

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the held on 11 October 2012 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllrs. Mrs. Bracken, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Davison and Hogarth

Apologies for absence: Cllrs. Mrs. Bosley, Mrs. Hunter and Ramsay

Cllrs. Davison, Firth, Raikes and Miss. Stack were also present.

31. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 13 September 2012 be approved and signed as a correct record.

32. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

33. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)

There were no questions.

34. Matters referred from Council

There were no matters referred from Council.

35. Matters referred from the Performance and Governance Committee and/or Select Committees (Paragraph 5.20 of Part 4 (Executive) of the Constitution)

- (a) Edenbridge Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
(Environment Select Committee – 4 September 2012)

This issue will be considered at the meeting on 8th November 2012.

- (b) Annual Treasury Management Report 2011/12 (Performance and Governance -
18 September 2012)

This was considered under Minute 37.

- (c) Argyle Road Offices, Accommodation for Outside Organisations (Performance and
Governance - 18 September 2012)

This was considered under Minute 36.

Cabinet - 11 October 2012

- (d) Universal Credit Scrutiny Board – Findings (Services Select Committee – 25 September 2012)

This was considered under Minute 38.

36. Argyle Road Offices, Accommodation for Outside Organisations

Members considered a report outlining proposals for the use of the office accommodation vacated following the relocation of Environmental Health to Dartford. The District Council had been approached by Moat Housing, currently renting 12 desk spaces, with a request to rent a further 3 desk spaces. In order to accommodate the additional desk spaces it was proposed that Moat Housing move to the area vacated by Environmental Health on the first floor of the Argyle Road Offices.

Officers were also in discussion with Kent County Council Social Services who were looking for accommodation for 6 staff. These staff could be accommodated within the second floor area that would be vacated as a result of the proposed Moat Housing move with the remaining 6 desk being used as corporate hot desks until an alternative occupier was identified.

To achieve this capital expenditure in the sum of £7,000 was needed to be invested by the District Council in respect of furniture and alterations to the power supply with each proposed tenant being responsible for providing their own IT and telephony systems at no cost to the District Council.

The Property Manager explained that the proposals would increase income to the Council and would reduce revenue costs on the building.

In response to a question from a visiting Member, the Property Manager explained that staff from outside organisations were given coded Entacards which enabled them to access the building but restricted access to the car park.

Resolved that capital reserves are used to provide office accommodation for Moat housing and Kent County Council on the terms and conditions detailed in the report and to such other conditions as the Council's legal advisors consider necessary to protect the Council's interests.

37. Annual Treasury Management Report 2011/12

Members considered a report providing a review of investment activity during 2011/12 as required by the Council's Financial Procedure Rules. The report outlined the strategy adopted during the year, showed the position of the investment portfolio at the beginning and the end of the year and provided details of how the fund performed in comparison with previous years and against various benchmarks.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources reported as a result of the issues experienced with the Icelandic investments the Council has taken a more cautious approach when considering potential investments.

Members noted that a further review would be undertaken by the Performance and Governance Committee in November 2012.

Cabinet - 11 October 2012

Resolved that the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2011/12 be approved.

38. Universal Credit In-Depth Scrutiny Board - Findings

Members considered a report outlining the findings from the Universal Credit In-Depth Scrutiny Review. The review had been commissioned by the Services Select Committee at its meeting on 31 January 2012.

The Group Manager – Financial Services, introduced the report and highlighted the potential significant impact of this change on residents and staff. He advised that both he and the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources were extremely grateful for the work that the Members' Working Group had carried out, the clarity it had provided and the action plan that it was putting forward. It placed the Council in a strong position going forward in what could only be described as an uncertain period.

The Chairman of the Universal Credit In Depth Scrutiny Board spoke to the report outlining the background to Universal Credits, the effects on and possible role of local councils. Members were reminded that local councils currently had no defined role and no funding for implementation had been identified. As a result of this the way the Council communicated any possible changes would be key.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources agreed that there was a need to have a dedicated co-ordinating group of Officers to take forward any changes. This group would be able to provide the Services Select Committee with regular updates.

A Member suggested that the extensive work that had been undertaken by the Working Party should be shared with other Local Authorities, possibly through the Local Government Association.

Resolved that the Strategy be adopted.

39. Performance Report

Members considered a summary of Council performance for the period to the end of August 2012.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Improvement introduced the report and explained that indicator LPI Waste 004 – Number of missed green waste collection - was giving cause for concern. The Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Community and Planning Services explained that staffing issues had arisen and these were now being addressed. A new Supervisor had been appointed and it was hoped that the recent improvements to the service would continue. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Improvement highlighted that it was impossible to regulate who was buying green waste sacks and it was therefore down to the experience of staff to know who was likely to put sacks out. The Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Community and Planning Services confirmed that green waste bins were actively marketed to people who bought green waste sacks.

Referring to LPI DC 009 – Percentage of appeals against planning application refusal dismissed – a Member queried if the reasons for dismissal had been thoroughly

Cabinet - 11 October 2012

reviewed. The Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Community and Planning Services reported that Officers reviewed the reasons given when planning appeals went against the Council and as part of this instances where Officer recommendations were overturned at the Development Control Committee were also reviewed. Officers had also been reviewing how the Planning Inspectorate interpreted policy.

A visiting Member suggested that it may be helpful to reference the Select Committee responsible for the indicators as well as the Portfolio Holder. The Policy and Performance Manager agreed that this could be done for future reports.

Members noted that the Performance Indicators for the Economic Development and Partnership Portfolio would have to be reviewed.

Resolved that the report be noted.

40. Shared Services Environmental Health Enforcement Policy

The Environmental Health Teams of Dartford and Sevenoaks had revised their Enforcement Policy to reflect changes resulting from Government Guidance and the new Environmental Health Partnership arrangements that commenced in April 2012. The proposed revised policy ensured that Environmental Health enforcement actions are fair, consistent and transparent.

The Chairman reported that he and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Partnerships had attended K College "Skills Fest" the previous day and had seen that a number of young people were interested in careers in Environmental Health.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities highlighted that the Environmental Health Team provided a vital service that was outside of the public eye. Members thanked staff for the excellent service they provided.

Resolved that Full Council be recommended to approve the revised Environmental Health Enforcement Policy.

41. 10 Year Budget Savings Options

Members considered a report from the Leader of the Council outlining savings options for the achievement of the £300,000 per annum savings scheduled for year 3 of the 10 year budget (with effect from April 2012). It was agreed by Council in December 2010 that these savings would be found either through shared management or from further savings within Sevenoaks District Council's management. The Council had already identified additional savings of £60,000 per annum towards this target and to assist in clarifying options, the Chief Executive had notified the Leader of his personal intention to retire at the beginning of September 2013. The Leader reported that this decision had a major bearing on the options available and would shield the Council from what could otherwise be significant redundancy costs.

In considering the future Chief Executive role there were four basic options:

- (i) Straight replacement through external advertisement;
- (ii) Consider a shared Chief Executive arrangement with another District;

Cabinet - 11 October 2012

- (iii) Adopt the “Wiltshire” model (delete the Chief Executive post and manage the Authority through Leader/Cabinet/Directors; or
- (iv) Make an internal appointment.

The Leader proposed that the Council make an internal appointment from the current Directors, combining the role of Chief Executive with that of the successful Director. This would make a major contribution towards the savings target.

Following discussions, Members agreed that it made sense to pursue an internal appointment as this would provide the best balance of savings and continuity.

Resolved that option (iv) –make an internal appointment – be recommended to Full Council on 16th October 2012.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 15 October 2012. The decisions contained in Minutes 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41 take effect immediately.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.23 PM

CHAIRMAN