

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2014 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllrs. Hogarth, Ms. Lowe, Piper and Ramsay

Cllrs. Mrs. Davison, Davison, Dickins, Edwards-Winsler, Mrs. Parkin, Searles and Miss. Stack were also present.

27. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 17 July 2014, be approved and signed as a correct record.

28. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

29. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)

There were none.

30. Matters referred from Council

There were none.

31. Matters referred from the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committee (Paragraph 5.20 of Part 4 (Executive) of the Constitution)

There were no references from the Audit Committee or Scrutiny Committees.

32. Recommendations from the Cabinet Advisory Committees

- a) Gypsy and Traveller Plan – Responses to consultation and additional sites and pitches promoted (Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee – 3 September 2014, Minute 15)

This was considered under Minute 33.

- b) Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy 2015/16 and Beyond Advisory Committee (Finance & Resources Advisory Committee– 3 September 2014, Minute 21)

This was considered under Minute 35.

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- c) Annual Treasury Management Report 2013/14 Advisory Committee (Finance & Resources Advisory Committee– 3 September 2014, Minute 18)

This was considered under Minute 36.

33. Gypsy and Traveller Plan - Responses to consultation and additional sites and pitches promoted

The Portfolio Holder for Local Planning & Environment presented the report and advised that the Local Planning & Advisory Committee had considered the same report and were recommending Officer amended recommendations from those contained within the report to reflect the life of the Gypsy and Traveller Plan.

The Chairman had received a request from the Chairman of Shoreham Parish Council to address the Cabinet. Mr. Ennis, Chairman of Shoreham Parish Council, thanked the Chairman and gave a short [speech](#) on behalf of the Parish Council and villagers highlighting concerns, referring to an independent report they had paid to have carried out by a private expert and welcoming the recommendation to remove the Filston Lane site from the Plan.

The Vice Chairman thanked everyone involved from the residents of Shoreham, petitioners, the Parish Council and consultees to officers for their hard work over the summer. The Chairman also acknowledged the enormous amount of work, including by the Portfolio Holder of Local Planning & Environment.

Questions were raised by the Chairman of Shoreham, Parish Council's speech, a resident of Shoreham and a member of the Shoreham Society. The Chairman advised that at the outset it had been made clear that at the time the site was put in the consultation it was the Council's belief that the Salford report figures were correct. He was aware that the Government were talking about changing the definition of 'traveller', however nothing had yet been changed and the Council had to work to current legislation. He believed all processes had been followed correctly and as a result other sites had been identified and the desired result achieved. He understood that the site could not now be placed back into the plan, however this exemption only lasted the life of the plan so could only be guaranteed up to 2026. The reason and necessity of the consultation was to be able to look at issues raised and investigate site suitability.

The Joint Planning Policy Team Leaders advised that in their opinion the most robust justification for the removal of the Shoreham site was that there were now site options that would have less impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The points raised on school places were only comments on 15 pitches not less, and Kent County Council Highways had not raised any overriding objections with regards to infrastructure at this point. If it were being proposed to pursue this site then further work would be carried out into these issues, but as there was already a robust reason to remove the site there was no requirement to.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

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Resolved: That

- a) the site options previously consulted on in the Gypsy and Traveller Plan: Site Options consultation at Land South of Mesne Way, Shoreham, and Land at Fort Halstead, be ruled out of further consideration in the Gypsy and Traveller Plan covering the period up to 2026;
- b) the Council continue to investigate sites promoted to it through the recent call for sites and prepare a supplementary site options consultation to be considered by the Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee and agreed by Cabinet prior to publication, in order to provide an opportunity for interested parties to comment on potentially suitable alternative site options.

34. Draft Strategic Risk Register

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources presented the report advising that at the Audit Committee's meeting in June 2014 it had considered the Draft Strategic Risk Register, making no further recommendations for its improvement, but requesting that the Audit Committee review the register more frequently during the year. It remained within the Cabinet's terms of reference to adopt policies and documents associated with the management of risk and so this report was presented to Cabinet. The report provided Members with the opportunity to review and comment on the Council's Draft Strategic Risk Register. The Draft Register had been developed by Officers, taking in the views of the Officers Risk Management Group, Service Managers and Chief Officers. It set out those risks that Officers considered could prevent the Council delivering the Vision and Promises set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Members were happy with the views and recommendations of the Audit Committee.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the Council's Strategic Risk Register be adopted.

35. Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy 2015/16 and Beyond

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources presented the report advising that the Council was now in the 5th year of using the current Business and Financial Planning Strategy that included the 10-year budget which had proved successful to date and put SDC in a much stronger financial position than most other Councils. The Finance & Resources Advisory Committee had considered the same report but was recommending that the Council Tax assumption of 3% for 2016/17 onwards should be reduced to 2%.

At the Audit Committee on 9 September 2014 the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton, mentioned that the 10-year budget was excellent and a bedrock of the Council's success. Since the last 10-year budget had been agreed at Full Council in February, changes that had been made since then were a rolling 10-year budget on for one year and using the Budget Stabilisation - Reserve and Financial Plan Reserve balances.

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Appendix B to the report showed a shortfall of £647k (i.e. £65k pa) however, the position was likely to change as Chief Officers were currently reviewing the growth and savings requirements for their services. These would be reported back to the relevant Advisory Committees. The Cabinet Advisory Committees would also get the opportunity to review the Service Plans and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs). A budget update report would then be submitted to Cabinet in December which should almost finalise the budget subject to any late announcements coming from central government.

Members discussed the Finance & Resources Advisory Committee's view that the assumption that Council Tax would be increased by 3% in 2016/17 onwards was unrealistic. The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources pointed out that he had advised that Council Tax assumptions had been agreed by Members at Full Council in February 2014. It was thought that this would not be the right time to look at amending this assumption and was a debate to be had at a later date.

The Chairman restated that to survive going forward with the reduction of Revenue Support Grant and council tax support, required continual savings, local taxation and the generation of income. Council Tax increases were not the answer as a whole but were part of it and these were just assumptions.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the ten year financial planning approach and principles set out in the report be endorsed.

36. Annual Treasury Management Report 2013/14

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources and Chief Finance Officer presented the report which outlined the strategy adopted during the year, showed the position of the investment portfolio at the beginning and the end of the year and gave details of how the fund performed in comparison with previous years and against various benchmarks. It also highlighted that the overall return on the Council's investments exceeded the budget in 2013/14 by approximately £7,000; and the Council continues to adopt a very cautious investment approach.

The Chief Finance Officer stated that a call account had been opened with Svenska Handelsbanken, and £3m had been invested at 0.45% which is better than most available on the market.

Members noted and considered the relevant minute and recommendations received from the Finance & Resources Advisory Committee who had considered the same report, and commended the Principal Accountant for his work.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2013/14, be approved.

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 for the following item of business 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.

Before any discussion took place it was noted that agenda item 7 'Gypsy and Traveller Plan – Responses to consultation and additional sites and pitches promoted' had already been discussed and a resolution passed so that any discussion would have no bearing on the decision already taken and was merely an opportunity for comments to be fed back to Officers.

The Chairman allowed a local Member to address the Cabinet and make some points in relations to sites detailed in appendices E and F that would be fed back to Officers for information.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 15 September 2014. The decisions contained in Minutes 34, 35 and 36 take effect immediately. The decision contained in Minute 33 take effect on 23 September 2014.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.03 PM

CHAIRMAN

