

## Cabinet

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2024 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Thornton (Chairman)

Cllr. Perry Cole (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Dyball, Maskell, McArthur and Reay

Cllrs. Bulford, Gustard, Harrison, Skinner, Streatfeild, Varley and Williams were also present.

Cllr. Robinson was also present via a virtual media platform which is not recognised as attendance under the LGA 1972.

### 99. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of Cabinet held on 14 March 2024, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 100. Declarations of interest

For reasons of transparency Cllr Dyball declared that she also a Member of Swanley Town Council.

### 101. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)

A Member asked a question regarding Young Voter engagement whether there was a figure of the number of young votes (under 34) within the district who were not registered and what the Council were doing to engage with these voters. In response to the question Members were advised that a full response would be provided, however there was engagement regarding registering to vote, voter ID and the changes to postal vote handling.

In response to a question regarding Land East of the High Street, Sevenoaks and KCC's commitment to this, the Leader advised that she had met with the Leader of KCC and given him a tour of the area, KCC Officers were also engaging as the buildings they owned were also aging and facing similar issues to those owned by the Council. A Member briefing had taken place for KCC Councillors and this was well attended. In response to a further question regarding capital projects being brought forward, Members were advised that the works were continuing in Edenbridge with Stangrove Estate, including a retail unit, parking and housing. Quercus Housing had purchased eight homes for affordable rent and five would be sold at market value. Spitals Cross was also progressing well. White Oak residential was also coming forward with planning permission anticipated later this year. Feasibility work was

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continuing and procurement exercises for the Otford Road Site. There were also feasibility works for Edenbridge Leisure Centre. Bevan place would be looked at again in due course.

In response to further questions on Land East of the High Street, the Leader advised that Officers at both the Council and at the Town Council were in dialogue with each other and that both the Town Council's Masterplan and the Council's developing vision for Land East of the High Street had a focus on the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan and the emerging Local Plan. She expressed the importance of being open and cooperating, whilst being mindful of the emerging plans and visions of both the Council and Town Council.

In response to a question regarding the AONB Management Plan and how consistent it was with the response to Gatwick airport on the use of the Northern runway, the Portfolio Holder for Development & Conservation advised that he would meet with the questioner.

### 102. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee, CIL Spending Board or Cabinet Advisory Committees

There were none.

### 103. Swanley Neighbourhood Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Development & Conservation presented the report which provided an overview of the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan and recommended that it proceeded to referendum, following its examination and subject to minor modifications being agreed with Swanley Town Council. Followed by it being 'made' at Full Council if the referendum outcome was positive. The Swanley Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for the future of the parishes of Swanley, as well as objectives and planning policies. If successfully 'made', these policies would be used to determine planning applications with the same weight as Local Plan Policies.

Members discussed the report and in response to a question Members were advised that the plan was future proofed as far as it could be, the Town Council had been closely worked with and the previous local plan and emerging local plan had been taken into consideration.

#### Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the Independent Examiner's report, at Appendix A, be noted;

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- b) the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan, be modified according to the examiner's recommendations, including any minor proposed modifications, to be agreed with Swanley Town Council, be approved;
- c) the decision statement at Appendix C, and the decision to progress the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan to referendum, be approved;
- d) a referendum takes place on a date to be arranged, be noted; and
- e) Full Council must formally 'make' the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan within 8 weeks of a positive referendum result (more than 50%).

### 104. High Weald AONB Management Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Development and Conservation presented the report which set out the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan. The Council was legally required to prepare and publish a management plan for the High Weald AONB. In the High Weald this requirement was delivered through the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee. The Development & Conservation Advisory Committee had considered the same report and supported its adoption.

The Senior Planning Officer (Policy) further advised that the draft management plan had been prepared following public consultation and with input from the Council, setting out key character components of the High Weald's natural beauty. It was an important guidance document for functions affecting the AONB and its setting. The document would help preserve the purpose of the natural landscape, as the duty was to seek to strongly further the purpose of the Natural Landscape.

Members considered 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 the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, be adopted.

### 105. Financial Monitoring 2023/24 to the end of January 2024

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment presented the report, which set out the Council's financial position to January 2024, and the forecast position until March 2024. The forecast deficit had been reduced to an unfavourable variance of £195,000. The Finance & Investment Advisory Committee had considered the same

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report, asking questions of clarification from the Officers and Portfolio Holder and supported the recommendation.

The Head of Finance further advised that the unfavourable variances included the pay award, which equated to an average increase of 5.7% from April 2023. They further included the Direct Services unfavourable forecast, which was largely due to the post-pandemic levels of waste, though a number of measures had been implemented in 2023/24 to partly offset this. There were additional costs associated with planning appeals, and it had been agreed that reserves could be used to fund this unplanned expenditure by way of a supplementary estimate.

Favourable variances included investment income receipts, though it was noted that the core value of the investments in the Multi Asset Income Funds had reduced. Unfilled vacancies resulted in a favourable variance of £791,000. Some of the vacancies were being offset by agency and consulting costs, and others were used to reduce the overall deficit. The capital programme was forecast to have expenditure of £10.7million against a budget of £33million. This was due to the re-evaluation of the Bevan Place scheme, and the delayed start to the White Oak residential scheme.

Members discussed the report.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

### 106. Carry Forward Requests 2023/24

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment presented the report which detailed the revenue and capital carry forward requests from the 2023/24 budget to 2024/25. The figures were prepared before the final outturn and therefore were not exact. The Portfolio Holder advised that the Finance & Investment Advisory Committee had considered the same report and after thorough discussion were supportive of its recommendation to Cabinet.

Resolved: That

- a) The Revenue carry forward requests totalling up to £908,000 as set out in Table 1 of the report be approved; and
- b) The Capital carry forward request totalling £748,000 as set out in Table 2 of the report be approved.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 22 April 2024 . The decision contained in Minute 106 take effect immediately. The decision contained in Minute 103 take effect on 30 April 2024. The decision contained in Minute 104 is a reference to Council.

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THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.40 pm

CHAIRMAN