

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2013 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllrs. Bosley, Ms. Lowe and Ramsay

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Hogarth

Cllrs. Brookbank, Dickins, Eyre, Gaywood, Mrs. Hunter and Searles were also present.

40. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 7 November 2013, be approved and signed as a correct record.

41. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest

42. Questions from Members

There were no questions from Members.

43. Matters referred from Council

There were no matters referred from Council.

44. Matters referred from the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committee (Paragraph 5.20 of Part 4 (Executive) of the Constitution)

There were no references from the Audit Committee or Scrutiny Committee.

45. Recommendations from the Cabinet Advisory Committees

- a) Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan (*Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 24 October 2013*)

This was considered at Minute 46.

- b) Pest Control Review – Outcome (*Local Planning and Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013*)

This was considered at Minute 47.

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- c) Financial Prospects and Review of Service Plans (*Strategy & Performance Advisory Committee – 8 October 2013*), (*Housing & Community Safety Advisory Committee – 15 October 2013*), (*Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 24 October 2013*), (*Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013*)

This was considered at Minute 48.

- d) Climate Local Sevenoaks (*Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013*)

This was considered at Minute 50.

- e) Proposed Designation of Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area (*Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013*)

This was considered at Minute 51.

46. Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Plan

Members considered the reference received from the Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee. The Health & Communities Manager advised that the report had already been considered by the Health Action Teams, Health Liaison Board and the Advisory Committee. The report advised that the Health & Social Care Act 2012 had set up a new Public Health Service called Public Health England. At the local level in Kent, responsibility for the public health function had been given to Kent County Council. District Councils in Kent had been asked to lead on the production of an action plan which could demonstrate how the County-wide objectives could be delivered locally. The Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan set out objectives and actions that would help to reduce health inequalities across the District. There would be quarterly meetings to work on the objectives and actions.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty and that it would have a positive impact in reducing health inequalities across the District.

Resolved: That the Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan be agreed and adopted.

47. Pest Control Review - Outcome

Members considered the reference received from the Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee. The Portfolio Holder for Local Planning and Environment presented the report which recommended exposing the pest control service to competitive tender in order to identify the most financially advantageous price of delivering the service. A Member addressed the Cabinet voicing his concerns that it was a service that was losing money and should be discontinued. The Chairman of the Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee and Deputy Portfolio Holder advised that this issue had been well debated at the Advisory Committee and this way forward provided the opportunity to test the market. When the tender results came in there would be no obligation to accept and

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the service could still be discontinued, however by that time the Council would have gained any income from the busier summer season. It was noted that the Council had no statutory duty to provide the service but the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 placed a duty on every local authority to take such steps as necessary to secure as far as practicable that their District is kept free from rats and mice especially with regards to its own property. Some Members were not sure what could be gained but at least going to tender would provide a good comparative exercise.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty and that a decision to cease delivery of the service or contracting out to a private company may have a detrimental affect on residents receiving means tested benefits as discounts currently offered may not be available. Steps that could be taken to mitigate this would be a requirement within the tender process to require the 'contractor' to provide a discount on pest control treatments to families on means tested benefits and provision for this subsidy within future council budgets as a growth item.

Resolved: That the pest control service be exposed to competitive tender, for a three year contract and that the results of the tender be reported to the Planning and Environment Advisory Committee for consideration.

48. Draft Budget 2014/15

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources advised that the first stage of the budget process had been the 'Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy' report presented to Cabinet in September and this report set out progress made in preparing the 2014/15 budget since then. All five Advisory Committees had been asked to provide Cabinet with their growth and savings recommendations which were included in the report. Members considered the references received from the Advisory Committees. He reminded Members that the 4 year savings plan started in 2011/12 and contained savings of £4.2m and in the last ten years, over £10m of savings have been made. The Financial Prospects report showed a shortfall of £667,000 over the 10 years. By making the two changes to assumptions contained in the report, and including the growth and savings recommended by the Advisory Committees, a balanced 10-year budget was left. There was still uncertainty around the Government Support figures as these were not expected until later in December. Therefore, a further report would be presented to Cabinet in January which would hopefully contain a more complete picture.

The Chief Finance Officer report that as agreed in September this council is continuing to use the 10-year budget strategy, which was now in its 4th year. This remained unusual in local government as many local authorities were still only looking at the short term as they saw budgeting for 3, 5 or 10 years ahead as being past their financial cliff edge. Grant Thornton, the external auditors, were about to publish their Financial Resilience Report on Local Government, this document would include the council's 10-year budget as a good practice case study.

He reported that the savings item that had caused the most debate was SCIA8, deletion of the Parking Civil Enforcement post. Further information had now been provided to the Chairman and relevant members who were now happy. The two changes to assumptions since the Financial Prospects report were: the Government would be reducing the

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Government Support in 2014/15 by a further 1% resulting in a 7.5% reduction from the current year; and interest receipts had also been reviewed taking into account the latest information.

For information he advised that the Government had announced their Autumn Statement that day. The Chancellor had mentioned that local government would be protected from further cuts, but there were no details on how this would work. Business Rates increases were to be capped at 2% instead of being linked to RPI, and there were also changes to Business Rate reliefs. Again there were no further details as to how this would impact Business Rates Retention income. Also the New Homes Bonus would no longer be top sliced to fund the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

The report currently showed a balanced 10-year budget and this would be updated with the settlement figure and changes to any other assumptions should additional information become available, at the meeting in January 2014

The Chairman of Local Planning and Environment Advisory Committee advised that Kent County Council (KCC) was providing one year transitional relief of about £15,000 on the recycling credits that would help with the loss of the recycling at Sainsburys.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the Advisory Committee recommendations and comments be noted.

49. Performance Report

Members considered a report summarising the overall performance within each Portfolio Holder's area of responsibility against indicators and targets agreed by Cabinet in July 2013.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

50. Climate Local Sevenoaks

The Portfolio Holder for Local Planning & Environment referred Members to the recommendations from the Advisory Committee. The Housing Policy Manager advised Members on the background of Climate Local, which was a Local Government Association (LGA) initiative to drive, inspire and support local authority action on a changing climate. The initiative supported 'mitigation' measures (address the root causes by reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and 'adaptation' measures (lower the risks posed by the consequences of climatic changes). Climate Local superseded the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, which had been previously adopted by the District Council. In response to this, Kent County Council (KCC) and its public sector partners, which included all Kent district/borough councils, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue, and Kent and Medway NHS Trust, had jointly developed Climate Local Kent which was subsequently supported by the Kent Forum.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council, that *Climate Local Sevenoaks* Option A, be approved and adopted as District Council policy.

51. Weald Conservation Area Designation and Management Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Local Planning & Environment presented the report which sought support for a new Conservation Area at Sevenoaks Weald and the adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Resolved: That:

- a) a new Conservation Area be designated for Sevenoaks Weald; and
- b) the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

52. Treasury Management Mid-Year Update

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources presented the report which was one of a number that were recommended for submission to Members before, during and after the financial year in order to comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. It constituted the mid-year update, concentrating on activity in the first six months of the financial year.

Investment returns continue to be low and the prospects for any increase in Bank Rate in the near future appeared very limited. In order to maintain investment returns, the report looked at various options to increase yield in the forthcoming financial year. These options were discussed at the last meeting of the Finance and Resources Advisory Committee ahead of the Investment Strategy being set for 2014/15 and some of the ideas were being brought forward to consider with the Strategy.

Recovery of the Icelandic bank investment was on-going and at the current time four dividend payments had been received totalling approximately 54% of the investment and interest. The prospect was for 100% recovery over the coming years.

Resolved: That the Treasury Management Mid Year update for 2013/14 be approved.

53. Amendment to Local Planning & Environment Terms of Reference

Members considered a report that advised that since the formation the Local Planning and Environment Advisory Committee the Sevenoaks District Locality Board had ceased to exist making the reference to it within the terms of reference redundant. It was proposed to delete this reference to keep the terms of reference relevant and up to date.

Resolved: That the terms of reference be amended by the deletion of the line 'Two attendees appointed by the Sevenoaks Locality Board' as outlined within the report.

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54. Membership of Cabinet Advisory Committees

Members considered the report which proposed Cllr. Mrs Sargent to fill the vacancy that had arisen on the Finance and Resources Advisory Committee since its formation in May 2013.

Resolved: That Councillor Mrs Sargeant be appointed to the vacancy on Finance and Resources Advisory Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 9 December 2013. The decisions contained in minutes 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53 and 54 take effect immediately. The decision contained in minute 46 takes effect on 16 December 2013.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.40 PM

CHAIRMAN