
CABINET

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 7 August 2019 from 7.00pm - 7.16pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Vice-Chairman), Monique Bonney, Angela Harrison, Ben J Martin and Roger Truelove (Chairman).

Deputy Cabinet Members: Councillors Derek Carnell, Sarah Stephen and Ghlin Whelan.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Billy Attaway, Katherine Bescoby, David Clifford, James Freeman, Jill Peet and Emma Wiggins.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Cameron Beart, Simon Clark, Steve Davey, Tim Gibson, Alan Horton, Paul Stephen and Tony Winckless.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Richard Palmer and Tim Valentine. Deputy Cabinet Members: Councillors Alastair Gould, Julian Saunders and Eddie Thomas.

179 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

180 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

181 HOUSING DELIVERY TEST ACTION PLAN

The Leader introduced the item by referring to the discussion at the Local Plan Panel meeting on 25 July 2019. He explained that the extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet had been convened to ensure that the Plan could be considered by Cabinet prior to the deadline for its submission to the Secretary of State.

The Deputy Leader outlined the report, advising that the Council was required to produce the document as it had scored below 95% in the Government's Housing Delivery Test. The Plan set out the Council's position; how the Council was trying to meet the target; and the problems that the Council faced in doing this. He encouraged Members to support the Plan.

A Member welcomed the report but questioned the actions the Council was taking and the risks involved in not meeting the target. The Leader responded by saying that all Kent Councils were in a similar position in terms of not meeting housing targets and so he considered it was unlikely that the Government would intervene. He also spoke of the need to comply with the allocations in the Local Plan, and referred to market conditions which prevented new houses from being built.

The Deputy Leader drew attention to the need to look at alternative options, and referred to the visits being made to view Park Homes.

Another Member asked for the axis in the graphs to be clearly labelled and suggested that more reference should be made to 'land banking', however, it was suggested that in some circumstances developments with planning permission were not built as they were not considered viable by developers.

Another Member advised of some factual corrections to the Plan, referring to paragraph 3.26 which referred to Moat Housing instead of Moat Homes, and advised that the site hadn't been remediated yet. The Leader asked Officers to amend the Plan to correct this.

In response to comments made during the debate, the Head of Planning Services advised that there were only around four or five volume house builders operating within the area and they would usually operate with one opening, at best two, on a site in any one year delivering 50 to 75 dwellings.

Resolved:

(1) That the content of the Action Plan as appended to the report (incorporating amendments suggested by the Local Plan Panel and as outlined in the above Minute) be agreed for submission to the Secretary of State by the deadline of 19 August 2019.

Chairman

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