
CABINET

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 6 September 2017 from 7.00pm - 7.53pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Bowles (Chairman), Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Alan Horton and Ken Pugh.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Billy Attaway, Millie Grant, Zoe Kent, Jo Millard, Patricia Narebor, Mark Radford and Nick Vickers.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Andy Booth, Derek Conway, Adrian Crowther, Mick Galvin, Sue Gent, Nicholas Hampshire, James Hunt, Roger Truelove and Ghlin Whelan.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Mike Cosgrove, Gerry Lewin and David Simmons.

189 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

190 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 July 2017 (Minute Nos. 103 – 110) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

191 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

192 DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATE RELIEF

Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Residents' Services and the above Cabinet Member, which outlined that Central Government had made £300 million available for those businesses that had faced the steepest increases in their business rates bill as a result of the 2017 revaluation of business rates.

Resolved:

(1) That the Revaluation Discretionary Rate Relief criteria be adopted for 2017/18, with a review prior to year two of the scheme.

(2) That delegated authority be given to the Revenues and Benefits Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance for the award of the Revaluation Discretionary Rate Relief.

193 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT - APRIL-JUNE 2017**Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance**

Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Financial Officer and the above Cabinet Member.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance introduced the report, which had already been noted by the Scrutiny Committee, and highlighted that although the projected net underspend of £386,620 was positive news, efficiencies were continually being sought in order that this trend may continue. He drew attention to the higher than expected planning fees income.

The Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning added that whilst there had been many major planning applications recently, there may not be so many applications in the future.

Resolved:

(1) That the projected revenue underspend on services of £382,620 (including £672,000 additional income) be noted.

(2) That the capital expenditure of £1,000,380 to end of June 2017 be noted.

(3) That the projected capital overspend of £71,225 be noted.

(4) That the additional capital funding of £71,225 be approved.

194 AWARD OF CONTRACT - SWALE HOUSE LIFT REFURBISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE**Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance**

Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Financial Officer and the above Cabinet Member.

In response to a question from a Member, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance clarified that the table at paragraph 3.2 on page 26 of the report referred to a 5-year period.

The Cabinet Member for Safer Families and Communities highlighted that quality was a significant factor in appointing the contractor and gave his support.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance added that as the lifts were old, replacement parts often needed to be made and he hoped that new parts would be produced quicker in the future.

Resolved:

(1) That the appointment of Amalgamated Lifts to undertake the refurbishment of the lifts in Swale House, together with servicing and maintenance for the initial period of three years be approved.

(2) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Property Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance to extend the contract for a further period of up to two years subject to satisfactory performance of the Contractor.

195 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT ON HOUSING SERVICES

Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing congratulated the Housing Task and Finish group on the review undertaken and advised that the recommendations in the report would be considered by Cabinet at a future meeting.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee thanked the members of the Housing Task and Finish Group, and paid particular attention to Councillor Derek Conway who lead the review.

Councillor Conway praised the hard work of Housing Options staff and thanked the Policy and Performance Officer for his assistance. He explained that the issues around Housing changed constantly and looked forward to Cabinet's response.

The Leader agreed that work on Housing issues was one of the biggest topics that Members would be involved in throughout the rest of their term in office.

Resolved:

(1) That the report of the Scrutiny Committee on Housing Services be noted and the recommendations responded to at a subsequent Cabinet meeting.

196 MANAGED SERVICES FOR TEMPORARY AGENCY RESOURCES TENDER REPORT

Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of HR Shared Service with the above Cabinet Member which sought authority to award the agency staff services contract.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance advised that there had been large savings in using Agency Staff since Swale Borough Council had been part of a vendor-neutral contract, along with Maidstone Borough Council. He added that the current contract expired on 30 September 201, a tender process had been undertaken and Matrix SCM Ltd scored the highest.

Resolved:

(1) That that appointment of Matrix SCM Ltd as the recommended provider for vendor neutral agency services provision for an initial three year period with an option to extend for one year be approved.

197 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

(1) That under Section 100 (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act:

Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

ADJOURNMENT

At 7.25pm, the meeting was adjourned to allow Members to consider the confidential report Property Acquisition Sittingbourne. The meeting was reconvened at 7.33pm.

198 PROPERTY ACQUISITION SITTINGBOURNE

Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Financial Officer and the above Cabinet Member.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance stressed that the Council must be ambitious and generate income in future years and the purchase of the site would offer different options.

A discussion ensued and Members welcomed the opportunities that purchasing the land could offer.

Resolved:

(1) That responsibility be delegated to the Head of Property Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance to negotiate to acquire commercial land, Sittingbourne at the guideline price as set out in the report, or such other reasonable amount, to protect the Council's interest.

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel