
Economy and Property Committee

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Committee Room, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 9 April 2025 from 7.00 pm - 7.25 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Monique Bonney (Chair), Hayden Brawn, Derek Carnell, Lloyd Chapman, Shelley Cheesman, Mark Last (Substitute for Councillor Ann Cavanagh), Kieran Mishchuk, Tara Noe (Substitute for Councillor Lee-Anne Moore), Sarah Stephen (Vice-Chair), Terry Thompson, Tony Winckless (Substitute for Councillor Simon Clark) and Ashley Wise.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Jay Jenkins, Joanne Johnson, Mike Knowles, Kieren Mansfield and Philippa Richardson.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mike Whiting.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Ann Cavanagh, Simon Clark, Alex Eyre, Peter Marchington, Lee-Anne Moore and Mark Tucker.

797 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

798 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 January 2025 (Minute Nos. 594 – 602) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

799 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Tara Noe declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in respect of Item 6, Land rear of Queenborough Guildhall as her husband was a member of Queenborough Town Council. Councillor Noe did not speak or vote on this item.

800 **Procurement of Provision of RNLI Lifeguard Service**

The Seafront and Engineering Manager introduced the report which sought approval for the new five-year contract to be awarded to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) through the publishing of a Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency (VEAT) Notice.

The Chair spoke in support of the recommendation and commended the work the RNLI carries out.

Resolved:

(1) That the awarding of the Beach Lifeguarding Contract to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution from 1 April 2025 for a period of five years at a predicted total value of £295,733 be approved.

801 **Land rear of Guildhall, Queenborough - Disposal**

The Strategic Programmes and Asset Manager introduced the report which recommended the disposal of the land rear of Queenborough Guildhall alongside 44

High Street and the Queenborough Guildhall to Queenborough Town Council (QTC), as shown on Appendix I of the report.

A letter from Councillor Peter Marchington was tabled in his absence.

A visiting Ward Member spoke in support of the proposal.

The Chair invited question and comments from Members and these included:

- Welcomed the proposals;
- this was a good use of the land;
- it was important that both sides achieved what they wanted from the negotiations;
- encouraged growing plants etc. within the site if possible;
- and
- this would help to facilitate the foodbank.

Resolved:

(1) That the Head of Place be given delegated authority to negotiate and agree terms of the disposal of the parcel of land known as land rear of Queenborough Guildhall, to include the transfer of the Guildhall and 44 High Street, to Queenborough Town Council, within a 12 month period.

(2) That the Head of Place be given delegated authority to enact this disposal, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services.

802 **UKSPF 2025/26**

The Strategic Programmes and Asset Manager introduced the report which set out proposals for the management of funding allocated, or to be allocated, to Swale Borough Council (SBC) for 2025/26 through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). He referred to paragraph 2.8 and appendix I of the report, which set out a list of recommended projects for inclusion within the UKSPF and REPF programme for 2025/26.

The Chair invited question and comments from Members and these included:

- Clarification sought on the delivery and assessment process as set out in Section 3 of the report, especially with regard to the size of the grants and whether they would be capital or revenue; and
- pleased that groups could commence the process straight away.

In response, the Strategic Programmes and Asset Manager explained that the scheme was an extension of the existing grant funding, and mostly for capital expenditure. Where the fund was UKSPF, there was scope to use some elements of revenue funding. He added that the approval process was already established and would remain the same.

Resolved:

(1) That the outline scheme of delivery for projects through the 2025/26

allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund, as set out at Appendix I to the report be agreed.

(2) That a Prosperity Fund Member Working Group be continued, as per the undated terms of reference at Appendix II to the report.

(3) That the Head of Place be given delegated authority to:

- ***approve grants to third parties (following an application and assessment process); and***
- ***make changes to the programme as required. This will be in consultation with the Prosperity Fund Member Working Group where these are material changes as defined by Government and where individual projects cannot proceed or are to be significantly reduced in scale by more than 50%.***

803 **Forward Decisions Plan**

The Head of Place gave an update on the Markets Operation – Contract Award which had originally been scheduled to be considered at this meeting. She explained that the tender value was below the threshold needed for consideration by the Committee. The Strategic Programmes and Asset Manager confirmed that an update would be given on the contract at the next meeting.

Resolved:

(1) That the Forward Decisions Plan be noted.

804 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

There was no need to pass this resolution as Appendix III for item 6, Land rear of Queenborough Guildhall was not discussed at the meeting.

805 **Land rear of Guildhall, Queenborough - disposal - Appendix III**

This exempt item was not discussed.

Chair

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