

## **Council – 20 July 2010**

### **DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SEVENOAKS**

#### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Sevenoaks District Council held on 20 July 2010 commencing at 7 p.m.**

Present: Cllr. Loney (Chairman)

Cllr. Orridge (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Bosley, Mrs. Bosley, Mrs. Bracken, Brigden, Mrs. Broomby, Brown, Bruce, Chard, Mrs. Clark, Cole, Mrs. Cook, Darrington, Mrs. Davison, Davison, Mrs Dawson, Dibsdall, Fleming, Fodor, Gaywood, Gilbert, Golding, Harrod, Mrs. Hunter, Lankester, Mrs. Lowe, Maskell, McGarvey, McInnes, Ms. Moore, Mrs. Morris, Orridge, Mrs. Parkin, Pett, Piper, Mrs. Purves, Ramsay, Ryan, Mrs. Sargeant, Scholey, Miss Stack, Underwood, Waller, Walshe, Wigg and Williamson.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Arnold, Brookbank, Coates, Cooke, Dean, Grint, Mrs. Purves, Ryan and Walshe.

#### **12. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Chairman proposed that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2010, including the amendments contained on the late information sheet, be approved and signed as a correct record.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### **13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **14. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman informed Members that he would be reinstating the tradition of inviting Members into the Chairman's room for a drink after each Council meeting. He stated that due to the size of the room, Councillors would be invited on a rotational basis and he hoped that the vast majority of Members would be able to have a drink with him during his term of office.

#### **15. TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None were received.

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### 16. MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE CABINET AND/OR OTHER COMMITTEES

#### 17. (A) THE DUTY TO RESPOND TO PETITIONS

Cllr. Fleming proposed and Cllr. Bruce seconded that the recommendations of the Modern Local Government Group be adopted.

Resolved: That the Council

- (a) adopt the Petition Scheme (attached as Appendix A) and include it as Appendix Y to the Council's Constitution, subject to the following amendments;
  - (i) Section headed "Officer Evidence", Paragraph 2 - the fourth sentence be deleted and replaced with "The Committee will also require the relevant Portfolio Holder to attend the meeting"
  - (ii) Section headed "Full council debates" – After the first sentence, add new sentence to read "Petitions which relate to an issue which affects a particular area of the District and have a significant level of support from people who live, work or study in that area are also likely to be debated at a Full Council meeting.
- (b) implement the Petition Scheme with immediate effect, with the exception of those sections of the scheme which relate to e-petitions.
- (c) grant the Chief Executive delegated authority to bring the e-petitions elements of the Petition Scheme into effect, no later than 15 December 2010 (or such other timescale as approved by Government).
- (d) designate the Chief Executive as "petitions officer", with responsibility for determining the admissibility of petitions under the scheme and delegated authority to make minor administrative amendments to the petition scheme if required.
- (e) agree the consequential amendments to Part 2 of the Constitution - Council Procedure Rules (Appendix B) and Part 5 of the Constitution - Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Appendix C).

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18. (B) ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

Cllr. Bruce proposed and Cllr. Fleming seconded that the recommendation of the Performance and Governance Committee and the Modern Local Government Group be adopted.

Resolved: That the amendments to “Part 6 – Performance and Governance Committee” (Appendix A) be supported as amended above and that Council be recommended to amend the Constitution accordingly.

19. (C) DARTFORD AND SEVENOAKS REVENUES, BENEFITS, AUDIT AND ANTI-FRAUD JOINT WORKING PROJECT – PROPOSED FORWARD OPERATING MODEL

Cllr. Fleming proposed and Cllr. Ramsay seconded that the recommendation of the Cabinet be adopted.

Resolved: That a provision of £417,000 investment costs and a £75,000 contingency be recommended to Council to support in the implementation of the project as a Supplementary Budget Request which represents a 50% share of costs.

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

There were none.

21. TO CONSIDER ANY QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER PARAGRAPH 19.3 OF PART 2 OF THE CONSTITUTION

**(a) Cllr Harrod asked the following question:**

“Could the Leader of the Council state whether he agrees with all the reports, published over the last 15 years, that the several million pounds spent in Swanley on regeneration and housing has made Swanley a much better place to live?”

**The Leader of the Council replied as follows:**

“The Council has made a major investment of time and resources into Swanley and has been careful to ensure that the effectiveness of projects has been fully examined.

The Swanley People First SRB programme received £650,000 of funding and attracted £1.64m matched funding. It included 14 projects and associated initiatives and the independent evaluation found that over 8,000 people benefitted from the projects, 146 community and voluntary

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groups were supported and over 1,500 people had been involved in schemes that helped their educational attainment. The evaluation concluded that:

“it had been an extremely effective community focused programme, which has had a far reaching influence and impact on the infrastructure and morale of two deprived wards in Swanley.”

Since funding ended the Council has continued to work with the community and other organisations to take forward the various projects.

These have included the 8-12s project for which this year’s evaluation showed 71% of parents thought their child’s behaviour had improved.

Projects delivered as part of the Healthy Swanley Network have been found to provide wide health benefits to the community. The evaluation showed that over 8,000 residents of all ages benefitted.

Recently in 2007/8 we achieved £62,000 funding to contribute to improvements in the Swanley Park play area and funding for West Kent Extra Play Days and in 2009/10 we achieved £48,000 funding to improve the Cherry Avenue play area.

These projects have made a big difference but we recognise there is still much to do. The LDF contains a range of development proposals that will contribute to regeneration, including improvements to the town centre and sites for new housing and commercial development. We will also continue to work with the community to bring forward a wide range of community projects to benefit the people of Swanley.”

### **Cllr. Harrod asked a supplementary question as follows:**

“I would like to thank the Leader of the Council for that reply. As we are trying to attract new residents and businesses to the town would the Leader then like to disassociate himself from the comment, attributed to Cllr. Loney, that appeared in the Sevenoaks Chronicle on 20 May 2010, that Swanley was one of the more rundown parts of the District?”

### **The Leader of the Council replied as follows:**

“I never comment on any comment attributed to others by the Sevenoaks Chronicle.”

## **22. TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC UNDER PARAGRAPH 17 OF PART 2 OF THE CONSTITUTION**

None were received.

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

The Leader of the Council informed Members that it had been made very clear by the Government that local authorities' budgets would take a significant financial hit when the Government grant allocations were announced later in the year. He stated that both Members and Officers at the Council had demonstrated their resilience and innovation when faced with difficulties. He informed Members that there would be more partnership working between authorities in the future.

The Leader of the Council also informed Members that the Government would be delegating more responsibility down. This might be to local authorities in some instances but could go further to residents or neighbourhood groups. He stated that Members needed to play an active role in the community with such work in the future.

A Member commented that despite the Cabinet not providing any funding to help Crockenhill Parish Council purchase land at Greencourt Road, Crockenhill, the Parish Council had managed to buy the land at auction after raising £95,000 in private subscriptions and after taking a loan from the Public Works Board. Given that no money had been forthcoming from Sevenoaks District Council (SDC), the Parish Council had been surprised to then receive a request from SDC to make it public open land. He stated that the Parish Council had not looked favourably on the request. Finally, he stated that the fencing around the Greencourt Road site was in a poor state of repair and that work desperately needed to be undertaken on it but this was being frustrated by planning issues. He stated that Crockenhill Parish Council would appreciate some help from SDC.

The Leader of the Council replied that he would look into the planning issues which the Member had raised. However, he stated that there was a need to be careful on such issues as nationally, it was becoming common for land to be pushed up in value by people who were less than scrupulous. This led to local people having to pay over a piece of land's true value to secure. He also stated that this was the type of issue where more and more, local communities would need to take action for themselves.

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

There were no questions on the report.

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

There were no questions on the report.

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THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.33 P.M.

Chairman

