

POLICY & PERFORMANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2017 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chair)

Cllr. Miss. Stack (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, C. Barnes, Clark, Kelly, Krogdahl, Maskell, McGregor,
Mrs. Morris, Parkin and Thornton.

A minutes silence was held for the victims of the terror attack at Westminster on 22 March 2017.

21. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2016, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

22. Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

23. Actions from the previous meeting

There were none.

24. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman, informed Members that an article had been published in the local media which advised that Swanley had been named as the best place to live for a London commuter due to travel time, the price of a season ticket, life satisfaction and house prices.

Some of the Council's corporate projects were coming to an end and this included Bradbourne car park which would be opening in early April 2017 with work on the hotel starting shortly after. Plans were moving forward for Bevan Place, The Working Men's club and White Oak leisure centre.

25. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

26. Property Investment Strategy Update

The Chief Officer Communities and Business presented a report which updated Members on the progress of the Property Investment Strategy and looked at its

future direction. The report sought updates to the Strategy and a further £25 million to be set aside for future investments.

Initial acquisitions had helped the Council to become financially self-sufficient and it was requested for additional funding to be allocated to the property investment strategy to enable the Council to achieve the ambition of 'self-sufficiency plus'. External investment advisors had analysed the current property investment portfolio and provided advice as to the future direction of the strategy. They recognised that good investment purchases had been made and that they were performing well.

Members discussed the report and asked questions. Members were advised that the decrease in the income yield reduction to 5% was due to market value trends and only be applied to new purchases. If money was borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board the yield would be 3% net of borrowing costs. Members were advised that before a property was purchased, the property team looked through all the details first before the Chief Finance Officer and then the relevant Portfolio Holders were consulted. The Council would only move forward with a purchase if its Red Book Valuation was acceptable and at or above the offer price. The Council would not make purchases above the Red Book Valuation.

Some concern was expressed at purchases being made outside the District. Members were informed that this would be at a minimum and where possible be kept within Kent. In response to questions raised about risk, Members were informed that advice had been received that a larger number of investments offered a better spread of risk. Members noted that the report was also being considered by the Finance Advisory Committee on 28 March 2017.

Resolved: That the report be noted with Members' support.

27. Developing the Corporate Plan

Members considered a report which requested suggestions from the Policy & Performance Advisory Committee, under the 4 themes of health and housing, highways, community safety and economic development, for developing the Council's future priorities within its new Corporate Plan as it develops self-sufficiency plus. A number of items were suggested and discussed:

Health and Housing

- Early intervention with getting people out of hospital and back to their homes in the community.

Highways

- Potholes and quality of roads
- Gulley cleaning on a more local and regular basis

Community Safety

- Rubbish on the highway and grass verges
- Illegal/irresponsible parking

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- Speeding
- Graffiti
- Dog Fouling
- Warden Scheme

Economic Development

- Transport, including local bus services
- Strategic planning for skills and training

Resolved: That the suggestions be noted.

28. Work Plan

The work plan was noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.30 PM

CHAIRMAN

