

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Dickins (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dyball, Maskell, McArthur and Thornton

61. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022, be approved and signed as a correct record.

62. Declarations of interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

63. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)

There were no questions from Members.

64. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee, CIL Spending Board or Cabinet Advisory Committees (if any)

a) In-Depth Scrutiny - Covid-19 working group

Members considered the report from the Scrutiny Committee. At its meeting on 9 November 2021, the Scrutiny Committee resolved to set up an In-depth Scrutiny Working Group to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Working Group considered the actions taken in response to the pandemic and considered the effectiveness of the Council's Emergency Plan.

Resolved: That

- a) a peer review of the Emergency Plan be undertaken by the Kent Resilience Forum;
- b) the Emergency Plan be reviewed by the Chief Executive annually to ensure it remains up-to-date;
- c) a report on the Emergency Plan produced by the Chief Executive be considered by Cabinet every four years;

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- d) the process for recruiting volunteers continues, allowing the Council to access a body of trained volunteers;
- e) scenario exercises be undertaken every 4 years in the absence of an actual event, with the involvement of Gold and Silver Commanders;
- f) the inventory of the District Emergency Centre be regularly audited.

65. Changes to Appointments to Other Organisations

The report set out the proposed change to the appointments of Outside Organisations which Cabinet was asked to agree.

Resolved: That Cllr Streatfeild be appointed to Becket Trust Housing Association.

66. Infrastructure Funding Statement

The Portfolio Holder for Development and Conservation presented the report, which outlined the proposed priorities for the Council's new Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) which the Council was required to report to the Government by the end of the year. The Development & Conservation Advisory Committee had considered the same report and recommended it for adoption by Cabinet.

The Strategic Planning Manager explained that local authorities were not bound by the priorities detailed in the IFS but it provides transparency to developers and the community as to what the Council's infrastructure funding priorities were.

Members were advised by the Infrastructure Delivery Officer of the current priorities for allocating CIL and Section 106 (s106) monies, including projects being identified within the Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP), and that the projects are related to new development. It was explained that from 2014 to date, 64% of CIL Funding was allocated to Community Facilities, and 92% of Section 106 funding was allocated to Affordable Housing.

The Infrastructure Delivery Officer advised that the proposed priorities within the IFS were controlled by the existing evidence base and the IDP. Infrastructure projects to support major development sites were also a consideration for the IFS priorities. The priorities were largely unchanged from last year, including Health and Social Care, and Highways and Transport, but Education was newly identified as a key infrastructure type for the upcoming year.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning and Regulatory Services updated Members on a recent appeal decision at Pinehurst House Care Home. He in particular advised Members that the KCC request (albeit then withdrawn) - that the planning obligation included developer contributions towards primary and secondary education, libraries, community learning, youth services, social care and waste - was considered by the Inspector to not satisfy the tests for planning obligations as they were not necessary to make the proposal acceptable in planning terms.

Resolved: That

- a) the criteria for prioritising infrastructure projects for funding in the Infrastructure Funding Statement, as set out below, remain:
 - The projects fall with the infrastructure types/projects identified in the IFS report;
 - The projects have been identified in our Infrastructure Delivery Plan. (This ensures that the infrastructure prioritised supports the Local Plan);
 - The projects support and are clearly related to proposed or allocated development in the District. They therefore provide a strong link between development and the proposed project;
 - That there is a strong social, environmental or economic justification for the scheme;
 - That projects have not received CIL previously;
 - The scheme has support from infrastructure providers;
 - That there is a need or it will be expected to be delivered within the next 5 years;
 - That it is identified as having a critical or high need where the project has to be delivered prior to any development to support it;
 - Where it is likely that the infrastructure project can be delivered within the plan period as there are little or no issues with funding or landownership;
 - Where there is a clear plan as to how the project would be funded; and
- b) the specific projects and types of Infrastructure recommended in paragraphs 25 - 34 of the report, be identified in the Infrastructure Funding Statement as having a priority for full or partial funding.

67. Making Best Use of The Social Housing Stock - Under Occupation Initiative

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health presented the report which advised Members that the Housing Strategy 2022-2027 highlighted the importance of making the best use of existing social housing. The Head of Housing set out that approval was being sought to introduce an under occupation initiative which was open to all Registered Provider partners with family sized housing stock located in the District. The proposed initiative could be funded from available S106 affordable housing monies for an initial 2 year period, from April 2023 to March 2025, subject to Portfolio Holder approval for the use of these funds.

The Housing & Health Advisory Committee had considered the same report and supported the recommendations to Cabinet.

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 introduction of a new under occupation initiative, be agreed; and
- b) following consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Housing & Health, the Housing Strategy Manager, be delegated authority to finalise details of the initiative in collaboration with Registered Provider partners to make any minor amendments.

68. Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health presented the report which set out how the Council's Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2017 would provide assistance to homeowners and private tenants to enable them to keep their homes in good repair and free of hazards and enable them to live as independently as possible. The Housing & Health Advisory Committee had considered the same report and were in support of the recommendation to Cabinet.

The Head of Housing further advised that the Policy set out the assistance available to disabled people to help them adapt, improve or repair their homes. The levels of discretionary grant assistance contained within the Policy were regularly reviewed to ensure they remained fit for purpose. The last review was undertaken, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, in June 2022. The next full review was to take place in 2025, unless there were legislative changes then a review would take place sooner.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the updated levels of discretionary grant assistance available under the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy, be noted.

69. Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health presented the report which set out that the Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027 included the theme of promoting quality and optimising range and suitability of new and existing homes, which included an objective of fewer empty homes.

The Head of Housing set out that the Housing & Health Advisory Committee had considered the same report and were in support of the recommendation to Cabinet. The purpose of the Strategy was to create a database, send out surveys and by this means provide assistance to customers.

Public Sector Equality Duty.

Members gave consideration to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan 2022- 2028, be adopted.

70. Summary of the Emerging Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health presented the report which set out the Homelessness review and a draft Sevenoaks District Council emerging Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023- 2028 for consultation. The Housing & Health Advisory Committee had considered the same report and were in support of the recommendation to Cabinet.

The Head of Housing advised that the Housing Strategy 2022-2027 was approved in July 2022 contained 4 key themes of focus for the District Council's housing service over the next 5 years. It included reducing homelessness and improving routes into permanent accommodation.

The Council had a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002, to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy. The Strategy must be renewed at least every 5 years.

The Strategy must set out the Council's plans for the continued work towards:

- prevention of homelessness
- provision of sufficient accommodation/sustainable solutions
- support to be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk

The Council were required to undertake a Homelessness Service Review to inform the Strategy. The review provided information on the needs of people who had approached the Council's housing service for help since the last Homelessness Strategy was adopted. It considered what the Council had achieved, successful funding bids to widen service provision and the delivery of additional affordable housing units through Quercus Housing.

The objectives of the draft Strategy would cover prevention, interventions and sustainable solutions detailed on page 146 and the actions to be taken to deliver these in the Action Plan page 192.

Members were advised of the consultation timetable and the feedback from the consultation would come back to the Committee on 7 February 2023.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the outcome of the Homelessness Review, the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and the proposed timetable for consultation and implementation, be considered; and
- b) the first draft of the emerging Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for public consultation, subject to any required amendment, be approved.

71. Mill Pond Capital Works

The Portfolio Holder presented the report, which outlined the capital work plan for Mill Pond, Sevenoaks.

The Head of Direct Services explained that the Council were working on alternatives for the pond, as the pollution was likely to reoccur, but in the meantime the Council had a statutory duty to maintain it as the landowner.

The Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee had considered the same report and recommended it Cabinet.

Resolved: the Mill Pond Capital Works plan be considered, and support for a capital bid be developed as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.

72. West Kent CCTV Control Room Hub

The Head of Direct Services advised that following publication of the agenda, it had been agreed by the Partners that the project for combining the three CCTV Control Centres would not proceed due to the significant costs. Officers would now continue to upgrade and improve the existing CCTV service with a replacement of our operating system which was coming to the end of its life to a new digital system. This would be completed within existing budgets in the same way control monitors and cameras across the district had been replaced.

Resolved: that it be noted the Council's CCTV service played a critical role in making our communities and public spaces safer and that the Cabinet wished to continue to support the service.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 9 December 2022 . The decisions contained in Minutes 64, 65, 67, 68 and 72 take effect immediately. The decisions contained in Minutes 66, 70 and 71 take effect on 19 December 2022. The decision contained in Minute 69 is a reference to Council.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 19.41

CHAIRMAN