

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2016 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Lowe (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dickins, Firth, Hogarth, Piper and Searles

Cllrs. Clack, Maskell, McGarvey, Pett and Scholey were also present.

5. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 21 April 2016 and 10 May 2016, be approved and signed as a correct record.

6. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

7. Questions from Members

There were none.

8. Matter referred from Scrutiny Committee

a) Reference from Scrutiny Committee held on 3 May 2016 (Minute 39)

Scrutiny Committee were requesting that Cabinet consider whether it would be appropriate to apply a target of 75% of Penalty Charge Notice appeals to be won at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

Cllr. Clack addressed Members explaining why he had raised it as an issue at the Scrutiny Committee. He believed that a target would help ensure more correct decisions before an issue went to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT).

The Portfolio Holder for Direct & Trading Services advised that fewer than 15 out of 14,147 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued, went to the the TPT, and the currently policy was not to send an officer as it cost more to send an officer than if the case were lost. He was happy to revisit this policy. There was a higher success rate for the Council if an Officer was sent. Performance Indicators were useful for policy direction, but he did not believe one would be helpful here. The Council already had a different approach to enforcement which had received national press coverage and praise. The figures were already published and publicly available and he had undertaken to bring them to his Advisory Committee.

Resolved: That no new Performance Indicator be applied.

9. Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The minute reference from the Finance Advisory Committee was tabled. The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report which updated Members on the progress that had been made on the review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in liaison with other Kent authorities; and asked Members to agree the broad scheme framework in readiness for public consultation; and requested delegated authority to be given to the Chief Finance Officer and Finance Portfolio Holder. He further advised that the Finance Advisory Committee had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet subject to not consulting on including Child Benefit and Child Maintenance in the assessment of income.

Members were concerned that there was a lot of information and options within the consultation and were keen that the purpose be better explained and the consultation simplified, where possible, to enable better comprehension of what was being asked. Members were also keen to limit the consultation to those options that would better achieve alignment with Housing Benefit and achieve cost benefits. Members were clear within the debate that more work would need to be carried out in order to condense and clarify the proposed options within the public consultation, and it was suggested that HERO Officers could be asked for their input. More information was also required to understand whether there was a potential cumulative impact on certain residents. It was noted that Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council had produced a video to help understand the proposals and this was thought a useful aid that required further investigation.

Members were in agreement that at this stage they would prefer to defer a decision on this report until Officers had had an opportunity to address the issues raised.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty, attached as Appendix C to the report, and that residents may fall into more than one category of affected person.

Resolved: That

- a) Officers look at ways and liaise with the HERO officers to make the public consultation clearer, including the idea of a video; and
- b) consideration of the proposal with an amended report be deferred for decision at a future meeting.

10. Provisional Outturn 2015/16

The minute reference from the Finance Advisory Committee was tabled and noted. The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report which recommended that the funding for stabilisation works at the Otford Palace Tower be taken from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve to enable the General Fund Reserve to remain at £1,500,000 which was considered a prudent level relative to our net service

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expenditure. The Finance Advisory Committee had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That funding for the Otford Tower be taken from the Budget Stabilisation Fund and not from the General Fund Reserve.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.05 PM

CHAIRMAN

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 13 June 2016. The decision contained in Minute 10 takes effect immediately. The key decision report considered at Minute 9 was deferred for consideration at a future meeting.