
CABINET

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 6 February 2019 from 7.00pm - 7.45pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Sarah Aldridge, Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Alan Horton, Gerry Lewin (Vice-Chairman, in-the-Chair) and David Simmons.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Billy Attaway, David Clifford, Estelle Culligan, Zoe Kent, Kellie MacKenzie, Mark Radford and Nick Vickers.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Monique Bonney, Nigel Kay, Mike Henderson, Roger Truelove and Ted Wilcox.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Bowles and Mike Cosgrove.

475 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Vice-Chairman in-the-chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

476 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 December 2018 (Minute Nos. 380 – 389) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Vice-Chairman in-the-Chair as a correct record.

477 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

Part A Minutes for Recommendation to Council

478 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND 2019/20 BUDGET

Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Financial Officer and the above Cabinet Member, which set out the draft 2019/20 Revenue Budget and the draft Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance introduced the report which he explained had been considered by the Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on Wednesday 23 January 2019 and, he thanked them for their comments. The Cabinet Member noted that Kent had not been successful in its bid for being a Business Rate Pilot in 2019/20. He spoke about the proposed increase in Council Tax, which he regretted but noted that at 2.7% it was in-line with inflation. The Cabinet Member stated that he was proud of the position the Council had reached

with regard to regenerating the town centre and stated that the reserves were required to support that work.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance endorsed the report and proposed the recommendations.

In response to a request from a Member, the Vice-Chairman in-the-Chair confirmed that a copy of any response received from the Secretary of State in relation to why the Kent pilot bid had been unsuccessful, would be sent to all Group Leaders.

Following a query from a Member, the Chief Financial Officer explained that the two loans from other local authorities were short-term borrowing at a low rate.

In response to queries from Members, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, reported that there had not been any progress in relation to land acquired adjacent to Swale House. He explained that the site was closely connected to whatever the plans for Swale House were likely to be. The Cabinet Member considered that £3,360 for car park maintenance was reasonable, and that the Council had reserves which it could use if required. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance stated that it was important to ensure that the Council had reserves until it became "self-sufficient".

Recommendations:

- (1) That the 2019/20 Revenue Budget proposals be approved.***
- (2) That the proposed Council Tax band D increase for 2019/20 to £174.42 be approved.***
- (3) That the Medium Term Financial Plan be noted.***
- (4) That the Capital Strategy be approved.***
- (5) That the Capital Programme proposals be approved.***
- (6) That the additional amount of Council Tax for Parish and Town Precepts be noted.***
- (7) That the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement as set out in Appendix VIII of the report be approved.***

479 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2019/20

Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Financial Officer and the above Cabinet Member, which set out and sought approval of the Proposed Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators for 2019/20. The report fulfilled the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Code and the Department for Communities and Local Government Guidance.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance gave an overview of the report and proposed the recommendation.

Recommendation:

(1) That the Treasury Strategy 2019/20 and the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators be approved.

480 CORPORATE PLAN 2019-2022**Leader**

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Customer Services and the Leader, which set-out the purpose of the corporate plan and outlined the consultative approach taken to develop a new one. The report summarised the new priorities and objectives which had resulted from this process, considered the mechanisms available for monitoring progress towards these, and finally invited Members to adopt the Council's corporate plan as set out at Appendix I of the report, for the period April 2019 to March 2023.

In the absence of The Leader, the Vice-Chairman in-the-Chair proposed the recommendation.

A Member considered the document was clearer and easier to read. He noted that Parish Councils and interested parties had been consulted on the draft corporate plan.

A Member considered that the corporate plan should include wording to reflect residents' concerns around increased housing and the lack of doctors surgeries in the Borough. Another Member considered it was wrong to view the corporate plan as only an inward-facing document, as it impacted on local residents.

Recommendation:

(1) That the text at Appendix I to the report, as the Council's corporate plan for the period April 2019 to March 2023, be adopted.

481 COUNCIL TAX LONG-TERM EMPTY PREMIUM**Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance**

Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Financial Officer and the above Cabinet Member, which presented details of new regulations that had been introduced to allow authorities to vary the percentage of Council Tax premium that would be charged over the next 3 financial years, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 on long-term empty properties. Members were asked to recommend to Full Council changes for each of those financial years.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance proposed the recommendations.

In response to a question from a Member, the Revenues and Benefits Manager, Technical – Financial, stated that the cost of varying the Council Tax on empty

homes was minimal, and that the main purpose of the variation was to offer a greater incentive for the homes to be returned to use.

Members were supportive of the proposal.

Recommendation:

(1) That a revision to the Council Tax premium for the financial years beginning on 1 April 2019, 1 April 2020 and 1 April 2021 as per paragraph 2.4 of the report be approved.

Part B Minutes for Decision by Cabinet

482 BUSINESS RATE RETAIL RELIEF

Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Financial Officer and the above Cabinet Member, which outlined details of the Business Rate Relief re-introduced by Government to help local retail businesses, by reducing the amount of business rates they would have to pay for a two year period.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance proposed the recommendations.

A Member stated that this was a “tremendous” news story for small businesses. In response to a query about reducing car parking fees, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities stated that funding for this scheme came direct from Government, whereas parking was dealt with in-house.

Resolved:

(1) That Business Rate Retail Relief is awarded for the whole Borough for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

(2) That Business Rate Retail Relief is awarded for all types of businesses listed in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Business Rate Relief guidance document.

(3) That Business Rate Retail Relief is awarded automatically with no application process.

483 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2018

Cabinet considered the recommendations from the Swale Joint Transportation Board meeting held on 17 December 2018.

Resolved:

(1) That the recommendations in Minute No. 394 be noted.

484 SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP (STG) - 2019 TO 2022 BUSINESS AND DELIVERY PLAN**Cabinet Member for Planning**

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Planning and the above Cabinet Member, which asked Members to consider and make any comments on the draft STG shared building Control Partnership Business and Delivery Plans 2019 to 2022 and refer the comments to the Joint Committee.

The Cabinet Member for Planning introduced the report and proposed the recommendation.

Resolved:

(1) That the Draft South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business and Delivery Plans for 2019 to 2022 be agreed.

485 EXEMPT APPENDICES - SOUTH THAMES GATEWAY BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP - 2019 - 2022 BUSINESS AND DELIVERY PLAN

There was no discussion on this item, therefore the resolution to exclude the press and public was not passed.

Chairman

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