

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SEVENOAKS

Minutes of the Meeting of the Sevenoaks District Council held on 27 November 2012 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr Mrs. Morris (Chairman)

Cllr Pett (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs Abraham, Mrs. Ayres, Ayres, Mrs. Bayley, Ball, Bosley, Mrs. Bosley, Mrs. Bracken, Brookbank, Butler, Clark, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Cook, Cooke, Mrs. Davison, Davison, Mrs. Dibsdall, Dickins, Edwards-Winser, Eyre, Firth, Fittock, Fleming, Gaywood, Mrs. George, Grint, Hogarth, Horwood, Mrs. Hunter, London, Ms. Lowe, Maskell, McGarvey, Neal, Orridge, Mrs. Parkin, Mrs. Purves, Raikes, Ramsay, Mrs. Sargeant, Scholey, Searles, Miss. Thornton, Towell, Underwood and Walshe

Apologies for absence: Cllrs. Brown, Ms. Chetram, Mrs. Dawson, Piper, Miss. Stack and Williamson

36. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 16 October 2012 and 7 November 2012

The Chairman proposed that the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 16 October 2012 and 7 November 2012 be approved as a correct record.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 16 October 2012 and 7 November 2012 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

37. To receive any declarations of interest not included in the register of interest from Members in respect of items of business included on the agenda for this meeting

There were no additional declarations of interest.

38. Chairman's Announcements

Members were warmly invited to attend the Staff Carol Service at 11am on Thursday 20th December at St Luke's Church.

39. To receive any petitions submitted by Members of the Public.

No petitions were submitted.

40. Matters considered by the Cabinet and/or other Committees:

(a) Community Governance Review

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Mrs Bracken seconded that the recommendations outline on pages 7-8 of the agenda be agreed.

Councillor Grint addressed the Council as Ward Member for Halstead, Knockholt and Badgers Mount reporting that the majority of residents in Badgers Mount supported proposals for a Parish Council separate from Shoreham Parish Council.

Resolved: That

- (a) the draft recommendations to retain the existing boundaries and electoral arrangements of the Parishes of Chiddingstone, Cowden, Edenbridge, Farningham, Fawkham, Halstead, Hever, Horton Kirby & South Darenth, Kemsing and Knockholt be confirmed;
- (b) the draft recommendations in respect of the parishes of Ash-cum-Ridley and Hartley (Milestone School); Brasted and Westerham (High View Cottage); Crockenhill and Shoreham (no change to present arrangements); Eynsford and Shoreham (Austin Lodge Golf Course); Hextable and Swanley (Lower Road); Chevening, Dunton Green, Riverhead, Seal, Sevenoaks, Sevenoaks Weald and Sundridge with Ide Hill (no change to present arrangements); be confirmed;
- (c) the draft recommendation that no change be made to the electoral arrangements of Hartley Parish be confirmed;
- (d) the draft recommendation that the two properties North Lodge, Redleaf and Woodside Kennels transfer from Leigh Parish to Penshurst Parish be confirmed;
- (e) the properties Stursdon Farm, Mount Farm and Mount Farm Cottage transfer from Otford Parish into Shoreham Parish;
- (f) the draft recommendation to transfer the 8 Twitton properties currently in Shoreham Parish into Otford Parish be confirmed;
- (g) no change be made to the existing warded structure nor to the name of Penshurst Parish Council;
- (h) the Well Hill Hundreds ward remains a part of Shoreham Parish;
- (i) a separate parish of Badgers Mount be created;
- (j) Officers of the District Council discuss with Shoreham Parish Council the electoral arrangements of the reconstituted Parish of Shoreham and present the outcome to a future meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Committee; and
- (k) the draft recommendation for no change between the parishes of Shoreham and West Kingsdown in the vicinity of East Hill be confirmed.”

(b) Local Council Tax Support Scheme

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Ramsay seconded that the recommendations outlined on pages 33-34 of the agenda be agreed.

Councillor Fleming reported that the legislation had ensured that all claimants of pensionable age would be protected under the scheme. In addition to this, in year 1 of the scheme, transitional protection would ensure that all residents of working age received a deduction of 8.5% on the amount of council tax support they were entitled to, as calculated on the basis of the current council tax benefit scheme.

Councillor Fittock, whilst acknowledging that the Council had to adhere to legislation, highlighted that the new Scheme was effectively taking money from the poorest groups within the District and expressed surprise that the Council's consultation was focused on all those in receipt of Council Tax Benefit and not simply those affected by the proposals.

Councillor Fleming clarified that the legislation required all those currently in receipt of Council Tax Benefit to be consulted. The legislation required local authorities to be "mindful of the vulnerable" but the Government had obviously seen a clear need for pensioners to be protected.

Resolved: That, having considered the equality impacts, as set out in the report, it be resolved that:

- (a) The Council introduce a local support for council tax scheme that all residents of working age receive a deduction on the amount of council tax support they are entitled to, calculated on the basis of the current council tax benefit scheme, of 18.5%.
- (b) In year 1 of the scheme, from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 the Council applies transitional protection for all residents of working age eligible to receive council tax support. This transitional protection ensures that in year 1 only all residents of working age receive a deduction of 8.5% on the amount of council tax support they are entitled to, as calculated on the basis of the current council tax benefit scheme.
- (c) The Council applies to the Government's grant scheme for a financial contribution towards the transitional protection provided to residents once the grant scheme opens after 31 January 2013.
- (d) The Portfolio Holder for Value for Money is provided delegated authority to implement any consequential amendments to the local scheme as a result of the Government publishing its final regulations.

(c) Review of Member's Allowances

The Chairman reported that the item had been withdrawn as the Modern Local Government Group had asked Officers to undertake further investigations and report back to a later meeting.

(d) Revised Statement of Principles for Gambling Act 2005 Policy

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Mrs Bracken seconded that the Statement of Licensing Policy be adopted by Full Council.

Resolved: That the Statement of Licensing Policy be adopted.

(e) Review of the Performance and Governance Committee Terms of Reference

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Mrs Bracken seconded that the revised Terms of Reference for the Performance and Governance Committee be adopted.

Resolved: That the revised Terms of Reference for the Performance and Governance Committee be adopted.

41. To consider any questions by Members under paragraph 19.3 of part 2 (the Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.

There were no questions.

42. To receive any questions from Members of the Public under paragraph 17 of part 2 (the Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

There were no questions.

43. To receive the report of the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet since the last Council meeting.

The Leader introduced his report highlighting two specific items within the report:

1. Youth Service Transformation –this issue had been considered by the Locality Board. The Leader stressed that whilst joint commissioning of services with Kent County Council was still in its early stages he believed that locally commissioning services would become increasingly important in the future.
2. The signing of the White Oak Ward Charter for Cleaner and Safer Environments had been driven by community groups. The Leader had attended the signing which had demonstrated the power of communities when they worked together.

The Leader also offered congratulations to the Facilities Manager, Will Bowen, who would be leaving Sevenoaks District Council on 14th December 2012 to take up a new, more senior, post. The Leader commended Will's dedication to Sevenoaks District Council over a number of years and highlighted that Will's promotion had embodied the Sevenoaks ethos of growing its staff. The Council wished Will the best of luck in his new job.

Two Members asked the Leader if any work had been undertaken on reviewing different forms of governance as the Localism Act 2011 now allowed for this. The Members suggested that it may be helpful to set up a Member Working Group to consider all the available options and report back to Council in the Spring of 2013. The Leader responded that there were a number of options available and that all the options needed to be fully investigated. It had been agreed at the meeting of the Modern Local Government Group on 20th November 2012 that the Council's governance structure would be reviewed alongside the corporate officer restructure being considered by the Chief Executive Designate. The Leader stressed the need for a full governance review to be undertaken and suggested that the outcome of the review should be reported in six months.

44. To receive a report from the Chairmen of the Select Committees on the work of the Committees since the last Council meeting.

The Council received reports from the Chairmen of the following Select Committees:

- Environment Select Committee – 23rd October 2012
- Social Affairs Select Committee – 30th October 2012
- Services Select Committee – 1st November 2012.

45. To receive a report from the Chairmen of the Performance and Governance Committee on the work of the Committee since the last Council meeting.

The Council received a report from the Chairman of the Performance and Governance Committee on the work undertaken by the Committee at its meeting on 13th November 2012.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.29 pm

Chairman