

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2021 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Dickins (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. McArthur, Dyball, Maskell and Thornton

Cllrs. Carroll, Esler, Mrs Hunter and Osborne-Jackson were also present.

176. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of Cabinet held on 11 February 2021 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

177. Declarations of interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

178. Questions from Members

There were none.

179. Community Infrastructure Spending Board

Members considered the recommendations from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spending Board. The Chairman of the Board addressed Cabinet on this item and explained the decisions made in respect of each application.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that the process for CIL applications was working well and that recent feedback from an independent body had been excellent for the process. The Chairman thanked her, the team and the Chairman of the Board for their efforts.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

A. i) The £158,000 applied for, as set out in the report, for sports hall and facilities at the Orchards Academy sports and Hall facilities at Swanley be approved on the following grounds:

- strong social and economic benefits to the community;
- the project was identified in an adopted strategy/plan;

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- sufficient evidence had been submitted to demonstrate a strong link between new development and the scheme.
- strong community benefit.
- there was strong community support of the scheme.

subject to a legal agreement being signed within 6 months of the decision date (or such further time as may be agreed between the parties) which shall require as conditions of payment that:

- planning permission had been granted for the project
- a community use agreement had been entered into.

ii) if the legal agreement was not signed in accordance with the above then funding applied for would be refused for:

- failure to ensure the effective management of CIL funds;
- failure to ensure sufficient certainty that the scheme would be delivered; and
- failure to ensure a strong community benefit.

A. i) The £117,380 applied for, as set out in the report, for scheme “Kemsing Surgery Extension” be approved on the following grounds:

- strong social benefits to the community;
- there was evidence to show partnership working;
- sufficient information had been submitted to show that the scheme would be delivered as planning permission had been granted:
- the project was identified in an adopted strategy/plan;
- strong link between new development and the scheme;
- clear public benefits;
- vital community benefit;
- there was community support of the project.

subject to a legal agreement being signed within 6 months of the decision date (or such further time as may be agreed between the parties) which shall require as conditions of payment that:

- monies were clawed back proportionally should the premises not remain in use for the delivery of NHS Services for at least 10 years; and

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- when a time line be submitted and approved by the Council and the applicant confirms in writing when the project was commencing.

ii) if the legal agreement was not signed in accordance with the above then funding applied for would be refused for:

- failure to ensure the effective management of CIL funds;
- failure to ensure sufficient certainty that the scheme would be delivered; and
- failure to ensure a strong community benefit.

B. i) The £49,507.50 applied for, as set out in the report, for scheme “Oxford Road traffic scheme” be approved on the following ground:

- strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community
- the project was identified in an adopted strategy/plan
- strong evidence had been submitted to demonstrate a strong link between new development and the scheme
- strong local support.

subject to a legal agreement being signed within 6 months of the decision date (or such further time as may be agreed between the parties) which shall require as conditions of payment that:

- all the funding for the project had been secured.

ii) if the legal agreement was not signed in accordance with the above then funding applied for would be refused for:

- failure to ensure the effective management of CIL funds;
- failure to ensure sufficient certainty that the scheme would be delivered.

C. i) The £1,500 000 applied for, as set out in the report, for scheme “Wilderness sports and community facility” be approved on the following ground:

- Strong social and environmental benefits to the community;
- There was evidence to show partnership working
- The project was identified in an adopted strategy/plan;
- Strong link between new development and the scheme

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- Clear public benefit.
- Strong community benefit.
- There was community support of the project.

subject to a legal agreement being signed within 6 months of the decision date (or such further time as may be agreed between the parties) which shall require as conditions of payment that:

- planning permission had been granted for the project
- a community use agreement had been entered into.

ii) if the legal agreement was not signed in accordance with the above then funding applied for would be refused for:

- failure to ensure the effective management of CIL funds;
- failure to ensure sufficient certainty that the scheme would be delivered; and
- failure to ensure a strong community benefit.

D. i) The £15,000 applied for, as set out in the report, for scheme “Weald Memorial Hall maintenance and renovations” be approved on the following ground:

- strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community;
- strong community support of the scheme;
- clear community benefit;
- there was sufficient certainty that the scheme would be delivered.

subject to a legal agreement being signed within 6 months of the decision date (or such further time as may be agreed between the parties).

ii) if the legal agreement was not signed in accordance with the above then funding applied for would be refused for:

- failure to ensure the effective management of CIL funds.

F. i) The £200,000 applied for, as set out in the report for scheme “Knockholt Village Centre Refurbishment” be approved on the following grounds:

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- strong social benefits to the community;
- the project was in an adopted strategy/plan
- there was strong local support of the scheme
- strong community benefits
- there was sufficient certainty that the scheme would be delivered.

Subject to a legal agreement being signed within 6 months, which shall require that funding was secured.

ii) if the legal agreement was not signed then it would become refused for:

- failure to ensure the effective management of CIL funds
- failure to ensure sufficient certainty that the scheme would be delivered.

180. Bank Account Signatories

Members considered a report which sought approval for a change to the list of officers authorised to sign cheques and sanction banking instruments on behalf of the Council, in order to bring up to date the list of authorised signatories for the Council's bank accounts.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved : That

- a) Mrs Ekaterina Ratushnaya, Senior Accountant, no longer be authorised to sign cheques and sanction banking instruments on behalf of the Council; and
- b) pursuant to Financial Procedure Rules 4.73 and 4.74, Ms Penny Butterfield, Assistant Accountant, be authorised to sign cheques and sanction banking instruments on behalf of the Council.

181. Council Tax Hardship Relief Support Scheme 2021/22

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Investment presented report which set out a scheme, funded by Kent County Council, to provide additional council tax support for low-income households suffering financial hardship as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Council Tax and Recovery Manager set out that the proposed scheme had been developed by Kent County Council taking account of Council Tax Reduction

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information from district and borough councils with the purpose of providing additional support for low income working age households and those impacted financially through the Covid-19 pandemic. It looked to balance the need for support of households receiving Council Tax Reduction to partly offset the increase in Council Tax with the significant challenge that many households not receiving benefits faced through furlough or redundancy.

Cabinet extended its thanks to the Council Tax and Recovery Manager and his team for the work which had been done throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

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 Council that delegated authority be granted to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Customer and Resources, to finalise and implement the necessary requirements to apply the proposed scheme.

182. 27-37 High Street, Swanley Project Budget Update

The Strategic Head of Property and Commercial presented a report which sought approval for additional funding to the project, which would allow the Council to make an award to the preferred contractor and deliver the scheme within the agreed timetable set by the Getting Building Fund (GBF) grant agreement.

On 17 November 2020, Council approved the redevelopment of 27-37 High Street, Swanley, to provide 17 new residential units and a business hub with an estimated total project budget of £5,624,039. The project received a GBF grant of £1.49m upon condition of the scheme meeting a challenging timetable set by Government. As a result, the project was placed on an accelerated programme, and has met all its milestones to date. In particular, demolition work had started on site and the Council had now received tenders to undertake construction work.

However, after evaluating the tenders and choosing a preferred bidder, the tenders exceeded the envisaged cost estimates set for the construction and there was now a need to augment the project budget if the high quality scheme originally envisaged for the gateway location was to be maintained. Given the economic and social benefits associated with the scheme, costs associated with progressing the scheme to date, and given the ability to fund the additional costs through capital receipts, it was recommended that the project's total budget be increased by £490k. This would allow the project to proceed and continue to achieve the conditions stipulated in the GBF Grant Agreement.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

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- a) the addition of £490,000 to the current project budget of £5,624,039, be approved; and
- b) it be noted that the additional funding to the project is funded from the Council's Capital Reserves.

183. Equality Policy Statement and Objectives

The Chairman and Improvement & Innovation Portfolio Holder, presented the report which sought adoption of the Equality Policy Statement and Objectives. The Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee had considered and recommended the report.

The Assistant Chief Executive set out that under the Equality Act 2010 public authorities were required to prepare and publish one of more objectives and review at least every four years. There were five proposed equality objectives relating to the council's role as a community leader, service provider and employer.

The objectives would be subject to review, including consultation with stakeholders on the publication of Census 2021 data later in the year, and emerging guidance from Central Government.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the Equality Policy Statement and Objectives be adopted; and
- b) a full review of the Equality Policy Statement and Objectives take place on the publication of Census 2021 data be agreed.

184. Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy & Action Plan 2021-22

The People & Places Portfolio Holder presented the report which sought approval of the 2021-22 Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

The Health and Communities Manager set out that the plan responded to the community safety priorities identified in the most recent Strategic Assessment and would determine multi-agency work undertaken in the District to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and increase feelings of safety. The People & Places Advisory Committee had noted the report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

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Resolved: That the Community Safety Strategy & Action Plan for 2021-22, be approved.

185. Citizens Advice Service Level Agreement (SLA) 2021-24

The People & Places Portfolio Holder presented the report which set out details of the proposed Service Level Agreement for Citizens' Advice in the District and sought approval for funding to support their work over the next three years.

A Community Projects and Funding Officer explained that the People & Places Advisory Committee had considered and noted the report. She answered questions from Cabinet on the extent of the Service Level Agreement and its expected operation in the coming years.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the draft Service Level Agreement for 2021/24, be agreed.

186. Community Grant Scheme 2021/22

The People & Places Portfolio Holder presented the report which sought approval of the recommendation to carry forward the projects and funding relating to 2020/21 grants that had been affected by Covid 19 and proposed changes to the Community Grant Scheme for 2022/23.

The Community Projects and Funding Officers explained that applications received had been appraised according to the Council's Guidelines and those recommended for funding supported the aims of the scheme and represented value for money. The events of recent months had prompted the recommended changes to the Community Grant Scheme for 2022/23, which would ensure that the Scheme continued to deliver its' aim of benefiting the most vulnerable residents in Sevenoaks District.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) Grants, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be approved subject to the conditions set out below
 - i) that performance indicators as set out in the application forms are adhered to and monitored;
 - ii) that appropriate Safeguarding policies and arrangements are in place, where necessary;

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- iii) that appropriate recognition of this Council's funding contribution is made in all their publicity; and
 - iv) where services are provided over a wider area than the District boundaries, organisations will be required to hold grant aid from this Council in a restricted fund for the benefit of Sevenoaks District residents;
 - v) that organisations funded either have or are working towards any quality accreditation.
- b) projects and funding relating to the 2020/21 grant scheme affected by Covid 19 be carried forward, namely the grants to West Kent Extra and Kenward Trust, for the reasons set out in paragraphs 7 & 14 of the report; and
- c) changes as set out below, to the 2022/23 grant scheme (with applications commencing September 2021), be approved
- i) Promote the smaller grants (up to £500) to support and encourage new, grass-root community initiatives. Achieve this by streamlining the application process to make it more attractive and user friendly to applicants whilst still incorporating the eligibility, criteria and monitoring requirements of the Council. Communicate this approach earlier in the year to encourage applications.
 - ii) Consult and work with other departments to gain an oversight of all grants and funding available to community and voluntary organisations. Use this information to ensure cross-departmental checks and information shares are in place in relation to grants and funding being awarded and to greater understand and effectively manage arrangements and partnerships between the Council and the community and voluntary sector. Incorporate learning from this into the management of the Community Grants scheme and the application appraisal process to ensure that it continues to fund the most deserved, good value for money projects and to support the most vulnerable residents.

187. Adoption of Edenbridge Character Area Assessment SPD

The Development & Conservation Portfolio Holder presented the report which sought adoption of the Edenbridge Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The Design Officer set out that the report provided the background to the Edenbridge Character Area Assessment SPD and summarised the outcome of the public consultation. The Development & Conservation Advisory Committee had considered and recommended the report. Cabinet asked questions as to the operation of the SPD and the Design Officer demonstrated the Map of Edenbridge Character Area.

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 the Edenbridge Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Document, be adopted.

188. Street Litter Binfrastucture and draft Project Strategy 2021

The Cleaner & Greener Portfolio Holder presented the report which advised Members of a street litter bin project and draft litter strategy. A full Litter Strategy would be considered by Cabinet at a later date, however as a Litter Strategy was required in order to apply for Government funding the Draft Project Litter Strategy attached as an Appendix to the report was being used. She announced that the Council had successfully received a grant award of £25,000 towards the project and advised that the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee had noted the report.

The Head of Direct Services explained that the operation of the scheme would increase the efficiency of litter bin collections. He also explained the importance of community education in respect of littering habits.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the Draft Project Litter Strategy set out at Appendix A to the report, be noted.

189. Emergency Planning Service Update

The Cleaner & Greener Portfolio Holder presented the service delivery update report, which the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee had also noted.

The Head of Direct Services spoke on this item and reminded Cabinet of various Emergency Planning and other protocols which were in place. He answered questions from Cabinet and the Chairman thanked him for his report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the report be noted.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 19 March 2021. The decisions contained in Minutes 180, 183, 188 and 189 take effect immediately. The decisions contained in Minutes 179, 182, 184, 185, 186 and 187 take effect on 29 March 2021. The decision contained in Minute 181 is a recommendation to Council.

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THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.34 PM

CHAIRMAN