

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2015 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllrs. Dickins, Firth, Lowe and Searles

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Hogarth and Piper

Cllrs. Abraham, Edwards-Winsor, Mrs. Hunter, Maskell, Parkin, Pett, Purves, Scholey, Miss. Stack and Thornton were also present.

11. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 4 June 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

12. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

13. Questions from Members

There were none.

14. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet Advisory Committees

a) Anti-Fraud Team Report 2014/15 (Audit Committee – 23 June 2015, (Minute 7)

Members reviewed the Anti-Fraud, Sanctions and Prosecution Policy, which had been updated to take account of, and align with, a change in the Department for Work & Pensions' Sanctions Policy and recommended for approval by the Audit Committee. The Anti-Fraud Manager confirmed that the principal amendment was the level of overpayment which triggered legal action which was rising from £2,000 to £4,000.

In response to a question, the Anti-Fraud Manager confirmed that as many of the Anti-Fraud's Team's responsibilities were moving to the Single Fraud Investigation Service in February 2016, proposals for transition to a Corporate Fraud Team would be brought forward to January 2016.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the Anti-Fraud, Sanctions and Prosecution Policy, be approved.

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15. Oxford Palace Tower

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report which outlined the immediate requirement to maintain the structural stability of the Oxford Palace Tower and requested that Cabinet recommend to Council that the works be authorised with the appropriate budget totalling £130,699 allocated from the General Fund Reserve. These works would stabilise the fabric of the Oxford Palace Tower, and future use of the building and any subsequent works required would be looked at separately with Members and in conjunction with the community.

The Chief Officer Corporate Support further confirmed the Council had a responsibility to maintain any scheduled monuments it owned. The proposal covered those works considered urgent and essential stabilisation works as set out in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.3 of the recommendation in the Appendix to the report.

The Cabinet was addressed by a local Member in support of the recommendation to Council and by a representative of the Oxford Society asking that Oxford Tower be brought to good health for the community.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted the consideration given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council to approve allocation of £130,699 from the General Fund Reserve for the completion of essential stabilisation works at the Oxford Palace Tower.

16. Property Investment Strategy

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report which requested additional funding to enable further property acquisitions to help ensure that the Council remained in a financially sustainable position going forwards. The Property Investment Strategy had been approved by Council on 22 July 2014 to support the aim of becoming more financially self-sufficient as Government Support continued to reduce. Initial acquisitions had been successful in taking the Council some way towards this aim. The Treasury Management Strategy would be amended to allow a further £10 million to be invested in 2015/16. The Chairman added that he considered financial self-sufficiency was essential.

In response to a question the Chief Finance Officer advised that a business case would need to be presented for each investment and the appropriate funding options would be considered.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that

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- a) a further £10m for the Property Investment Strategy be set aside from borrowing; and
- b) the Amendment to the Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16, be approved.

17. Property Disposal Update

Members considered a report which updated them on the disposal of surplus property assets and sought approval for revised disposal strategies in respect of two properties and approval to dispose of further property.

Members noted and considered the relevant minute and recommendations received from the Policy & Performance Advisory Committee who had considered the same report. They noted the Committee's agreement with recommendations (a), (b), (e) and (f) of the report and their preferences for option 3 in the confidential Appendix A to the report for the Woodland at Hever Avenue, West Kingsdown and option 3 in the same Appendix for Timberden Farm, Shoreham.

The Chairman advised that consideration of disposal of land adjacent to Shacklands Cottages, Badgers Mount would be considered at a future point following consultation with the Parish Council and local residents.

It was moved by the Chairman and

Resolved: That, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendices A and C to the report, on the ground that likely disclosure of exempt information was involved as defined by paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) as identified in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Members discussed the proposals in the report for each site including the recommendations contained in the confidential appendices.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) delegated authority be given to the Portfolio Holder for Policy & Performance in consultation with the Head of Economic Development and Property to approve the terms of a disposal of land at Croft Road, Westerham following the bidding process;
- b) delegated authority be given to the Portfolio Holder for Policy & Performance in consultation with the Head of Economic Development and Property to approve the terms of a disposal of land at Knole Way, Sevenoaks following the bidding process;

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- c) in line with the recommendation of the Policy & Performance Advisory Committee, Cabinet approve option 3 as set out in the exempt Appendix A for the disposal of Woodland at Hever Avenue, West Kingsdown;
- d) in line with the recommendation of the Policy & Performance Advisory Committee, Cabinet approve option 3 as set out in the exempt Appendix A for the disposal of land at Timberden Farm, Shoreham;
- e) an initial budget of £20,000 from Capital Reserves be approved to appoint architects to prepare development options for the Bevan Place Car Park/Swanley Working Men's Club/16 High Street site; and
- f) a budget of £61,000 from Capital Reserves be approved to enhance the value of sites at: Timberden Farm, Shoreham; Hever Avenue, West Kingsdown; and Knole Way, Sevenoaks prior to disposal.

18. Appointments to other organisations 2015/16 - Executive (Sevenoaks District Sports Council)

Members considered the report which sought to confirm the Council's executive appointments to outside organisations following an agreement from Cllr. Kelly to replace Cllr. Reay as one of the Council's three representatives on the Sevenoaks District Sports Council.

Resolved: That Councillor Reay be replaced by Councillor Kelly as an appointed representative on Sevenoaks District Sports Council for the remainder of the municipal year 2015/16.

19. Appointment to Advisory Committees

The Chairman advised that, following discussions with Members, Memberships of Cabinet Advisory Committees no longer had to be amended.

Following a request from Cllr. Firth, noting that the Chairman had agreed to an amendment in the title of the Portfolio for Legal & Democratic to the Portfolio for Legal & Democratic Services, Members were asked to consider an amendment in the title of the relevant Advisory Committee accordingly.

Resolved: That the Legal & Democratic Advisory Committee be renamed the Legal & Democratic Services Advisory Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 20 July 2015. The decisions contained in Minutes 14, 18 and 19 take effect immediately. The decision contained in Minute 17 takes effect on 28 July 2015. The decisions taken in Minutes 15 and 16 will be considered at Full Council on 21 July 2015.

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THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.48 PM

CHAIRMAN

