

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SEVENOAKS

Minutes of the Meeting of the Sevenoaks District Council held on 16 December 2010 commencing at 7 p.m.

Present: Cllr. Loney (Chairman)

Cllr. Orridge (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Arnold, Bosley, Mrs. Bosley, Mrs Bracken, Brookbank, Mrs. Broomby, Brown, Bruce, Chard, Mrs. Clark, Darrington, Davison, Mrs. Davison, Dean, Fleming, Gaywood, Gilbert, Harrod, Mrs. Hunter, Lankester, London, Mrs. Lowe, Maskell, McGarvey, McInnes, Ms. Moore, Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Parkin, Piper, Mrs. Purves, Ramsay, Ryan, Mrs. Sargeant, Underwood, Waller, Walshe and Wigg.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Brigden, Coates, Cole, Mrs Cook, Cooke, Mrs Dawson, Dibsdall, Scholey, Miss Stack and Williamson.

48. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Councillor Chard advised Members that she had submitted her apologies for the last meeting and asked for this to be recorded.

Councillor McInnes stated that in minute 38, Declarations of Interest, the reference to "Colin Annett" should have read "Colin Annetts".

The Chairman proposed that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 9 November 2010 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 9 November 2010 with the amendments outlined above be approved and signed by the Chairman as correct records.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members declarations of interest at meetings from 28 October to 3 December 2010 were noted.

The following declarations of interest were declared in respect of the Council meeting:

Councillor Mrs Hunter declared a personal interest in minute item 57, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2011/12, as she is the Council's representative on Swanley and Sevenoaks Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor Walshe declared a personal interest in minute item 57, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2011/12 as his wife is a trustee of the Stag Theatre.

Councillor Harrod declared a personal interest in minute item 57, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2011/12, as his wife works for the Orchard Theatre

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which is in competition with the Stag Theatre.

Councillor Brookbank declared a personal interest in minute item 57 as he is a Non-Executive Director of Swanley and Sevenoaks Citizens Advice Bureau and as Chairman of Trustees of Darent Valley Age Concern.

Councillor Piper declared a personal interest in minute item 57, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2011/12, as he is a trustee of the Stag Theatre.

Councillor Mrs Parkin declared a personal interest in minute item 57, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2011/12, as she is a trustee of Age Concern, Darent Valley and as a member of the Council's Access Group.

Councillor Ms Moore declared a personal interest in minute item 57, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2011/12 as she is an employee of Clydesdale Bank.

Councillor Mrs Davison declared a personal interest in minute item 57, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2011/12, as she is a trustee of the Sencio Board.

Councillor Brown declared a personal interest in minute item 57, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2011/12, as he is a member of a theatre group which use the Stag Theatre.

Councillor Mrs Sargeant declared a personal interest in minute item 57, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2011/12, as she is president of the Thursday Club in Swanley many of who's members use the Minibus Service for the Elderly.

50. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman informed Members that thanks to the generosity of Members in donating prizes and cash the raffle held at the Members' Christmas Party had raised £287 in aid of Demelza House hospice which provided an invaluable service for sick children in Kent. He thanked Members for their generosity in supporting a worthy cause.

The Chairman announced that he proposed to vary the order of items in the agenda to bring forward consideration of item 6(a), Review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances, so that it would be dealt with before the various reports under item 5. This was because any decision on item 6(a) could have an impact on the Budget and Council Tax to be considered at item 5(e).

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

The Chairman announced that no petitions had been submitted in time for formal submission to the Council under this item. However a petition had been received the day before the meeting requesting that the Council should keep the Minibus Service for the Elderly running and further signatures had been received in support on the day of the meeting. In view of the late submission of the petition the Chairman proposed that this should be considered under

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agenda item 5(e), Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2011/12 (minute 53E refers).

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

(a) Review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances

Councillor Fleming moved and Councillor Mrs Davison seconded the recommendation contained in the report.

Councillor Harrod moved an amendment, seconded by Councillor Wigg, to amend the recommendation to read as follows:

“That the existing Members' Allowance Scheme be amended by adopting the revised allowances as set out on page 259 of the agenda column headed 2008/09 Scheme, minus the broadband allowance”.

During debate on the amendment Councillor Harrod clarified that he was proposing that the Council revert to the Members' Allowance Scheme as it was in 2008/09 without the monthly broadband allowance.

The amendment was put to the vote and was LOST.

Members debated the original motion. Councillor Fleming explained that the proposal was to forgo the planned increase of £45,000 in Members Allowances for 2011/12 which had been contained in the four year budget plan.

The motion was put to the vote and it was

Resolved: That the existing Members' Allowance Scheme be amended by adopting the revised allowances as set out on the updated Schedule 1 to Appendix G of the Constitution, as included at Appendix D2 to the report, and adding this to the Constitution.

53. MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE CABINET AND/OR OTHER COMMITTEES

A. Financial Strategy 2010-2021

Councillor Fleming moved and Councillor Ramsay seconded that the recommendation of the Cabinet be adopted:

Resolved: That the Financial Strategy attached to the report be approved.

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B. Investment Strategy Update 2010/11

Councillor Fleming moved and Councillor Ramsay seconded that the recommendations of the Cabinet be adopted:

Resolved: That

(a) the lending limit for individual institutions meeting the Council's lending criteria be increased to £5m excluding call accounts and £6m including call accounts across all institutions within a group of companies; and

(b) the existing restriction of not lending more than 15% of the total fund to any one counterparty or counterparties within a group of companies be changed to 25% (at the time of placing the investment).

C. Investment Strategy 2011/12

Councillor Fleming moved and Councillor Ramsay seconded that the recommendation of the Cabinet be adopted:

Resolved: That the Annual Investment Strategy set out in the report be approved.

D. Capital Programme and Asset Maintenance 2011/14

Councillor Fleming thanked the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Value for Money, the Finance Advisory Group and the Performance and Governance Committee for their work on developing the Asset Maintenance Programme against a background of prolonged financial pressure.

Councillor Fleming moved and Councillor Ramsay seconded that the recommendations of the Cabinet be adopted:

Resolved:

(a) That the Capital Programme 2011/14 and funding method set out in Appendix B to the report be approved; and

(b) That the proposed Asset Maintenance budget of £664,000 for 2011/12 be approved.

E. Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2011/12

Councillor Fleming moved and Councillor Ramsay seconded that the recommendations of the Council be adopted.

Councillor Fleming drew Members attention to a petition containing 307 signatures which had been received on the day before the meeting in support of continuing to provide a Minibus Service for the Elderly along with a letter in support from the St Vincent de Paul Society. A copy of the terms of the petition and the letter were tabled at the meeting. Councillor Fleming also advised Members that a letter had been tabled by Unison opposing proposed

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cuts to staff at Dunbrik.

Councillor Fleming introduced the budget proposals and explained the context against which the budget had been prepared. He drew attention to the reduction in government grant by 30% over the next two years and the need to reduce the budget by £4m over the next four years and noted the duty to produce a balanced budget. He expressed regret that it would no longer be possible to provide some services such as the minibus service for the elderly and the youth programme but stressed that the budget proposals focussed upon protecting front line services and that by agreeing the budget at an earlier stage in the budget cycle there would be greater opportunity to engage with partners to explore alternative means of funding and provision. Councillor Fleming thanked the Select Committees and Officers for their work on the budget and commended the budget to the Council.

Councillor Walshe moved and Councillor Gilbert seconded the following amendment:

“It is agreed that the Cabinet should be requested to consider that the Revenue Budget be adjusted as follows:

ADDITIONAL SAVINGS

Contact Centre	£225K
IT	£80K
Communications	£50K
CCTV	£150K

RESTORED SERVICES

Tourism	£30K
Sencio Parking	£26K
Arts	£5K
Grants	£70K
Leisure	£100K
Youth	£80K
Minibuses	£160K

Totals	£505K	£417K
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Balance returned to

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Reserves	£34K
	—————
	£505K

And that Appendices A,B,C,D,E,F,G and H be adjusted accordingly.

And report back to the next scheduled meeting of this Council with a revised revenue budget.”

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

Councillor Harrod then moved and Councillor Wigg seconded the following amendment to the original motion:

“Put the grants to the CAB and voluntary organisations back into the budget, as well as the cut to the subsidy to the Pest Control service

Community Grants (CAB/Voluntary Groups)	£25,000
Pest Control	£6,000
	—————
	£31,000

Scrap In Shape and use the funding to pay for it

In Shape	£31,000”
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Members debated the proposed amendment which was put to the vote and LOST.

Councillor Harrod moved and Councillor Wigg seconded the following amendment to the original motion:

“Put back into the budget the proposed cut of £20,000 to Youth Work.

Youth Work	£20,000
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To pay for this, scrap the Reserve Civic Transport Fund that was set up last year in case any future Chair could not drive and needed transport to visit different functions they had been asked to.

Reserve Civic Transport Fund	£20,000”
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Members debated the proposed amendment which was put to the vote and LOST.

Councillor Harrod moved and Councillor Wigg seconded a further amendment

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to the original motion as follows:

“Put back into the budget the proposed cut of £333,000 to the Minibus service.

Minibus	£333,000
To pay for this cut	
Out of Reserves	£67,000
Chair’s Allowance	£8,000
In Shape	£31,000
Citizens Panel	£22,000
Open Space maintenance	£30,000
The Stag	£100,000
Consultations	£5,000
Civic transport sub fund	£20,000
Renting out SDC office space to outside organisations and a property review	
	£50,000

	£333,000”

Members debated the proposed amendment which was put to the vote and LOST.

A further amendment to the original motion was moved by Councillor Wigg and duly seconded as follows:

“That the Sencio Leisure parking fees reimbursement of £26K should be reinstated”

Members debated the proposed amendment which was put to the vote and LOST.

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

Resolved:

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

(b) That the 10 year budget 2010/11 to 2020/21 set out in Appendix A to the report, including the growth and savings proposals set out at

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Appendix B, be approved and that where possible any variations during and between years be met from the Budget Stabilisation Fund;

(c) That the changes to the reserves set out in Appendix F to the report be approved;

(d) That any changes in the taxbase and collection fund and other minor variations be transferred to/from the Budget Stabilisation Fund;

(e) That the removal of the Outer-London Fringe Allowance (SCIA #62) be delayed until 2012/13 (a year later than planned) and the freeze on increments (SCIA #63) be brought forward to 2012/13 (a year earlier than planned) so that both issues relating to terms and conditions of employment can be determined at the same time; and

(f) That the Council's net revenue budget for 2011/12 be set at £13,771,000 and that the District Council's element of the Council Tax not be increased and remain at £181.89 for a Band D property.

F. Development Services Review

Councillor Fleming drew Members attention to the amended version of Appendix J to the report which was tabled at the meeting which contained a footnote designed to allow Local Member's the maximum opportunity to speak at meetings of the Development Control Committee.

Councillor Fleming moved and Councillor Mrs Davison seconded that the recommendation of the Cabinet, as amended, be adopted:

Resolved: That the Constitution be amended as set out in Appendix J to the report with a an additional footnote arising from concerns raised by a Member at the Cabinet on 28 October 2010 which reads "As an exception, a Local Member who is also a member of the Committee may indicate a wish to address the Committee as a Speaker, during the declarations of interest or predetermination, as set out in the agenda."

G. Partnership Working with Dartford Borough Council on Revenues, Benefits, Internal Audit and Anti-Fraud Services

Councillor Gilbert asked for his thanks to Officers and to the Leader of the Council for their work on Partnership initiatives with other authorities to be recorded. He said that this had released funding which could be focussed on other areas of service delivery.

Councillor Fleming moved and Councillor Ramsay seconded that the recommendations of the Cabinet be adopted:

Resolved:

(a) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Finance and Value for Money Portfolio Holder to agree the terms of a Partnership Working Agreement with Dartford Borough Council in respect of joint working

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arrangements for shared services;

(b) That, under s.113 of the Local Government Act 1972, the services of Officers employed by Sevenoaks District Council be placed at the disposal of Dartford Borough Council for the purposes of their functions;

(c) That, in relation to Council functions, the Managing Director, being the Head of Paid Service at Dartford Borough Council, be authorised to exercise the powers and functions as set out in the Appendix to the report and approval be given to the necessary amendments to the Constitution; and

(d) That, in relation to Council functions, the Scheme of Delegations be amended so as to authorise the Chief Executive, being the Head of Paid Service at Sevenoaks District Council, to exercise the powers and functions delegated by Dartford Borough Council as set out in the Appendix to the report and approval be given to the necessary amendments to the Constitution.

H. Surveillance Policy – Report of the Chief Surveillance Commissioner

In moving the recommendations Councillor Bruce drew attention to the comments by the Chief Surveillance Commissioner that the Council had a well structured policy and dedicated officers, and paid tribute to the work of the Legal Services Manager.

Councillor Bruce moved and Councillor Mrs Davison seconded that the recommendations of the Performance and Governance Committee be adopted:

Resolved:

(a) That the report of the Chief Surveillance Commissioner be noted; and

(b) That the revised Surveillance Policy appended to the report be approved.

I. Appointment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee

Councillor Mrs Bracken moved and Councillor Mrs Morris seconded that the recommendation of the Standards Committee be adopted:

Resolved: That Mr John Henderson and Mr John Newman be appointed as Independent Members of the Standards committee.

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

None were received.

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

None were received.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.10 PM.

Chairman