

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SEVENOAKS

Minutes of the Meeting of the Sevenoaks District Council held on 20 February 2018 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Abraham (Chairman)

Cllrs. Ball, C. Barnes, Barnes, Mrs. Bayley, Brown, Dr. Canet, Clark, Coleman, Dickins, Dyball, Edwards-Winsor, Esler, Eyre, Firth, Fleming, Gaywood, Grint, Hogarth, Horwood, Kelly, Kitchener, Krogdahl, Lake, Layland, London, Lowe, Maskell, McArthur, McGarvey, McGregor, Mrs. Morris, Parkin, Parson, Pearsall, Piper, Purves, Raikes, Scholey, Searles, Miss. Stack and Thornton

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Bosley, Mrs. Bosley, Clack, Halford, Hogg, Mrs. Hunter, Pett, Reay, Scott, Ms. Tennessee and Williamson

31. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21 November 2017

The Chairman advised that further to the despatch of agenda papers the printed version of the minutes on the agenda did not have Councillors Ball, Barnes or Bayley listed in attendance. This had since been corrected and a corrected version was before him.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21 November 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

32. To receive any declarations of interest not included in the register of interest from Members in respect of items of business included on the agenda for this meeting

No additional declarations of interest were received.

33. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman reported the passing of former Councillor Richard Davison, who had represented Edenbridge South & West on the District Council from 2003. Stating that everyone's thoughts were with his wife, former Councillor Jill Davison and his family, and he asked Members to join him in a moments silence in his memory.

He advised that Sajid Javid, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, had visited on Monday 5 February to find out about the Council's recent successes, and to launch a #DigitalSunsetChallenge scheme the Council were backing to help young people learn good digital habits. He understood that he was spreading the word and advising people to come and see how it was done in Sevenoaks.

After the huge success of last year's Run, Walk or Push against Dementia in Knole Park, the Chairman reported that the event was making its comeback on Sunday 13

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May and would once again include timed 3, 5 and 10k courses suitable for everyone from parents with pushchairs to seasoned runners.

The Chairman also announced that he was hosting a Charity Indoor Bowls event which would take place at 7pm on Thursday 15 March at the Indoor Bowls Club in Sevenoaks at 7pm, and holding his end of term dinner on Friday 27 April at 7pm at Brands Hatchplace Hotel and Spa.

34. 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.

35. To receive any petitions submitted by members of the public under paragraph 18 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

No petitions were received.

36. Matters considered by the Cabinet

(a) Calculation of Council Tax Base and other Tax Setting Issues

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Scholey seconded, the recommendation from Cabinet. The report set out details of the calculation of the District's tax base for Council tax setting purposes.

Resolved: That

- a) the report of the Chief Finance Officer for the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2018/19 be approved;
- b) pursuant to the report of the Chief Finance Officer and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by the Sevenoaks District Council as its Council tax base for the whole area for the year 2018/19 shall be 49,902.89;
- c) pursuant to the report of the Chief Finance Officer and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by the Sevenoaks District Council as the Council tax base for 2018/19 for the calculation of local precepts shall be:

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Tax Base</u>
Ash-cum-Ridley	2,431.82
Badgers Mount	329.31
Brasted	779.00

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Chevening	1,443.19
Chiddingstone	600.18
Cowden	402.07
Crockenhill	656.44
Dunton Green	1,180.38
Edenbridge	3,548.58
Eynsford	930.38
Farningham	657.83
Fawkham	280.51
Halstead	777.21
Hartley	2,538.28
Hever	598.98
Hextable	1,643.18
Horton Kirby & South Darent	1,298.26
Kemsing	1,813.75
Knockholt	628.51
Leigh	877.50
Otford	1,687.32
Penshurst	831.38
Riverhead	1,242.10
Seal	1,223.02
Sevenoaks Town	9,470.04
Sevenoaks Weald	621.15
Shoreham	686.26
Sundridge	925.22
Swanley	5,485.19
Westerham	1,985.12
West Kingsdown	2,330.73

- d) any expenses incurred by the Council in performing in part of its area a function performed elsewhere in its area by a parish or community Council or the chairman of a parish meeting shall not be treated as special expenses for the purposes of section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(b) Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Scholey seconded, the recommendations from Cabinet. The report sought approval of the Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19.

Resolved: That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19 be approved.

(c) Budget and Council Tax Setting 2018/19

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Scholey seconded, the recommendations within the report and from Cabinet.

The Leader spoke to the motion stating that Members had before them another balanced 10 year budget, an achievement still unique within Local Government and an achievement recognised again this year by peers from across the sector. The Council had followed last year's success with two awards from CiPFA, including their Grand Prix Prize and the highest accolade in local government the LGC Council of the Year, a win in which the Council's financial self-sufficiency had played no small part. He could guarantee with absolute certainty that the budget in front of Members would also be unique in the positivity of its message: investment in services, not cuts; increased investment in assets, not cuts; which demonstrated that the Council was a seriously different Council.

There was however no getting away from the fact these were incredibly difficult times for the local government sector. In the last eight years Sevenoaks District Council's revenue support grant had fallen by over five million pounds. In simple terms that meant the direct grant funding for every man, woman and child within the District had reduced from £55.95 in 2010 to zero, absolutely nothing this year and risks remained. The spectre of the 'negative Revenue Support' was live and certain parts of the Council's financial future was beyond its control. But the Council had put itself in absolutely the best possible position as the property portfolio had grown and was performing well.

He thanked all Members and officers who had helped to make it a reality. Last year he had spoken about plans being brought forward in Swanley, Edenbridge and Sevenoaks as the Council looked to build out the aspirations of those communities. Some of this work had taken longer than hoped for but he believed would now move at pace. Self-sufficiency and a property portfolio were never the end of the story, they were always to give the Council an opportunity to make decisions which would best serve the communities represented.

Members knew that he strongly believed that the Council should always balance the make-up of the money it had to spend. The main three pillars that remained after the removal of government support were Council Tax, Savings and Investment income, and over reliance on any one of the three he believed destabilised the authority.

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The Secretary of State had been clear when he stood at the dispatch box to deliver the local government settlement. He believed that Council tax increases should keep pace with inflation and he had made this possible by raising the referendum limit to 3%, which followed a theme over the last few years as Councils moved away from direct government support. For Sevenoaks it would mean an increase of £6.03, as proposed, taking the total Sevenoaks District Council Tax figure to £208.80, or £4.00 a week.

The Leader stated that the work that Members and officers at Sevenoaks District Council had already done and the outcomes achieved had gained the Council national recognition. Whilst awards weren't why anyone came into local government, they did act as a yard stick with which to measure against others and to coin a phrase they 'keep us honest' not allowing backsliding or any resting on our laurels. Over the coming years the Council needed to go further, faster, and would need to both learn from others and lead.

He stated that there would undoubtedly be challenges ahead, and the Council's future was not without risk, some of it falling outside of the Council's control, so it would need to make sure it was fit for, ready for, and up for these challenges.

The work carried out and the work the Council continued to do, supported by the balanced ten year budget before Members was the solid foundation that makes him believe that Sevenoaks District would not just survive but would thrive in the future. He commended the budget to Members.

In response to a question the Chief Finance Officer stated that Kent County Council had held their budget meeting that day and he could report that agreement had been reached as per report recommendations.

The vote was taken.

For	Against	Abstention
Cllr. Abraham		
Cllr. Ball		
Cllr. C. Barnes		
Cllr. J. Barnes		
Cllr. Mrs Bayley		
Cllr. Brown		
Cllr. Dr. Canet		
Cllr. Clark		
Cllr. Coleman		
Cllr. Dickins		
Cllr. Dyball		
Cllr. Edwards-Winser		
Cllr. Esler		
Cllr. Eyre		
Cllr. Firth		
Cllr. Fleming		
Cllr. Gaywood		

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Cllr. Grint Cllr. Hogarth Cllr. Horwood Cllr. Kelly Cllr. Kitchener Cllr. Krogdahl Cllr. Lake Cllr. Layland Cllr. London Cllr. Lowe Cllr. Maskell Cllr. McArthur Cllr. McGarvey Cllr. McGregor Cllr. Mrs. Morris Cllr. Parkin Cllr. Parson Cllr. Pearsall Cllr. Piper Cllr. Purves Cllr. Raikes Cllr. Scholey Cllr. Searles Cllr. Miss. Stack Cllr. Thornton		
42	0	0

It was therefore

Resolved: That the

- a) Summary of Council Expenditure and Council Tax for 2018/19 set out in Appendix E to the report, be approved;
- b) 10-year budget 2018/19 to 2027/28 which is the guiding framework for the detailed approval of future years' budgets set out in Appendix B to the report be approved, including the growth and savings proposals set out in Appendix C-D to the report, and that where possible any variations during and between years be met from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve;
- c) Capital Programme 2018/21 and funding method set out in Appendix H to the report be approved;
- d) changes to reserves and provisions set out in Appendix I to the report, be approved;
- e) Capital Programme 2018/21, and Asset Maintenance 2018/19 budget of £561,000 be approved (Cabinet 6 February 2018 - Capital Programme & Asset Maintenance 2018/21);

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- f) it be noted that at the Cabinet meeting on 11 January 2018 the Council calculated as its Council tax base for the year 2018/19:
- i) for the whole Council area as 49,902.89 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 the attached Appendix L;
- g) Council tax requirement for the Council’s own purpose for 2018/19 (excluding Town and Parish precepts) be calculated as £208.80;
- h) following amounts be calculated for the year 2018/19 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
- (i) £56,248,220 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) £41,601,000 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - (iii) £14,647,220 being the amount by which the aggregate at (h)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (h)(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) £293.51 being the amount at (h)(iii) above (Item R), all divided by (f)(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) £4,227,497 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Town and Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act (as per Appendix K to the report).
 - (vi) £208.80 being the amount at (h)(iv) above, less the result given by dividing the amount at (h)(v) above by the amount at (f)(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.
- i) it be noted that for the year 2018/19 the Kent County Council, the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner and the Kent & Medway Towns Fire

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Authority had 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 -

<u>Valuation Bands</u>	<u>Precepting Authority</u>			
	Sevenoaks District Council £	Kent County Council £	Kent Police & C.C. £	Kent & Medway Towns Fire Authority £
A	139.20	825.12	112.77	50.34
B	162.40	962.64	131.56	58.73
C	185.60	1,100.16	150.36	67.12
D	208.80	1,237.68	169.15	75.51
E	255.20	1,512.72	206.74	92.29
F	301.60	1,787.76	244.33	109.07
G	348.00	2,062.80	281.92	125.85
H	417.60	2,475.36	338.30	151.02

- j) Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in Appendix N to the report as the amounts of Council tax for the year 2018/19 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings; and
- k) Council's basic amount of Council tax for 2018/19, shown in (h)(vi) above, is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

37. Matters considered by other standing committees

- (a) Gambling Act 2005: Licence Fees from April 2018

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Mrs. Morris seconded the recommendations from the Licensing Committee.

Resolved: That the appropriate fee levels be £3,670 for a new or renewal application, and £1,840 for the transfer of an application from 1 April 2018.

- (b) Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 - Licence Fees from April 2018

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Mrs. Morris seconded the recommendations from the Licensing Committee.

Resolved: That the appropriate fee levels be £3,670 for a new or renewal application, and £1,840 for the transfer of an application from 1 April 2018.

(c) Monitoring Officer's Annual Report

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Gaywood seconded the recommendations from the Standards Committee.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

38. To consider the following reports from the Chief Executive or other Chief Officers on matters requiring the attention of Council:

(a) Pay Policy Statement

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Lowe seconded the report which set out the elements of senior officer pay that enabled the Council to attract high quality officers whilst protecting value for money to the community. Approval by Council and publication on the Council website improved transparency and accountability whilst ensuring adherence to the Localism Act 2011.

Resolved: That the Pay Policy Statement be adopted and published on the Council's website.

39. 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.

One question had been received from a Member in accordance with paragraph 19.3 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

Question 1: Cllr. Dr. Canet

“Will Sevenoaks District Council consider the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders for building sites in the district which have been empty for some considerable time?”

This waste of valuable uses for these sites is blighting Sevenoaks Town, for example the former Edwards Electrical site in the centre of the town, and not contributing to meeting our local housing needs.”

Response: Leader of the Council

The Government outlined plans for the 2017 Housing White Paper to prepare new guidance encouraging the use of CPO powers to support the build out of stalled sites. That guidance has not yet been published.

The Council can make use of provisions in the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act to use compulsory powers to acquire sites in order to facilitate development or improvement. The use of such powers should only be made where there is a compelling case in the public interest and consideration given to a number of factors in deciding whether to exercise those powers.

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Those factors include understanding why the owner isn't bringing the site forward themselves, whether there is anything else the Council can do to enable development, short of making a Compulsory Purchase Order and is there both the ability for the Council to procure its development and do that in a timely manner. That latter point is important because there are costs involved in using those powers, particularly where the owner objects to the making of the Order and an Inquiry is held to determine whether the Order should be made, above and beyond the costs of purchasing the site and its subsequent development. It can typically take around 18 months to make and confirm a Compulsory Purchase Order.

Where possible our approach is to seek to work with owners of such sites and their advisors to see if there are ways that the Council can enable development to take place. If that doesn't work then it would be necessary to carefully consider any use that could be made of CPO powers and the financial aspects of any potential acquisition.

Supplementary question: Cllr. Dr. Canet

When is Sevenoaks going to issue a Compulsory Purchase Order so we can get on with some of those matters and provide for our local housing needs.

Response: Leader of the Council

The Leader referred Councillor Dr. Canet to his initial response.

In accordance with the Constitution, there was no further discussion.

40. To consider any motions by Members under paragraph 20 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.

No motions had been received.

41. 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 4 November 2017 to 31 January 2018.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.30 PM

CHAIRMAN