

## **DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SEVENOAKS**

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Sevenoaks District Council held on 4 November 2014 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Mrs. Davison (Chairman)  
McGarvey (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Mrs. Ayres, Ayres, Mrs. Bayley, Ball, Bosley, Mrs. Bracken, Brookbank, Brown, Butler, Ms. Chetram, Clark, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Cook, Cooke, Davison, Dickins, Edwards-Winsor, Firth, Fittock, Fleming, Mrs. George, Grint, Horwood, Mrs. Hunter, London, Ms. Lowe, Mrs. Morris, Neal, Orridge, Mrs. Parkin, Pett, Piper, Mrs. Purves, Ramsay, Mrs. Sargeant, Searles, Miss. Thornton, Towell, Underwood and Walshe

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs. Bosley, Mrs. Dawson, Eyre, Gaywood, Hogarth, Maskell, Raikes, Scholey, Miss. Stack and Williamson

24. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 July 2014

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 July 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record.

25. To receive any declarations of interest not included in the register of interest from Members in respect of items of business included on the agenda for this meeting

No further declarations of interest were received.

26. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed the Kent Police & Crime Chief Commissioner Ann Barnes, and Deputy Chief Constable Paul Brandon, and advised that with the Councils indulgence, she would move forward the presentations to the first item after her announcements.

It was with sadness that she reported the passing of former Cllr. McInnes who had served as a District Councillor for Hextable between 2007 and 2011. A moments silence was given to remember his service to the Council, his ward and village, where he was held with great regard and demonstrated by the attendance at his funeral.

The Chairman reported that she had been very busy representing the District and asked that if Members were aware of anywhere in the District she had not visited, or knew of an event they wished her to attend she urged they get in contact as her diary was filling up fast, especially before Christmas.

27. To receive presentations from the Chief Commissioner Ann Barnes and the Deputy Chief Constable Mr. Paul Brandon

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Members welcomed Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner, Ann Barnes and the Deputy Chief Constable Kent Police, Paul Brandon. Ann Barnes gave a [presentation](#) on the work of the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Chief Constable Kent Police, Paul Brandon, gave a [presentation](#) on the new policing model for Kent.

The Police and Crime Commissioner was asked why she had responded negatively without explanation to a question posed by a Member in the Kent on Sunday, asking them to consider helping financially with the cost of CCTV which was relied on and used as evidence by the Police and was something other Commissioners around the country did. She replied that unfortunately there was just no money available to do this.

A Member commented on the local impact of Kent County Council (KCC) withdrawing its funding for community wardens and further asked whether it was possible to extract crime figures by Parish rather than by the current combined areas, as this led to higher insurance premiums in areas that otherwise did not have particular issues. He stated that recently this had been possible, and asked whether technology had allowed this or whether the extrapolation caused further expense and resources.

The Deputy Chief Constable replied that he was aware of the cut in Community Wardens which would affect Kent Police and they may need to fill any gap created. Representations had been made to KCC but he wasn't sure these would be successful. They were trying to identify the most suitable and effective locations to place the remaining community wardens. With regards to the statistics, losing resources meant that there was not the same capacity to extrapolate. The statistics were still accessible however he was unsure to what level, as already stated they had been moving away from numerical statistics and more towards quality of service indicators.

The Police and Crime Commissioner added that the Community Wardens did a fantastic job and went on to commend Special Constables and the amount of free hours given. There were more than 350 in Kent.

The Chairman thanked them both for attending.

28. To receive any questions from members of the public under paragraph 17 of Part 2 (the Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

No questions had been received.

29. To receive any petitions submitted by members of the public under paragraph 18 of Part 2 (the Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

No petitions were received.

30. Matters considered by Governance Committee

a) Community Governance Review

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Pett seconded the recommendations from the Governance Committee.

Resolved: That

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- a) following consultation on the District Council's draft recommendation, a Romney Street Ward be created in the Parish of Shoreham;
- b) following consultation on the District Council's draft recommendation, the number of parish councillors for the Romney Street Ward, the Shoreham Ward and The Well Hill Hundreds Ward of the Parish of Shoreham be 1, 6 and 1 respectively; and
- c) following consultation on the District Council's draft recommendation, the boundary between the parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald be amended in the vicinity of Bowzell Green.

### b) Recording and The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

Councillor Fleming proposed a slightly amended version of the Governance Committee recommendations and Councillor Pett seconded. The amendments were that discretion to record other meetings be with the consent of the relevant Chairman, and that the Constitution amendments reflect the item listed as 29.3 as a heading in its own right rather than causing any confusion by being listed underneath 'disturbance by public.' Cllr. Fittock commended the amendments as they gave more input to Members. It was noted that recording was possible in the Conference Room.

Resolved: That

- a) following Full Council being successfully recorded on a trial basis all meetings of Full Council, Development Control Committee and Licensing Hearings be recorded from now on;
- b) with the consent of the relevant Chairman, Officers be given discretion to record such public meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and their committees, sub-committees or joint committees; and
- c) following the implementation of The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, the amendments to the Constitution together with a Protocol on Reporting on Meetings as set out at Appendix B to the report subject to making 29.3 in the Constitution, a heading in its own right, be approved.

### 31. To consider the following reports from the Chief Executive or other Chief Officers on matters requiring the attention of Council

#### a) Membership of Committees

It was moved by Cllr Fleming, seconded by Cllr. Ms. Lowe and

Resolved: That the dissolution of the Sevenoaks District Strategic Board be noted and the amended memberships of Committees for 2014/15, attached as an Appendix to the report, be approved.

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### b) Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2015/16

It was moved by Cllr Fleming, seconded by Cllr. Ramsay and

Resolved: That as resolved by Council on 27 November 2013, Members approve that from 1 April 2015 all residents of working age receive a deduction on the amount of council tax support they are entitled to, calculated on the basis of the previous council tax benefit scheme, of 18.5%.

### 32. To consider any questions by Members under paragraph 19.3 of Part 2 (the Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which has been duly given.

Two questions had been received from Members in accordance with paragraph 19.3 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

Question 1: Cllr. Mrs. Sargeant

“Would the Leader of this Council Please explain why he has allowed 106 Money to be used for the most recent Swanley Housing Survey, as to which the results may be used in evidence to support a Green Belt Planning Application”.

Response: Leader of the Council

The District Council works with Action for rural Communities in Kent and three Housing Needs surveys had been factored in (using s.106 planning gains under the relevant criteria for affordable housing) and this was an opportune time to gain valuable data on the District's second largest town in order to effectively plan for all of Swanley's housing need and demand going forward into the future. This data will supplement any future Strategic Housing Market Assessment data by providing a more detailed analysis of the respective area. The study was intended to inform future strategy development and allow any scheme proposals, including that of Birchwood, to be objectively assessed. Before the survey, current data was inadequate and this could have left the District Council in a weak position when considering planning applications. This study was similar to the Balanced Housing Market Report which accompanied a previous District-wide housing needs study and fits within the priorities in the Member approved spending criteria for the s106 funding. The initial results of the survey have just been received indicating a need for 10 units of accommodation for over-55s in the Swanley area.

Supplementary question: Cllr. Mrs. Sargeant

Please explain the discrepancy between the email dated 3 September 2014 where the Leader stated this was not undertaken for the Birchwood planning applications, and the email from a Council Officer to the Clerk of the Town Council on 19 August 2014 proposing the survey be carried out on 15 September 2014 in order to be able to produce a report by 10 November 2014 as this would be the latest timescale for it to be submitted as comments for the Birchwood application as there was likely to be a resubmission before 12 December 2014.

Response: Leader of the Council

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The report was for future strategy and to help with any scheme including Birchwood and the objective had been achieved. To reiterate, the initial results of the survey indicated a need for 10 units of accommodation for over-55s in the Swanley area.

There was no further discussion.

Question 2: Cllr. Mrs. George

"Could the Leader of this Council explain why a member of staff made contact in August 2014, with an SDC Deputy Cabinet Member of the Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee? With regard to help with the recent Swanley Housing Survey and Swanley Town Council. For Transparency why did this member of staff not contact the Town Clerk?"

Response: Leader of the Council

Throughout this process, officers have been in contact with various local Members regarding housing needs generally in the respective area and, of course, the proposed scheme at Birchwood – including various direct communications between yourself and officers, such as Gavin Missons and Liz Crockford. Back in August 2014, contact was made with Cllr Searles, a District Council Member who also sits on the Town Council. Officers do generally communicate with relevant elected councillors in order to move forward strategy and policy work. In this case an email was sent to Cllr Searles, of Swanley Town Council and an elected Member, asking for suggestions as to the best way to engage the Town Council on this matter. Direct communication with the Town Council then followed with Julie Pilbeam, as you know, as soon as she returned from leave (on 18/08/14) dialogue commenced verbally and by email.

Supplementary question: Cllr. Mrs. George

Who paid for the aborted letter.

Response: Leader of the Council

Swanley Town Council was billed for the letter, as the Clerk had received an executive instruction from the Town Council to send it out in the Mayor's name which was then withdrawn.

There was no further discussion.

33. To consider any motions by Members under paragraph 20 of Part 2 (the Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which has been duly given.

Councillor Fittock proposed, and Councillor Mrs. Sargeant seconded the following motion:

"This Council has agreed to conduct a housing needs survey just for Swanley parishes that is linked to proposals to build on the Sevenoaks District Green Belt. Sevenoaks District Council has recently agreed to conduct a District Wide Older Persons housing needs survey as part of new Strategic Housing Market Assessment required by

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Central Government. Therefore this Council condemns, as a misuse of public money, the inappropriate use of section 106 funds being spent on a separate survey for Swanley.”

Cllr. Fittock spoke to the motion stating that the Council had agreed to the protection of the greenbelt and the motion was to ensure everything possible was done to support that policy. The first affordable housing supplementary document had been adopted and supported in 2011. An Older Housing Needs Survey was to be carried out in 2012, but was delayed to be included in the strategic housing survey and coincide with new household forecast figures and in addition another survey for Swanley was carried out by this Council. Members were concerned that it had been squeezed in to coincide with a planning application in the greenbelt. Councillors were also concerned that Officers had been compromised and Councillors misled that the Town Council had been consulted. The questionnaire was worded in such a way that ex-pats could comment, was it the intention of the Council to rehouse expats? Some of the questions were difficult to understand. He asked that the Council support or at least heed the content of the motion.

The Leader reminded Cllr. Fittock of the answers given to the previous questions posed. The survey showed that there was no need for the Birchwood site, and all the propaganda had been proven untrue. The data had been needed in order to make a proper judgement. It had showed the need for just 10 units of accommodation for over 55's in the Swanley area, and as only 50% of need was required that meant only 5 units. The Council should be congratulated for carrying out the survey because it had helped prove the Birchwood site was not needed.

Another Member stated that regardless of the result the question was whether it had been needed and that it had been a waste of money. It was commented that KCC should have paid for the survey, and it would have been appreciated if ward councillors had been consulted and that the Cabinet Members for Housing & Community Safety and Local Planning & Environment had not listened to local members.

Cllr. Fittock stated that he had taken on board the Leader's responses to the previous questions, but insisted that it had been a waste of time and money.

The motion was put to the vote and it was lost.

34. To receive the report of the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet since the last Council Meeting.

The Leader of the Council reported on the work that he and the Cabinet had undertaken in the period 8 July to 30 October 2014.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.12 pm

Chairman