

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **12th November 2015**

Present:

Cllr. Bell (Vice-Chairman in the Chair);

Cllrs. Bennett, Mrs Blanford, Clokie, Galpin, Heyes, Miss Martin, Shorter.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Britcher, Clarkson, Hicks, Mrs Martin, Chief Executive.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Bradford, Buchanan, Burgess, Link, Michael, Ovenden, Sims, Smith, Mrs Webb, Wedgbury.

Head of Communities and Housing; Housing Resources Manager; Head of Personnel and Development; Head of Finance; Principal Solicitor – Strategic Development; Health, Parking and Community Safety Manager; Facilities Development Manager; Principal Accountant; Cultural Projects Manager; Communications and Marketing Manager; Member Services and Scrutiny Manager.

198 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Smith	Made a "Voluntary Announcement" in respect of Agenda Item No. 6 as he was a retired Unison member.	200

199 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 8th October 2015 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

200 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2015 - 2045

The report provided Members with the annual update of the HRA Business Plan financial projections and the affordability of agreed plans and priorities. Due to the four year rent reduction announced in the July 2015 Budget, Ashford was currently

anticipating an income loss of £10 m over the next four years and a loss of £160 m over the 30 year Business Plan cycle. A cost recovery programme had been actioned to recover the financial position of the HRA to ensure it remained affordable.

The Portfolio Holder referred to paragraph 20 of the report and said that in his view it was very unlikely that if a new Government was elected it would return the rent increases to their previous levels. He also explained that the recommendations within the report would allow the process of consultation with staff to commence which stemmed from the reduction in the work of the Building Maintenance team.

A Member referred to the issue regarding potential redundancies and said it appeared that the Council was not following its adopted policies and correct procedures and he therefore asked the Cabinet to consider deferring those elements of the report regarding the proposed redundancies to allow time to consider the potential for voluntary redundancies across the board.

The Chairman indicated that he did not support the request made by the Member and confirmed that following adoption of this report, the Council's normal processes would be followed. The Head of Personnel and Development confirmed that no decisions had been taken or were proposed regarding redundancies in the report and that a further report would be submitted to the Joint Consultative Committee in due course and appropriate due procedures.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the updated HRA Business Plan and Financial Projections be agreed.**
 - (ii) the savings programme to recover the financial position be approved.**
 - (iii) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to review the HRA Business Plan Financial Projections as part of the budget scrutiny process.**

201 Spearpoint Community Sports Pavilion: Request for Additional Capital Funding

The report advised that the lowest acceptable tender received exceeded the anticipated estimate by £49,000 and by allowing a prudent 10% contingency the revised estimated cost was £918,000 which represented a revised total project cost of £130,000 above the anticipated level. The report sought Cabinet's approval for a capital budget allocation of £130,000 to address these costs.

The Portfolio Holder said that the tenders had come in higher than expected which was largely attributable to the upturn in the economy and the fact that building skills were now more in demand. Subject to the Cabinet and Council approving the recommendations, it was hoped to start on site in February/March 2016.

In response to a question, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the tenders had been submitted on a fixed contract basis.

A Member said he wished to place on record the work undertaken by the Ward Member for Little Burton Farm in bringing the project to fruition.

Recommended:

- That**
- (i) entering into a contract for the demolition and construction of a new building be approved within the revised project budget of £918,000 subject to approval by the Council.**
 - (ii) an additional capital contribution of £130,000 be agreed for the renewal of the Spearpoint Pavilion to be funded from strategic 106 contributions and/or New Homes Bonus as detailed within the report.**
 - (iii) the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be given authority in consultation with the Head of Culture and the Environment to:**
 - (a) execute and complete all necessary documentation, and**
 - (b) in consultation with the Chief Executive take any further action required to give effect to the above recommendations.**

202 Gambling Act 2005 – Policy Revision

The report presented a revision to Ashford Borough Council's Gambling Policy for public consultation which had been prepared in accordance with the Gambling Act 2005.

The Portfolio Holder advised that there were no significant implications associated with the latest revision of the policy.

A Member referred to paragraph 6 of the report and said that he believed that it should be clarified that the majority of the establishments listed were in the urban areas of Ashford.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the revised Gambling Policy Statement be approved for the purposes of issuing for consultation.**
 - (ii) the Cabinet notes that the majority of gambling related businesses were located in the Ashford urban area (with one betting shop in Tenterden).**

203 Budget Monitoring Report – Second Quarter 2015/16

The report presented the Second Quarter Budget Monitoring Report for the current year for the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account, and the Collection Fund. The report indicated that this quarter the General Fund was projected to be £30,000 over its original budget, a £16,000 movement from the last quarter where a slight overspend of £14,000 had been projected.

Resolved:

That (i) the Budget Monitoring position as at 30th September 2015 be noted.

(ii) the New Homes Bonus Schedule in Appendix A be noted.

204 Ashford Borough Council's Performance – Quarter 2 2015/16

The report advised Members and the public of the performance of the Council during the Second Quarter. This included information on what the Cabinet had achieved through its decision-making, key performance data on front line services and consideration of the wider borough picture which impacted upon the Council's work.

The Portfolio Holder drew attention to the fact that the average number of families requiring temporary Bed and Breakfast accommodation during the quarter had risen slightly to just under 15 a month. He acknowledged the significant contribution made by the Christchurch Road accommodation but believed that the overall situation needed to be closely monitored.

Resolved:

That the performance for Quarter 2, 2015/16 be noted.

205 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group – 28th September 2015

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group held on the 28th September 2015 be received and noted.

206 Town Centre Regeneration Board – 20th October 2015

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Town Centre Regeneration Board held on the 20th October 2015 be received and noted.

207 Ashford Strategic Delivery Board – 23rd October 2015

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board held on the 23rd October 2015 be received and noted.

208 Schedule of Key Decisions to be Taken

Resolved:

That the latest Schedule of Key Decisions as set out within the report be received and noted.

(KRF/AEH)

MINS:CAXX1546

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Keith Fearon:
Telephone: 01233 330564 Email: keith.fearon@ashford.gov.uk
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