proposed savings figures:

Grants - £20,000

Leisure (Asset Maintenance) - £70,000

Tourism (reduced activity) - £30,000

Youth (reduced activity) - £60,000

TOTAL £180,000

Insert new savings figures:

Members allowance (new scheme) - £45,000

Contact Centre – £50,000

External Communications - £25,000

IT - £60,000

TOTAL £180,000

The amendment was put to the vote and was LOST.

Cllr. Fittock moved and Cllr. Underwood seconded the following amendment:

" To reduce the subsidy on the Stag Community Arts Centre by 20% and transfer the £20,000 saved to all other voluntary organisations."

Councillor Raikes declared a prejudicial interest as Chairman of the Stag Theatre and left the room for the duration of the debate.

Councillors Mrs Dawson, Hogarth, Piper and Brown declared prejudicial interests as Trustees of the Stag Theatre and left the room for the duration of the debate.

Members held a debate on the proposed amendment. The amendment was put to the vote and was LOST.

Members returned to debating the original motion. This was put to the vote and it was

Resolved: that:

(a) the summary of Council Expenditure and Council Tax set out in Appendix C of the report be approved;

(b) the 10 year budget 2011/12 to 2021/11 set out in Appendix A to the report, including the growth and savings proposals set out at Appendix B to the report, be approved and that where possible any variations during and between years be met from the Budget Stabilisation Fund; and

(c) any changes in the tax base and collection fund and other minor variations be transferred to/from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve.

(c) Monitoring Officer's Annual Report (Standards – 26 January 2012)

Cllr. Fleming moved and Cllr. Mrs Bracken seconded that the recommendations of the Standards Committee held on 26 January 2012 be approved.

The report provided an overview of the work of the Monitoring Officer, the work of the Standards Committee and the general governance arrangements within the Council in the past year. The report also set out the Monitoring Officer's statutory responsibilities, summarising how these duties had been discharged during 2011 in accordance with the Council's constitution, legislative requirements and drew attention to issues requiring attention in the next calendar year.

Resolved that the Monitoring Officer's Annual Report be noted.

(d) Housing Strategy Action Plan (Cabinet – 9 February 2012)

Cllr. Fleming moved and Cllr. Mrs Clark seconded that the recommendations of the Cabinet held on 9 February 2012 be approved.

The report advised Members that the draft Housing Strategy Action Plan had been produced to reflect findings from consultation and latest intelligence, both of which provided an indication of future housing need and demand. Consideration had also been given to financial and non-financial capacity going forward, which was a key factor in the current and near-term economic environment. Delivery of the Housing Strategy Action Plan would be overseen by the Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP) Strategic Housing Sub-group, which was represented by District Council officers and a number of other partner organisations. Progress reports would be taken to the main LSP and Service Select Committee to update on strategic objectives. It was likely that, over time, minor adjustments would be made to the Action Plan to reflect developing policy and the changing housing market. This would ensure that that local housing strategy was routinely adapted to best effect. A full review and update of the Housing Strategy Action Plan would take place in 2014.

Resolved: That the Housing Strategy Action Plan be adopted.

(e) IT Strategy (Cabinet – 9 February 2012)

Cllr. Fleming moved and Cllr. Mrs Davison seconded that the recommendation of the Cabinet held on 9 February 2012 that the IT Strategy and Plan be approved and adopted. In moving the recommendation, the Leader thanked Members and officers for their input into the Strategy.

The report set out the Council's strategic approach to the management, use and development of technology. Within the strategy consideration was given to the Council's strategic priorities, policies and other key strategies. The strategy also set out key assumptions being made to deliver the required outcomes.

Resolved: That the IT Strategy and Plan 2012-2015 be approved and adopted.

52. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING REPORTS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OR OTHER DIRECTORS ON MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF COUNCIL:

(f) Budget and Council Tax Setting 2012/13

Cllr. Fleming moved and Cllr. Mrs Davison seconded that the recommendations contained in appendices 6 and 7 to the report be agreed.

The report set out the factors requiring consideration in order to set the Council Tax for 2012/13 and to approve the 2012/13 budgets. These factors include (i) precepts received from other authorities, (ii) Collection Fund position, (iii) Corporate Budget Update, and (iv) opinion on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of the reserves.

Resolved:

- (a) That the Summary of Council Expenditure and Council Tax 2012/13 at Appendix 2 of the report be approved;
- (b) that the 10 Year budget 2011/12 to 2021/22 including the growth and savings proposals set out at Appendix 3 of the report be approved and that wherever possible any variations during and between years be met from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve;
- (c) that any changes in the taxbase and collection fund and other minor variations be transferred to/from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve;
- (d) that the changes to reserves and provisions set out in Appendix 4 to the report be approved;
- (e) that the Capital Programme 2012/15, and Asset Maintenance 2012/13 budget of £372,000 be approved;
- (f) that the Financial Strategy attached at Appendix 5 of the report be approved;
- (g) that it be noted that at the Cabinet meeting on 12 January 2012 the Council calculated as its council tax base for the year 2012/13:
 - (i) for the whole Council area as 50,860.03 being Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, (the "Act"); and
 - (ii) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relates as in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (h) that the council tax requirement for the Council's own purpose for 2012/13 (excluding Town and Parish precepts) be calculated as £181.89;

- (i) that the following amounts be calculated for the year 2012/13 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
- (i) £59,232,241 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Town and Parish Councils.
 - (ii) £46,579,074 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - (iii) £12,653,167 being the amount by which the aggregate at (i)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (i)(ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
 - (iv) £248.78 being the amount at (i)(iii) above (Item R), all divided by (g)(i) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (including Town and Parish precepts).
 - (v) £3,402,236 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Town and Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act (as per the attached Appendix 1).
 - (vi) £181.89 being the amount at (i)(iv) above, less the result given by dividing the amount at (i)(v) above by the amount at (g)(i) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Town or Parish precept relates.
- (j) that it be noted that for the year 2012/13 the Kent County Council, the Kent Police Authority and the Kent & Medway Towns Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below:-

Council - Tuesday, 21 February 2012

| Valuation Bands | Precepting Authority | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| | Sevenoaks District Council £ | Kent County Council £ | Kent Police Authority £ | Kent & Medway Towns Fire Authority £ |
| A | 121.26 | 698.52 | 92.45 | 45.30 |
| B | 141.47 | 814.94 | 107.86 | 52.85 |
| C | 161.68 | 931.36 | 123.27 | 60.40 |
| D | 181.89 | 1,047.78 | 138.68 | 67.95 |
| E | 222.31 | 1,280.62 | 169.50 | 83.05 |
| F | 262.73 | 1,513.46 | 200.32 | 98.15 |
| G | 303.15 | 1,746.30 | 231.13 | 113.25 |
| H | 363.78 | 2,095.56 | 277.36 | 135.90 |

- (k) that the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in Appendix 7 to the report as the amounts of council tax for the year 2012/13 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings; and
- (l) that the Council's basic amount of council tax for 2012/13, shown in (i)(vi) above, is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(g) Pay Policy Statement

Cllr. Fleming moved and Cllr. Mrs Davison seconded that the Pay Policy Statement be adopted by the Council and published on the Council's website. In moving the recommendation, the Leader highlighted that the Pay Policy Statement set out in the report was a requirement of the Localism Act and that the information it contained was in accordance with the primary legislation. For Sevenoaks District Council it brought together in one place information about the pay of officers and that the information had been available on the Council's website and in the Statement of Accounts. The Government had belatedly issued final guidance related to Pay Policy Statements on Friday 17th February 2012, and in light of this the Leader recommended to Members that any minor and consequential amendments to the Policy to reflect the emerging Government guidance be delegated to the Leader (in agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Value for Money).

The report outlined that as part of the Localism Act 2011 there was a requirement for Local Authorities to publish a Pay Policy Statement by 31 March 2012. The Pay Policy Statement is required to set out the authority's policies relating to the remuneration of each of its chief officers, the remuneration of its lowest paid employees and the relationship between the two.

Resolved that the Pay Policy Statement be adopted and published on the Council's website and that any minor and consequential amendments to the Policy to reflect the emerging Government guidance be delegated to the Leader (in agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Value for Money).

53. TO CONSIDER ANY QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER PARAGRAPH 19.3 OF PART 2 (THE COUNCIL AND DISTRICT COUNCIL MEMBERS) OF THE CONSTITUTION, NOTICE OF WHICH HAVE BEEN DULY GIVEN.

No questions were submitted by Members in accordance with Paragraph 19.3 of Part 2 of the Constitution.

54. TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC UNDER PARAGRAPH 17 OF PART 2 (THE COUNCIL AND DISTRICT COUNCIL MEMBERS) OF THE CONSTITUTION.

No questions had been received from members of the public.

55. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ON THE WORK OF THE CABINET SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING.

The Leader of the Council reported on the work that he and the Cabinet had undertaken in the period 16 November 2011 to 10 February 2012.

The Leader drew attention to the visit to the Council by Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform. Lord Freud had spent three to four hours meeting with the Leader and officers and looking at frontline delivery. The Leader expressed hope that some of the amendments emerging from the debate in the House of Lords had been coloured by Lord Freud's visit to Sevenoaks. Drawing attention to the Kent College event for Apprenticeship Week in February 2012, the Leader expressed pride in the support provided to the apprenticeship scheme by Sevenoaks District Council. In response to a question regarding his meeting with Roger House and Robert Hardy, Federation of Small Business, the Leader clarified that this had been a scoping meeting to investigate the support that could be provided to the Centre for Micro Business and that more information would be provided to Members as discussions progressed. In response to a question regarding Locality Boards the Leader reported that a detailed paper would be presented to Members in the future.

56. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMEN OF THE SELECT COMMITTEES ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEES SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING.

The Council received the reports from the Chairmen of the Select Committees as follows:

- Environment Select Committee – 17 January 2012
- Social Affairs Select Committee – 24 January 2012
- Services Select Committee – 31 January 2012

57. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING.

The Council received the report from the Chairman of the Performance and Governance Committee on the work undertaken by the Committee at its meeting on 10 January 2012.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.01 pm

Chairman

