

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2016 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Lowe (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dickins, Firth, Hogarth, Lowe, Piper and Searles

Cllrs. Dr. Canet, Mrs. Hunter, McGarvey, Pett and Scholey were also present.

Members welcomed the new Head of Legal and Democratic Services to the meeting.

11. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 9 June 2016, be approved and signed as a correct record.

12. Declarations of interest

There were none.

13. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)

There were none.

14. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet Advisory Committees

There were none.

15. Affordable Rent Tenure (proposed adjustment)

The Housing Policy Manager gave a [presentation](#) which updated Members on ongoing discussions and ideas and included an additional recommendation to the one contained within the report.

The report recommended that the District Council allow new-build Affordable Rent social housing to be let at up to 80% of Open Market Rent (OMR) from this point forward. That said, the District Council would still support the LHA threshold where viability allowed and develop other models of delivery which would help to maintain Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels on new-build housing, e.g. cross-subsidy projects and/or institutional investment.

If agreed, the approach would be reviewed when the District Council's upcoming housing needs study was complete and as part of the subsequent development of a

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new housing strategy. Therefore this was potentially an interim measure. The Housing Policy Team will continue to explore new delivery models and this will likely result in a move towards more cross-subsidy and institutional development projects. The recommended change in approach would enable current models to continue to work and would be critical to enabling continued provision in the interim period and until such time as alternative models become the norm.

Further to the presentation, Members welcomed the idea of more tailored cross-subsidy models to take into account particular areas with differing complexities.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) an amendment to the rent setting objectives by allowing all new-build Affordable Rented housing to be set at a rate of up to 80% of Open Market Rent values, be approved; and
- b) opportunities for onsite private rental units in lieu of affordable housing be discussed positively, subject to viability considerations and identified need.

16. Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the updated report which had previously been deferred from the last meeting. Since that meeting Officers had carried out further work to take on board previous comments and make the consultation more user friendly. As requested the HERO Officers had been consulted, and the number of options to consider, reduced.

The Chief Finance Officer summarised the report. As outlined within the report, Kent district councils were working together in order to achieve a common framework in respect of the review of the local CTR schemes. Each district council needed to individually agree the terms for consultation. If any significant issues arise through the 'group approach', Cabinet would be updated. He further clarified that the purpose of the report was to agree the options that were to be consulted on.

As previously requested a short explanatory [video](#) had been produced which was presented to Members.

Members welcomed the new proposed consultation subject to some amended wording on the first page, and were pleased with the video.

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Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty, attached as Appendix C to the report, and that residents may fall into more than one category of affected person.

Resolved: That

- a) the work undertaken to date and the Kent Finance Officers' group recommendation that any new Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme should be based on the current scheme but with a series of potential modifications upon which we should consult, be noted;
- b) for the 2017/18 Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme, starting on 1st April 2017, a consultation be launched on the potential introduction of a range of modifications to the current CTR scheme for working age claimants as follows:
 - i) reduce the maximum level of CTR for working-age applicants from 81.5% of their Council Tax liability to 80% (Option 1);
 - ii) remove the Family Premium for all new working age applicants (Option 2);
 - iii) reduce the backdating provision from 6 months to 1 month (Option 3);
 - iv) introduce a 'Minimum Income Floor' for self-employed claimants after their first year of trading (Option 4);
 - v) reduce the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive CTR from 13 weeks to 4 weeks; (Option 5)
 - vi) remove the Work Related Activity Component (WRAC) in the calculation of CTR for new claims from working-age claimants who are in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (Option 6);
 - vii) limit the dependent child addition used in the calculation of CTR to a maximum of two children (Option 7);
 - viii) exclude foreign nationals with limited immigration status (Persons from Abroad) from receiving CTR (Option 8);
 - ix) introduce a scheme to help claimants suffering exceptional financial hardship (Option 9).

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- c) through the consultation, seek views on other ways of meeting the demands highlighted through the report other than changing the existing CTR Scheme.
- d) the Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) at Appendix C, be noted; and
- e) the proposed arrangements for the consultation, be endorsed.

17. Local Plan Update - Local Development Scheme (LDS)

The Portfolio Holder for Planning presented the report which updated Members on the work programme for the production of planning policy documents to reflect current timetabling and content. He advised that the Planning Advisory Committee had considered and debated the same report and agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

In response to discussion of the timetable, the Chief Planning Officer advised that the timetable was deliberately ambitious on timings as the current core strategy was prepared before the National Planning Policy Framework. A commitment had been made during the Allocation and Development Management Plan (ADMP) examination in 2014 to undertake an early review of the Core Strategy in part or in whole within the next five years.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the report be noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.08 PM

CHAIRMAN

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 18 July 2016. The decision contained in Minute 17 takes effect immediately. The decisions contained in Minutes 15 and 16 take effect on 26 July 2016.