

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Dickins (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. McArthur, Dyball, Maskell and Thornton

Cllr. Pender was also present.

11. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

12. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest made.

13. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)

There were none.

14. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee, CIL Spending Board or Cabinet Advisory Committees (if any)

There were none.

15. Changes to Advisory Committee Memberships and other Organisations

Members considered the report which detailed changes in membership of certain Cabinet Advisory Committees, as set out in Appendix A.

Resolved: That Cllr Pett be appointed to the People & Places Advisory Committee and Cllr Penny Cole be appointed to Housing & Health Advisory Committee.

16. Financial Results Report 2021/22 Draft Outturn

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment presented the report which set out the Provisional Outturn figures for 2021/22. The impacts of Covid-19 pandemic were still being felt and the current world events continued to contribute to the unprecedented pressure on the authority not only financially but also operationally.

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The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading advised that there had been an unfavourable variance of £45,000, which was a real achievement, especially in comparison to 2020/21 which was an unfavourable variance of £321,000.

Members discussed the report.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

17. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Improvement & Innovation presented the report which sought approval of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan. The Council had received a provisional allocation of £1million from the UKSPF covering the financial years 2022/23 - 2024/25. The funding would support the Government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on the levelling up objectives and had three main investment priorities.

The Economic Development & Programmes Manager advised Members that the Council along with all other Local Authorities had to submit an investment plan to Central Government by 1 August. Extensive informal consultation had taken place to gain consensus from a range of key partners, including MPs, on the current challenges and opportunities in the District that UKSFP would support. The range of project interventions would ensure effective outcomes were delivered that would benefit communities, environment and local economy.

Members attention was brought to the Investment Plan as published within the supplementary agenda and to Appendix A of the report which detailed the proposed projects which had been development through consultation.

As part of the plan a governance structure for managing the plan was required to be set out as part of the submission this would include using the Sevenoaks District Business Board, corresponding on a six monthly basis with the MPs as well key roles from within the Council and with the West Kent Partnership Board.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan as detailed in the supplementary agenda be noted; and
- b) the Strategic Head of Property and Commercial be authorised following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for People & Places to
 - i) take the necessary decisions and actions required to finalise the investment plan and accept the allocation of funds,

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- ii) implement and administer the scheme and all related plans in accordance with the requirements and priorities of the prospectus and the fund.

18. Annual Review of Parking Management 2022- 23 Public Consultation

The Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener presented the report which informed Members of the outcomes of the public consultation on the proposed changes to the on-street and off-street (car parks) parking fees and charges in the annual review of parking management 2022 - 23.

The Head of Direct Services advised that following the Cabinet meeting on 21 April 2022, a parking consultation on the proposed changes was undertaken and feedback was received which had been summarised in the appendices. To help regulate and manage the use of parking facilities in the District it was important to ensure on-street and off-street (car parks) parking fees and charges were set to support a sustainable local economy; and to support services for residents.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: that

- a) the report be noted;
- b) following consideration of the responses to the public consultation, the revised parking management arrangements for 2022/23, be agreed.

19. Net Zero 2030 - E-bikes and Social Value

The Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener presented the report which requested authorisation for engagement of a consultant to assess the viability of an e-bikes scheme. The report detailed the work carried out to date for introduction into the Sevenoaks area encompassing local villages and towns for an e-bike scheme. The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Regulatory and Planning advised that Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee had considered the same report.

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

Resolved: That

- a) the engagement of a consultant to assess the overall feasibility of introducing an e-bike scheme in the District taking into account scheme demand, geographical coverage, economic case, fleet

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assumptions, cost and tariff plans, delivery and operating options and scheme risks, be authorised;

- b) the engagement of the same consultant to develop a business case for a feasible scheme if such a scheme is deemed achievable by the consultant be authorised;
- c) the initial costs be funded from the Net Zero Reserve, be agreed;
- d) in principle the provision by spring 2023 of a partnership e-bike scheme within the District as a vehicle to address the issues of homelessness, under-employment and low skills in the workforce, be endorsed; and
- e) prior to the 2023/24 budget being set, a final report on this item including any consultancy advice be brought back to Cabinet for consideration.

20. Contaminated Land Strategy 2022 - 27

The Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener presented the report which proposed a revised strategy for dealing with contaminated land. The strategy reflected action taken with respect to the previous strategy and incorporated current methods of addressing the statutory duty. The Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee had considered the same report and were in support.

The Environmental Health Manager advised that the Development Control Process had been instrumental in the remediation of many sites and would be encompassed within the Strategy. This strategy proposed this method of discharging the statutory duty primarily by the development control processes. The strategy had been circulated throughout the Council departments and the Environment Agency and all were happy with its content.

Members discussed the report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That it be recommended Council that the Contaminated Land Strategy, be adopted.

21. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spending Board - Review of Governance

The report needed further consideration and would need to come to a future meeting.

Resolved: That the report be deferred.

22. Local Plan timetable (LDS)

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The Portfolio Holder for Development & Conservation presented the report which outlined the proposed Local Development Scheme (LDS), which set out the timetable for the development of the Local Plan and its requirement for revisions to keep it up to date. The Development & Conservation Advisory Committee had considered the same report and were in support.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that the proposed timetable was a rolling project programme which would allow it to incorporate updates when necessary, for example due to changes in national policy, relating to the recent Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

She outlined the proposed new timetable and explained that the completion of the evidence base for the plan would be the first priority, to inform policy preparation. The first Regulation 18 consultation would take place in autumn 2022, and would focus on optimising sustainable urban development. This would be followed by further evidence base work, review, and policy preparation. This consultation would also inform discussions with neighbouring authorities regarding their assistance in addressing the District's housing shortfall, under the duty to co-operate. Green Belt sites would only be considered in the second Regulation 18 consultation in autumn 2023, and only where required and under exceptional circumstances.

Members were informed that Regulation 19 pre-submission publication would take place in spring 2024 to receive final representations, which are then reviewed. She explained that these representations would focus on legal compliance and fulfilment of the duty to co-operate. She advised Members that Regulation 22 Submission to the Secretary of State would then occur in summer 2024, and that an examination by the Planning Inspectorate would follow.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the proposed Local Plan timetable be approved.

23. Welcome Back Fund

The Leader, and Portfolio Holder for Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee presented the report which reviewed the Welcome Back Fund Project following its conclusion with £212,383 of funding providing direct support to the Town and village centres across the District during the Covid pandemic. She explained to the Committee that the Improvement & Innovation, and People & Places Advisory Committees had also considered the same report.

The Economic Development Officer explained that the funding of £214,212 (available to draw down as £107,106 per year between 2020 and 2022) was for temporary projects that supported the high street recovery. She explained how the project worked closely with Town and Parish Councils and businesses to ensure

local needs were met. The Council had successfully spent 99% of the allocation, with 100% of the claims on the funding paid in full.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the successful delivery of the Reopening High Street Safely/Welcome Back Fund and the positive impacts the interventions had across the district, be noted.

24. Sevenoaks District Draft Economic Development Strategy

Members considered the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) for the District for the period 2022 - 2027. The Portfolio Holder for Improvement & Innovation explained that the Strategy addressed the challenges facing businesses with supply chain issues, a tight labour market and rising costs. It also focussed on the opportunities provided by changes in working practices and the possibility of capturing new spending patterns.

The Economic & Development Programmes Manager outlined the four focus areas of the Strategy, which were Business & Enterprise, Tourism and Rural, Town Centres, and Skills & Employment, and explained the elements within these that the EDS specifically targeted. He emphasised the importance of sustainability and Council's Net Zero plan within all these areas, the reference to Brexit and the rising cost of living, alongside the opportunities for growth that these presented for the District.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the Economic Development Strategy 2022 - 2027 as amended by the changes in the supplementary agenda and comments at the meeting, be adopted.

25. Community Grant Scheme Review

The Portfolio Holder for People & Places presented the report which outlined the proposed changes to the Council's code of Practice for grant making, which focused on speeding up and making the process of applying easier. She also explained that there would be bi-annual meetings of officers involved to share best practice. The People & Places advisory Committee had considered and supported the same report.

The Community Projects and Funding Officer advised that the proposed changes to the scheme guidelines would better adhere to the new code of practice and be in line with current processes, with particular attention to how the lower grant limit of £500 was raised to £1000 to allow the scheme to provide meaningful grants in

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the current economic climate. The assessment criteria for applications was also updated.

It was explained that further work would be undertaken with the support of the legal team to reduce the timescales of grant-making and would be a future report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) The revisions to the Council's Code of Practice for Grant-making as detailed in Appendix A, be approved.
- b) The recommended actions as set out below, be approved:
 - i) The Council Code of Practice for Grant-making is amended as detailed in Appendix A to update it in line with current practices;
 - ii) The new version of the Code of Practice for Grant-making is re-distributed to all managers and services that offer grants;
 - iii) A meeting of all officers that deliver grant schemes is held twice yearly to share good practice and ensure consistency across Council teams;
 - iv) To implement the amended Community Grant Scheme Guidelines attached as Appendix B;
 - v) To amend the online application form to reflect these proposed revised Community Grant Scheme Guidelines;
 - vi) To share the revised Community Grant Scheme with the voluntary and community sector via the Voluntary Sector Forum;
 - vii) Collaboration between Officers, including those of Legal and Democratic Services, and Members, to understand if and how the appraisal process for the Community Grant Scheme could be migrated from Committee appraisal to another process, to enable the approval process to be more streamlined with a quicker turnaround. This piece of work will include investigating the possibility of introducing two funding rounds per year for the Community Grant Scheme.
- c) The revisions to the Community Grant Scheme Guidelines as detailed in Appendix B, be agreed.

26. Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2021 - 22

The Portfolio Holder for People & Places Advisory Committee presented the report which detailed an overview of the work of the Sevenoaks District Community

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Safety Partnership (CSP) from April 2021 - March 2022. Members were advised that the People & Places Advisory Committee had considered the same report.

The Health and Communities Manager further advised that rates of victim-based crime in the District, including the 44% decrease in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the past year compared to the year before. Members were advised of the achievements of the Community Safety Unit (CSU), which met daily and reviewed 626 daily taskings, all of which were actioned. It was reported that the CSU was commended by Kent Police as the most exceptional in Kent.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Annual Report for 2021 - 2022 be noted.

27. Sevenoaks District Community Plan Annual Review

The Portfolio Holder for People & Places, and provided an overview of the work of the Local Strategic Partnership Community Plan in its final year up to March 2022. The Plan was 96% on target, with 4% relating to currently unavailable data on road safety from Kent County Council. Members were advised that People & Places Advisory Committee had considered the same report.

The Health and Communities Manager outlined some of the successes of the plan within each of the six priorities of the Plan, which were Safer Communities, Caring Communities, Green Environment, Health, Sustainable Economy, and Dynamic Economy. These included successes in the last 12 months including more than 4000 enforcement actions against parked vehicles, the provision of 20 new affordable houses, the awarding of 52 disabled facilities grants, a new Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, and delivery of the Kickstart West Kent project, supporting young people into employment.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: The Sevenoaks District Community Plan's Annual Report for 2021 - 22 be noted.

28. Sevenoaks District Community Plan 2022- 2032

The Portfolio Holder for People & Places presented the report which outlined the new Community Plan for the period 2022 - 2032.

The Health & Communities Manager advised that the Plan was made in collaboration with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and focused on Place, Economy, Environment, and People.

It was explained that public consultation helped shape the direction of the plan, with particular emphasis on community spirit and mobilisation, the environment, town centres, and transport links.

Members were advised that the new plan emphasised readability, to promote community engagement within it. The plan outlined both what the Council and the LSP partners would do, as well as what the public could do, to reflect the community's engagement in these matters. Members praised the plan for the centrality of resident feedback in its construction and outlook, and encouraged this to continue.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the final draft Community Plan and action plan for 2022 - 2032 be agreed.

29. Draft Housing Strategy 2022- 2027

The Portfolio Holder for People & Places Advisory Committee presented the report which proposed the Housing Strategy for adoption following its consultation. Responses had been positive and there was good support for the proposed schemes. Areas of note included protecting the green belt, the type and quality of new housing, energy efficiency and the need for more affordable housing. The Housing & Health Advisory Committee had considered the same report. Following this Officers had provided additional information as detailed within the agenda papers. The Committee recommended its adoption.

The Interim Head of Housing advised that the themes contained in the draft Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027 were subject to public consultation between 14 February and 18 April 2022. Over 140 responses were received, alongside engagement with elected, members, town and parish councils, housing associations and the voluntary sector. It was considered that a broad range of participants responded to the consultation. Subsequent to the consultation, it remained the case that officers believed the themes of the Housing Strategy addressed the housing needs and aspirations of local people, whatever their background.

Members discussed the report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the feedback received from the public consultation, be noted;
- b) the Housing Strategy 2022-2027 be noted; and
- c) it be recommended to Council that the Housing Strategy 2022- 27, be adopted.

30. Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocation Scheme 2022- 27

The Portfolio Holder for People & Places Advisory Committee presented the report which outlined the Council's Housing Strategy Allocations Scheme. The report presented a second draft of the Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027, which had been refined in light of feedback received from a recent public consultation. The Housing & Health Advisory Committee had considered the same report. Following this Officers had provided additional information as detailed within the agenda papers which proposed some amendments to the document. The Committee recommended its adoption.

The Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme enabled the Council and its partners to work together to ensure that those in most need of affordable housing were prioritised. The Council operated a Choice Based Letting Scheme and the Housing Register Allocations Scheme set out a framework that described how to register, the assessment process and property allocation process. Over 500 responses were recorded including from Members, partners and key stakeholders.

Members discussed the report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the feedback received from the public consultation, be noted.
- b) the draft Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocation Scheme 2022- 27, be noted; and
- c) it be recommended to Council that the Sevenoaks District Housing register allocations scheme 2022 - 27, be adopted with the revised proposed wording as set out on page 405 of the agenda papers.

31. Out of Area Placement Policy

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health presented the report which proposed the Council's Out of Area Placement Policy. The Housing & Health Advisory Committee had considered the same report and were in support of its adoption. The proposed Out of Area Placement Policy set out how the Council sought to work with households based on their priorities, presenting needs and affordability in order to offer the most appropriate accommodation for both temporary accommodation and through the Private Rented Sector as a longer-term housing solution.

The Interim Head of Housing advised that the demand for both temporary accommodation (TA) and settled accommodation was growing across the district with the number of applicants approaching the Council for resettlement support growing each year. Alongside the increase to local demand, the Council was also competing for both TA and longer-term accommodation with other districts and

boroughs including unitary London Authorities, whom have a far more generous budget and funding streams than Sevenoaks District. There was a lack of available move on properties. These pressures led the Council to consider the manner in which resources were allocated based on household composition; community contribution including work and volunteering; and social and welfare needs.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the Sevenoaks District Out of Area Placement Policy be adopted.

32. Homelessness Out of Hours Service Update

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health presented the report which gave an update to the Committee on the Council's contract with Centra to deliver the Council's homelessness out of hours service. The Housing & Health Advisory Committee had considered the same report and were in support of the extension to the current contract.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - People & Places advised that since October 2019, the majority of customers calls continued to be received Monday to Friday during office hours and are handled by Council officers, however, 135 calls were taken by the Centra Out of Hours team which released increasing pressure on the Housing Advice team and provided continued support to residents out of office hours to find housing support or immediate emergency accommodation in line with legislation. The CCTV team took a weekly log of calls which were recorded for monitoring purposes along with internal officer meetings with Centra being held on an ongoing basis to discuss cases and issues arising. Regular customer checks are undertaken and the report outlined all customer feedback had been positive. An on-call Housing Officer could be contacted by Centra in an emergency.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That an extension to the current contract with Centra for a further three years to deliver the Council's homelessness out of hours service, be approved.

33. Quercus Housing - Increasing Delivery of affordable housing in the district

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health presented the report which recommended that the Council approve £15 million to be drawn down by Quercus Housing over a 10-year period to deliver affordable housing in the district. The Housing & Health Advisory Committee had considered the same report, and the Finance & Investment Advisory Committee were also invited to attend the meeting. Members were in support of the reports.

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The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - People & Places further explained that Quercus Housing remained ambitious in achieving the delivery of affordable homes in the Sevenoaks District and was seeking a longer term position to support this ambition and develop a project pipeline for the next 10 years. Quercus Housing had identified potential sites that were under development by the Council, including sites in Swanley, and Edenbridge where Quercus Housing could acquire the affordable units.

An indicative pipeline of projects was discussed. Each site would be looked at on a scheme by scheme basis and subject to the usual due diligence, financial assessment and securing relevant permissions, such as planning. Projects costs, financial viability assessment and borrowing requirements would be impacted by existing inflation levels and would therefore be undertaken on a site by site basis. Quercus Housing would benefit from an ongoing income stream on the assets that should increase in value over time which would reduce the overall risk.

Members discussed the report

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 Council that

- a) a financial facility of up to £15m to be drawn down by Quercus Housing over a 10-year period from prudential borrowing obtained by the Council and to be used for the purpose of delivering affordable housing, be approved; and
- b) the Deputy s.151 Officer in consultation with the Chief Executive, be delegated authority to agree the terms of any borrowing to be determined at the point of draw down.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 8 July 2022. The decisions contained in Minutes 15,16, 19, 21, 23, 26, 27 and 32 take effect immediately. The decisions contained in Minute 17, 18, 22, 24, 25, 28 and 31 take effect on 18 July 2022. The decisions contained in Minutes 20, 29, 30 and 33 are references to Council.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.56 PM

CHAIRMAN

