

CABINET
05 March 2015 at 7.00 pm

Further to the recent despatch of agenda and papers for the above meeting, please find the following item(s) which were marked as 'to follow':

4. **Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet Advisory Committees** (Pages 1 - 2)
 - a) Referral from Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 12 February 2015 (Minute 28)
10. **Changes to Government Guidance on Planning Obligations - implications on SDC's Affordable Housing Policies** (Pages 3 - 4)
11. **Citizens Advice Bureaux 3 Year Service Level Agreement 2015-2018** (Pages 5 - 6)
12. **Grants to Voluntary Organisations 2015/16** (Pages 7 - 8)



To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, Members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the appropriate Director or Contact Officer named on a report prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you require a copy of this agenda or any of the reports listed on it in another format please do not hesitate to contact the Democratic Services Team as set out below.

For any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact:

The Democratic Services Team (01732 227241)

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Reference from Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee

Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 12 February 2015
(Extract of Minute 28)

Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder reported that Cabinet had taken a decision after the consultation for parking charges and as a consequence there was to be no changes to the evening charges and no increases to on-street charges. He advised that he had asked the Chief Finance officer what the impact of freezing fees for one year would be and it had been a shortfall of £1.1m over the 10 year budget plan period.

He advised that Gary Connor, Parking Manager, was retiring in April and his expertise would be hard to replace. Andy Bracey, Senior Parking and Traffic Engineer, was also leaving. Both would be missed. It was confirmed that recruitment was underway.

Members discussed the need for more lateral and creative thinking with regards to car parking fees and finding other sources of revenue. Fees could not be raised in perpetuity; at some point there would be a tipping point and it would become detrimental to the local economy. Members discussed the need for the Council to have a clear aspiration for moving towards freezing parking fees where occasion allowed, for example with stable inflation.

Resolved: That Cabinet be requested to consider a Council aspiration as above.

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Item 10 – Changes to Government Guidance on Planning Obligations - Implications on SDC's Affordable Housing Policies

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Community Safety Advisory Committee relevant minute extract below:

Housing & Community Safety Advisory Committee – 10 February 2015 (Minute 34)

The Planning Manager presented a report which advised that the Government had recently published changes to the National Planning Practice Guidance and a written ministerial statement was issued on planning obligations. In most areas, contributions to affordable housing would not now be sought from developments of 10-units or less. In designated rural areas, local authorities could choose to seek financial contributions on developments of 6-10 dwellings in designated rural areas. In addition, where developments involved the conversion or demolition of existing buildings the contribution would be proportionate to the net increase in floorspace. Therefore, developments that did not increase the amount of floorspace on a site would not have to make an affordable housing contribution. These changes would have a significant impact on the Council's ability to secure the delivery of affordable housing. At present there was not considered to be any opportunities for the Council to 'work-around' these changes to national policy. As a result, it was considered that the Council should lobby the Government to rescind or amend these policy changes.

A [briefing note](#) by the Housing Policy Manager had been circulated and was tabled for information on the Starter Homes initiative from which the Chief Housing Officer highlighted some key points.

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 Cabinet that

- a) the Council lobby Government to rescind or amend recent changes to national policy on the use of planning obligations for securing affordable housing; and
- b) the Council seeks financial contributions to affordable housing consistent with the percentages applied in Core Strategy policy SP3 on developments of 6-10 units in designated rural areas in the District.

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**Item 11 – Citizens Advice Bureau Service Level Agreement 2015/16 -
2017/18**

The attached report was considered by the Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee relevant minute extract below:

Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 12 February 2015
(Minute 33)

The Chief Officer for Communities & Business presented the report which outlined progress on the work of the Citizens' Advice Bureau during the current year and sought approval for the Service Level Agreement for the next three financial years. She advised that the current Service Level Agreement ran until 31 March 2015, and the merger was due to take place on 30 March 2015. The Portfolio Holder moved the recommendation contained within the report along with the additional wording that the agreement would be subject to his satisfaction and approval of the proposed future merger arrangements between Sevenoaks and Swanley CAB with Tonbridge and Gravesham CABs. The Chief Officer for Communities & Business agreed to revisit the agreement in relation to the clarity of 2.3 under Service Standards, in order to maintain face to face contact.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That Cabinet be recommended to agree the draft Service Level Agreement for 2015/18 subject to the Portfolio Holder being satisfied with the future proposed merger arrangements between Sevenoaks and Swanley CAB with Tonbridge and Gravesham CABs.

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Item 12 – Community Grant Scheme Draft Allocations 2015/16

The attached report was considered by the Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee relevant minute extract below:

Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 12 February 2015
(Minute 32)

The Chief Officer Communities and Business presented a report which set out information about the Community Grant Scheme and summarised applications received by the Council from voluntary organisations for funding during 2015/16. Details of the appraisal process were provided, which had included a lengthy and detailed consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic & Community Development and the Deputy Portfolio Holder for Economic & Community Development, who were both trained in appraisal techniques.

Members were advised that it was the first time the report had come to the Advisory Committee, it was for information only, and was in order to be as clear and transparent as possible. Any changes to the recommended grants would require a revisit to the whole process. The Chief Officer Communities and Business agreed to check whether an application from Play Place Innov8 was intended to cover Seal in addition to other Parishes, before consideration at Cabinet.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the recommendation to Cabinet to approve the grants, as set out in Appendix C of the report subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 14 of the report, be noted.

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