

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2014 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllrs. Hogarth, Ms. Lowe, Piper and Ramsay

Cllrs. Ayres, Mrs. Ayres, Dickins, Eyre, Firth, Mrs. Hunter, Scholey, Searles and Miss. Stack were also present.

4. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 8 May 2014 and 13 May 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record.

5. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

6. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)

There were none.

7. Matters referred from Council

There were no matters referred from Council.

8. 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.

9. Recommendations from the Cabinet Advisory Committees

- a) Provisional Outturn 2013/14 and Carry Forward Requests (Finance and Resources Advisory Committee – 3 June 2014, Minute 11)

This was considered under Minute 12.

10. Membership of Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee

The report advised that owing to an administrative error, at the Special meeting of Cabinet held on 13 May 2014, the memberships and terms of reference were agreed for all the Cabinet Advisory Committees but one too many Conservative party members was appointed to the Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee.

The Chairman proposed that owing to her current ill health Cllr. Mrs Dawson be removed from the Committee membership.

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Resolved: That Cllr. Mrs Dawson be removed from the Membership of the Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee.

11. Flood Support - Repair & Renew Grants - revised guidelines

The Chief Officer Communities & Business presented a report which explained that since the Repair and Renew Grant guidelines were agreed by Cabinet on 8 May 2014, DEFRA had changed their guidelines for the scheme that required the Council to make changes to its own Repair & Renew Grant guidelines. Although there was now no requirement for applicants to provide three quotations or seek a third party independent survey, DEFRA still expected participating councils to undertake cost verification to ensure value for money. This would be undertaken by requesting applicants provide at least one quotation and Officers assessing the applicant's statement relating to value for money.

She advised that since the scheme began in May 2014 26 application forms had been sent out and two claims totalling £10,000 would be assessed on 11 June 2014. For the business support scheme 14 application forms had been sent and 2 applications totalling £8692 would be assessed on the same day. £6,349 had already been paid. Letters had been sent to 1,500 addresses to notify them of the different flooding support schemes. Claims were principally from Edenbridge and Brasted with a few from Otford and Swanley.

It was noted that the risk was that DEFRA may not repay the full amounts paid out by the Council. However the grants were only to a maximum of £5,000 each and so the risk was limited.

The Chairman requested local MPs be sent a monthly email on the applications processed for the business flooding support scheme. Local beneficiaries would be approached to help publicise the support they had received through the business flooding support scheme.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the amended guidelines for the Council's Repair and Renew Grant, as set out at Appendix A of the report, be agreed.

12. Provisional Outturn 2013/14 and Carry Forward Requests

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources presented a report which provided the provisional financial outturn figures for 2013/14 and commentary to any significant variances. The report also set out the requests to carry forward unspent budgets into 2014/15. Members noted and considered the relevant minute and recommendations received from the Finance & Resources Advisory Committee which had considered the same report, which had been tabled.

The Head of Finance reported that a provisional favourable variance of £299,000 had been achieved. Renegotiation of costs for shared services with Dartford Borough Council

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had reduced costs by £90,000. Should the carry forward requests and earmarked reserve be approved then £170,000 could be allocated to the Budget Stabilisation Fund. This represented a variance of 0.33% of the gross service budget.

Noting the comments of the Finance & Resources Advisory Committee, the Chairman explained that the Council had put a lot of effort into getting new Council Tax Support payers used to paying Council Tax and to keep the pressure on them once they were paying. National discussions were ongoing as to the administration of Disabled Facility Grants in two-tier Council areas because the Council held the budget but it was statutorily Kent County Council who determined what works needed to be done. He asked that the appropriate Minister be written to on the matter. The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources enquired whether there could be a role in the Council carrying out the assessment role on behalf of the County Council.

Action: The Housing & Community Safety Advisory Committee to consider the role of the District and County Councils in dealing with Disabled Facility Grants.

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 Cabinet that

- a) the Revenue 'carry forward' requests totalling £129,000 as set out in paragraph 16 of the report be approved;
- b) the Capital carry forward request totalling £66,594, as set out in paragraph 17 of the report be approved; and
- c) Flood Support Earmarked Reserve be established, and the income receipt of £172,000 be transferred to that reserve at the end of March 2014.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 9 June 2014. The decisions contained in Minutes 10, 11 and 12 take effect immediately.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.30 PM

CHAIRMAN

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