

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **12th June 2014**.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);

Cllr. Cloughton (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Galpin, Heyes, Hicks, Howard, Robey, Shorter.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Ovenden.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Bennett, Britcher, Buchanan, Burgess, Clokie, Davison, Michael, Sims.

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Planning and Development, Head of Communities and Housing, Head of Cultural and Project Services, Finance Manager, Strategic Environmental and Customer Services Manager, Interim Waste Contract Manager, Senior Communications Officer, Member Services and Scrutiny Manager.

33 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 8th May 2014 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

34 Leader's Announcements

The Leader said that the statement recently issued advising that the Highways Agency at a Board Meeting had agreed to recommend that the full Junction 10A scheme be implemented was welcomed. He advised that the partners on the Ashford Strategic Development Board and the MP had been lobbying for this which was now subject to Ministerial approval.

The Leader then referred to the report issued by Mary Portas on the progress on the Portas Pilot Initiative and in particular to the favourable comments she had made in respect of the progress Ashford had been making. Despite these complimentary comments the Leader said that there was still a lot to do and therefore the Council could not be complacent.

The Leader said that Members would shortly be receiving a briefing note from him advising that the first ever Ashford Annual Report had been produced which covered the previous financial year. He said it was an exciting document to look at and included detailed information on the work of the Council over the previous year. He emphasised that the document had been printed in-house and Members would be encouraged to request copies of the report if they wished to distribute them within their Wards. He also explained that they would be sent to all Parish Councils and be available at the Gateway.

35 Recommendations Arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Meeting on 20th May 2014

The report advised that the Committee had received a report on "Fly Tipping – Powers and Obligations for the Council" and had reviewed the Ashford Borough Council Business Plan Quarter 4 2013/14 report. The Committee had made three recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Budget and Resource Management referred to the recommendation regarding Gas Safety Certificates and advised that Certificates ran for a period of 12 months and therefore before they lapsed Officers took steps to ensure that they were renewed. This process commenced two months before the expiry date. He advised that there were some instances where difficulties were encountered in gaining access to properties and he said that in appropriate cases legal action would be taken to gain entry to premises.

In terms of the recommendation that the Cabinet consider amending the contents of the Business Plan report to include benchmarking and comparators, he said that in his view the current report was clear and easy to read and it set out 19 data sets of information which were updated quarterly. Therefore Members could examine previous reports to establish base data. In terms of comparator information, for example with other Authorities, he said this could be misleading as it was not possible to compare like with like. He therefore asked that the request from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

In terms of the recommendation regarding trialling the use of surveillance at known fly tipping hotspots including covert methods, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Culture, Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces said that this recommendation had already been taken on board and would be progressed. She advised, however, that there was a legal requirement to give notice in the respective areas that cameras were to be set up.

The Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee referred to the recommendation about benchmarks and comparators and advised that in his capacity as a School Governor he found them useful in terms of comparisons with other schools.

Resolved:

That (i) the use of surveillance at known fly tipping hotspots including covert methods where lawful be trialled.

- (ii) **action be taken to ensure that 100% of the Council's homes have a Gas Safety Certificate.**
- (iii) **the recommendation about amending the content of the Business Plan Report to include benchmarks and comparators be noted.**

36 Financial Outturn 2013/14

The report detailed the final outturn position for the Budget for 2013/14 together with information on the Council's capital expenditure and financing and the use of reserves, all of which had been in line with the Budget plans.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Budget and Resource Management clarified that in recommendation (ii) the reference to the table should say "Table 5" rather than "Table 4". For the general fund he advised that the outturn was £97,000 below budget for the financial year and it was proposed that this be transferred to the general reserve. The Housing Revenue Account had produced a small surplus of £1,000 and capital expenditure had been £13.3 m with £8.2 m funded through HRA resources and £2.2 m through borrowing. He believed that the report demonstrated that the Council's budget had been prudently managed over the financial year.

In response to a question from the Deputy Leader about the potential slippage on the Farrow Court Sheltered Housing Development, the Head of Communities and Housing advised that the first phase was still scheduled to be completed by March 2015 and on the overall work, significant steps had been taken to catch up with the construction programme.

Resolved:

- That
- (i) **the financial outturn for 2013/14 and reserves balances be noted.**
 - (ii) **the capital outturn and financing as set out in Table 5 of the report be noted.**

37 Local Growth Fund – HRA Borrowing Programme 2015/16 and 2016/17

The report advised that there was an announcement in the Autumn Statement that additional HRA borrowing would be made available to help stockholding Authorities build more new affordable homes via a bidding process. The Cabinet was asked to support and approve the bids for additional HRA borrowing as detailed in the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Social, Local Needs and Special Care Housing advised of a minor amendment to recommendation (3) by the insertion of the figure of "21" after the word "purchase" and in paragraph 2 of the report, the word "building" be substituted with the word "purchase". She explained that the report gave an opportunity for the Council to restructure its debt and increase its debt cap and thereby to enable the Council to provide 21 additional new affordable homes for the Borough.

In response to a question as to why the 21 dwellings were split on the basis of 13 for rent and eight for shared ownership, the Head of Communities and Housing advised that the properties were being purchased from a Section 106 site where 35% would be made available as the affordable element. The split between properties for rent and shared ownership was in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement. She also advised that a letter had been received that day from South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) in support of the bid.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the bid for additional funding be supported.**
 - (ii) the Cabinet be informed in due course of the outcome of the bid to Government.**
 - (iii) subject to the bid described being approved by DCLG, 21 properties be purchased as outlined in the report, subject to detailed diligence being carried out to the satisfaction of the Portfolio Holder for Social Housing, Local Needs and Special Care Housing, the Head of Communities and Housing and the Finance Manager.**
 - (iv) authority be given to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Strategic Housing and Property Manager to execute and complete all necessary documentation to give effect to the recommendations.**

38 Recycling and Waste Collection Policies and Procedure Statement and Guidance to Recycling and Waste Services in Multi-Occupancy Properties

The report advised that the Recycling and Waste Collection Policies and Procedure Statement and Guidance to Recycling and Waste Services in Multi-Occupancy Properties had been produced to clearly set out the Council's approach to managing this key service activity.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Culture, Leisure and Parks and Open Spaces said that it was important to have policies in place which offered a practical and informative guide to Members, residents and Landlords. She explained that recycling was currently over 50% but, however, warned that when the figures from DEFRA were released later in the year it would show in the region of 43% as it was on a part year basis. The Service would be rolled out to flats in the Summer and to houses in multiple occupancy in the Autumn. Furthermore there would be a project to look at those properties which did not have proper storage for bins and she would be working with the Portfolio Holder for Tourism and Rural Focus, Customer Services, Waste and Recycling when taking this forward. The Chairman said he believed that all could be proud of what Ashford had achieved, particularly with recycling being over 50%.

A Member referred to the amount of recycling and waste collected at the Cobbs Wood Transfer station and said he would be interested to find the exact tonnage of material recycled via that facility as he believed it would give a true representation of the overall recycling percentage for the Borough. The Strategic Environmental and Customer Services Manager advised that the tonnage information would be obtained and distributed to Members in due course.

Another Member referred to issues which had arisen regarding the roll out to occupiers of some private flats who had purchased their own bins which had been subsequently taken away by the Borough Council. He asked that Officers ensure that there was good consultation with the owners of flats. The Strategic Environmental and Customer Services Manager advised that this particular incident had been rectified and Officers had learned from that issue. She also explained that in terms of collection rates the figures currently showed 99.96% of collections being achieved correctly on the first collection round.

Recommended:

- That (i) **the Recycling and Waste Collection Policy and Procedure Statement as set out at Appendix 1 to the report and Guidance to Recycling and Waste Services in Multi-Occupancy properties as set out at Appendix 2 to the report be approved.**
- (ii) **authority be delegated to the Head of Cultural and Project Services to apply the Policies and should it be necessary, to undertake any enforcement action as set out in the Policies.**

39 Application for the Designation of a Neighbourhood Area for Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council

The report advised that the Borough Council had received an application from Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council for the Designation of a Neighbourhood Area. The application and map of the area was open for public consultation for six weeks from Monday 24th March to Friday 2nd May 2014. The report provided information about the neighbourhood planning process, details of the application boundary and the response to consultation.

The Portfolio Holder summarised his Portfolio Holder views as set out within the report. He explained that the area did include the Eureka employment site but said it would not be an issue as the neighbourhood plan had to be in accordance with the Borough Council's local plan for the area. In terms of the resource implications, he said that the issue would need to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Resolved:

That the application to designate the Neighbourhood Area as identified on the plan at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

40 Dark Skies – Preserving our Skies: Light Pollution and the Need for Darkness Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The SPD set out advice and guidance for applications where lighting was an integral part of development across the Borough. It also summarised the comments received following the Council's consultation on the SPD and detailed the recommended responses and proposed changes to the document which was put forward for adoption.

The Portfolio Holder summarised his comments as set out within the report and said that he believed that the SPD was a major and welcome step forward and an important contribution to the protection of the environment. The Portfolio Holder for the Town Centre Focus and Commercial Property said he believed the report was very well constructed and presented and said he wished this comment to be passed on to the Officer who had produced it who was a graduate Town Planner.

The Chairman endorsed the comment about the quality of the report but also said that the Kent County Council when operating lighting units needed to replace them with the most appropriate unit.

Recommended:

- That (i) **the responses to the representations received and changes made to the SPD contained within Appendix 1 to the report be noted and the final version of the SPD contained within Appendix 2 to the report be approved.**
- (ii) **subject to the changes at (i) above, the SPD be adopted as one of the Council's local development documents.**

41 Member Training Panel Annual Report 2013/14

The report introduced the first Annual Report of the Member Training Panel for 2013/14.

A Member referred to paragraph 7 of the report which stressed that any Member attending an individual training course/session should be asked to give a report back to Members. He said that he was the first Member to have a report circulated to all Members and arising from this he had two points to make. He asked that reports be kept in-house unless agreed with the report author and not be passed to Members of the public as had happened with his report. Secondly, he said that most seminars/courses did not supply much in the way of printed literature for attendees. Usually attendees received, after the event, an email containing attachments which were the notes of the speakers. He asked whether these should be circulated to all Members and if so in what format.

The Chairman asked the Portfolio Holder for Information Technology and Communications and Social Member who was responsible for Member Training to draft appropriate recommendations in consultation with the Member concerned.

Resolved:

That the contents of the Annual Report be received and noted.

Post Meeting Note

The Portfolio Holder has requested that the following points in (a) and (b) below be conveyed to Members:-

- (a) All reports produced by Members following attendance at courses/seminars be kept in-house unless agreed with the author Member and should not be passed to Members of the public.**
- (b) The material or notes arising from attendance at seminars/courses be distributed in the format considered the most suitable.**

42 Report of the Chairman of the Member Training Panel held on the 15th April 2014

Resolved:

That the report of the Chairman of the Member Training Panel held on the 15th April 2014 be received and noted.

43 Transportation, Highways and Engineering Advisory Committee – 28th April 2014

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Transportation, Highways and Engineering Advisory Committee be received and noted.

44 Joint Transportation Board – Nomination of Membership

Resolved:

That the following Members be appointed to the Joint Transportation Board:-

Cllrs. Burgess, Davey, Feacey, Heyes (VCh), Mrs Martin, Robey, Yeo.

45 Ashford Strategic Delivery Board

A Member referred to Item 4 Ashford International College Campus and asked whether there was any further progress. The Chairman advised that he was due to meet with the Head of Hadlow College shortly and he hoped to be in a position to report back to Members in due course.

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board held on the 25th April 2014 be received and noted.

46 Planning Task Group

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Planning Task Group held on the 13th May 2014 be received and noted.

47 Schedule of Key Decisions to be Taken

The report set out the latest Schedule of Key Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet.

Resolved:

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

(KRF/AEH)

MINS:CAXX1424

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **10th July 2014**.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);

Cllr. Cloughton (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Mrs Blanford, Galpin, Heyes, Hicks, Howard, Robey, Shorter.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Bennett, Britcher, Buchanan, Burgess, Clokie, Davison, Miss Martin, Michael, Mortimer, Ovenden, Smith, Wedgbury.

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Planning and Development, Head of Communities and Housing, Head of Cultural and Project Services, Policy Manager, Head of Personnel and Development, Revenues and Benefits Manager, Housing Improvement Manager, Policy and Performance Manager, Cultural and Youth Projects Leader, Communications and Marketing Manager, Member Services and Scrutiny Manager.

61 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Cloughton	Made a "Voluntary Announcement" in respect of Agenda Item No. 16 as he was the Chairman of Ashford Access	75
Hicks	Made a "Voluntary Announcement" in respect of Agenda Item No. 6 as she had been appointed by the Council to the Ashford Leisure Trust but explained that the item did not in her view directly affect the financial position of the Trust.	65
Shorter	Made a "Voluntary Announcement" in respect of Agenda Item No. 9 as he was a member of Kingsnorth Parish Council	68

62 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 12th June 2014 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

63 Petitions

The Ward Member for the South Willesborough (Ashford) Ward advised that he wished to present a petition in his capacity as a member of the South Willesborough and Newtown Community Group from the residents of Newtown regarding car parking problems within the area. He explained that the area suffered from commuter parking and from those visiting the Designer Outlet. He explained that any future expansion of the Designer Outlet would only make the problem worse. From a survey recently carried out in a car park clearly marked "Residents Only" which contained 32 spaces, only two of them were cars from residents of Newtown. He therefore said that the petition called upon the Council to introduce a residents only parking scheme for all of the roads within the Newtown area, and including Turner Close. He advised that the petition contained over 160 signatures. He presented the petition to the Chairman.

The Chairman advised that he would pass the petition to the Portfolio Holder for Transportation, Highways and Engineering to examine with officers and explained that he understood a meeting was already planned with the Head of Cultural and Project Services.

Resolved:

That the Petition be referred to the Portfolio Holder for Transportation, Highways and Engineering.

64 Leader's Announcements

The Leader advised that Ministerial approval had now been received for the provision of the full Junction 10A Scheme which would cost in the region of £70m and explained that work would be undertaken with the Parish Council, Kent County Council and the Highways Agency regarding the design and operation of the junction to ensure it best fitted with the amenity of the residents of Ashford. He also explained that £10m had been awarded towards work on the A28 to accommodate the Chilmington Green Development and also the Arts Council had increased the revenue grant to the Jasmin Vardimon Dance Academy for the period up to 2018 and had awarded a capital grant of £3m towards the Jasmin Vardimon Academy of Dance.

In response to a question from a Member as to whether the work on the A28 would involve dualling along its whole length, he advised that a reply to that specific question would be sent to the Member in due course.

65 Informing the Next 5 Years

The report sought approval to a number of measures designed to enable the Council to close a projected budget gap previously reported to the Cabinet in February 2014, over the next 3 to 4 years with an aim towards achieving self-sufficiency.

The Chairman said that the proposals within the report were based on the solid financial position the Council had from prudently managing the budget over previous years. He referred to Table 4 on page 10 of the Agenda and advised that in terms of the proposals for a café on the heathland area of Hothfield, work would start soon with a hope that spend on the project would be achieved in the current financial year. He said that in due course the Council would be looking at other ways in which Hothfield could be regenerated.

In response to a request from a Member, the Chairman said he saw no problem with Appendix E to the report being also considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Task Group which was as detailed in Recommendation (v) within the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Town Centre Focus and Commercial Property referred to the proposed environmental enhancements and in particular in terms of market gates and a bandstand and advised that these matters were being progressed and would be delivered. Following this it was hoped that work would commence on enhancing the gateways to the town centre.

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Wellbeing and Education praised the officers for pulling together all of the issues within the report and he enquired on the progress in terms of the pilot work being undertaken on Universal Credit between the Council and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the Task Group established to consider this issue would be next meeting on the 14 July and said that very encouraging discussions had already taken place with DWP and indeed they had established an office within International House which the Borough Council could use.

Resolved:

- That
- (i) **the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Assumptions (Appendix A and B to the report), and the detailed saving proposals (Appendix C to the report), be agreed.**
 - (ii) **the Counter Inflation Strategy (Appendix D to the report) be re-affirmed.**
 - (iii) **the Investment and Borrowing Policy (Appendix E to the report) be agreed and the Council's Direction of Travel be noted.**
 - (iv) **the allocation of New Homes Bonus funding to specific projects as listed in Table 4 within the report be agreed.**
 - (v) **the Budget Scrutiny Task Group be invited to scrutinise the MTFP Assumptions (Appendix A and B within the report), and the Detailed Savings Proposals (Appendix C within the report) and the**

Investment and Borrowing Policy (as set out in Appendix E to the report) and to report back to the Cabinet in October prior to the detailed Budget Build Works starting in the Autumn.

66 Revenues and Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule

The report proposed the formal write-off of 571 debts totalling £243,277.86. The proposals were in line with the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service Write-Off Policy. The existing bad debt provisions already more than covered the sums involved.

The Portfolio Holder explained that this was a standard report and said that the level of write-offs was broadly at the same level as in previous reports. He explained that the collection rate showed that Ashford was in the top 90%. In terms of the table within paragraph 4, he explained that the total bad debt provision made within the budget was under review as it may be in excess of the likely amount needed to cover bad debts. The Chairman confirmed that this would be examined and if appropriate it would be used in other ways.

Resolved:

- That (i) accounts totalling £159,817.76 that had been written-off under Delegated Powers (Financial Regulations 11.1) be noted.**
- (ii) the write-offs listed in the Exempt Appendices in the report totalling £83,460.10 be approved.**

67 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) Update 2014

The report sought approval for adoption of the revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2014 which included the production timetable for the Local Plan 2030 and the CIL Charging Schedule and to recommend that it be formally adopted by Full Council.

In response to a question about the publication date of the Ashford Strategic Housing Market Assessment the Chairman advised that this would be checked with the Head of Planning and Development and if appropriate the document would be amended to ensure that the correct date was incorporated.

Recommended:

That the Local Development Scheme, as required under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2014 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) be approved.

68 Extending Bus Services into Park Farm South and East, Kingsnorth

The report examined the financial and other issues involved for the Council with extending the existing B-Line bus service into Park Farm South and East, Kingsnorth and recommended that the use of funding already agreed by the Council be used for this purpose.

The Portfolio Holder for Transportation, Highways and Engineering said he understood that there were concerns from one of the Ward Members for the area. He also said that there were continuing uncertainties in terms of the overall enforcement of the bus gates which were currently located within the town and believed there was a need for enforcement of the proposals particularly in terms of safety.

The Ward Member for Park Farm South said that when the development at Finberry became on-line there would be increased pressure on the use of the bridge, and he believed it would be inevitable that people would use the bridge as a short cut to save journey time, and therefore there was a safety issue with the proposals.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development said that in view of concerns raised he would suggest that the report be deferred for further discussions with the Ward Members.

The Portfolio Holder for Town Centre Focus and Commercial Property said that the residents of Bridgefield had initially been promised that the bus service would commence on 1st April 2014 and whilst understanding the safety concerns said that the delay in introducing the service to these residents should also be noted.

Resolved:

That the matter be deferred to September to allow for further discussions with the Ward Members.

69 Section 106 Cabinet Annual Monitoring Report 2013/14

The report set out the Section 106 activity for the period of 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014 to show transparently how contributions were being collected and applied in a proper way and to demonstrate the monitoring of Section 106 Contributions remained a very important resource stream.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the chart on page 64 of the Agenda which showed a great variance in terms of the numbers of agreements signed and the end of year balance between the years 2013/14 and 2012/13. He advised that this was largely due to Section 106 Contributions being delayed following the recession.

Resolved:

That the report be endorsed and made available online to provide information to the public and provide a transparent record of Section 106 activity over the last financial year.

70 M20 Junction 10a - Update

The report provided an update on the decision of the Highways Agency's Investment Board to restart work on the delivery of the Agency's full "All Movements" scheme for Junction 10a and explained the process from here, including how the Council would be involved in seeking to shape the detailed design of the scheme and any mitigation needed. Under Minute No. 64 – Leader's Announcements, the Chairman had advised that Ministerial Approval had now been received for the full "All Movements" Scheme.

The Portfolio Holder said he believed the decision was very welcome and that as part of the detailed design process the Borough Council would be pressing the Highways Agency to take account of issues raised in the locality, for example regarding the potential for rat running. The total cost was in the region of £70m, with £35m provided by the Government, £20m from the LEP and £15m from developer contributions.

The Chairman explained that shortly before this evening's meeting he had met with Mersham Parish Council who had said that they were pleased that the Government had decided to fund the full Junction 10a scheme. He also explained that he had a letter from the Kent Association of Local Councils thanking Ashford for pursuing the full junction scheme in conjunction with Damian Green MP, and suggesting that priority should be given to this over the partial scheme which should be placed on the back burner.

In response to a question from a Member as to whether up to date measures on capacity and traffic flows would be obtained, the Chairman said that the Council would ensure that those responsible for collecting such data did that.

The Head of Planning and Development also explained that Members would have noticed the large number of traffic counting apparatus associated with this scheme which were already located on various roads around the Ashford area.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) support be given to the Government and Highway Agency's decision to press ahead with delivering the full Government Scheme for Junction 10a by 2019.**
 - (ii) details of the consultation process the Highways Agency will adopt and the funding arrangements for delivering the scheme be reported to Members in due course.**

71 Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 – Employer Discretions

The report updated the Council's Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions to bring them in line with the new Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations and made recommendations about how the Council should approach the new regulations that gave the Council discretion to "switch-on" the "85 Year Rule".

In response to a question from a Member as to whether the KCC Superannuation Fund had been consulted on the proposals set out within the report, the Chairman suggested that this be dealt with outside of the meeting.

Recommended:

- That
- (i) **the changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulation Numbers be noted.**
 - (ii) **Ashford Borough Council allow the "85 Year Rule" to be "switched on" and applied subject to the policy statement attached to the report.**
 - (iii) **the updated Policy Statements on Local Government Pension Scheme – Employer Discretions be adopted.**

72 Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy

The report presented a "suite" of revised policies which, when taken together, reviewed and strengthened the Council's approach to tackling fraud, corruption and money laundering whilst providing a framework for officers to speak about concerns they might have regarding the organisation.

The Portfolio Holder encouraged Members to read the documents to ensure that they complied with the various provisions set out within the relevant legislation.

Recommended:

That the updated policies contained within the report be adopted.

73 Youth Employment Offer Review

The report sought approval to a revised approach to youth employment within the Council which had three elements to provide the focus to the Council's offer and which would enable the Council to lead the way in its quality and diversity of offer to local young people.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Budget and Resource Management said that he was keen that the Borough Council did the best for the young people seeking employment and explained that a pilot was being undertaken to provide a structured

period of time in line with vocational training. He explained that Coty had read the report and were enthusiastic about the approach being pursued by the Council. It was acknowledged that the review set out a model which could be followed by other organisations if they so wished. The Portfolio Holder for Town Centre Focus and Commercial Property praised both officers involved with the undertaking of the review and the production of the report.

Resolved:

That the revised approach to supporting employment and employability of local young people, which following a successful pilot period, would become mainstream within the Council, be supported.

74 Differential Service Levels to Tenants

The report proposed to introduce a policy of offering different service levels to tenants based on the conduct of their tenancy. Those in full compliance with their tenancy conditions would be eligible for the Council's full range of services, whilst those in some form of breach would get a reduced statutory minimum service. The Portfolio Holder said that during the development of this policy discussions had been held with several organisations who had adopted similar policies and the feedback they had received was that it assisted in reducing rent arrears and achieved an overall positive impact. She believed that the document would help tenants to become fully responsible for ensuring that they obtained the appropriate financial assistance which was available to them. For those tenants with full compliance they would receive small rewards.

In response to a question as to whether the maintenance of front gardens by tenants would be included, the Housing Improvement Manager explained that a condition about garden maintenance would be included within the policy.

In response to a further question as to whether the changes would breach some tenancy rights, the Chairman said that the Bronze Level would still meet the statutory minimum service which was required to be given.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the implementation of a policy of offering the full extent of housing services to those tenants in full compliance with their tenancy conditions be approved and those tenants in breach of one or more conditions will only receive the basic statutory service until such time as they have remedied the breach for a sustained period.**
 - (ii) the Head of Community and Housing be authorised to agree the details of the Ashford Promise following the consultation response.**

75 Review of Disabled Adaptions Work for Council Tenants

The report summarised a policy review of the disabled adaptions works provided for Council tenants under Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Funds. It also sought approval of a revised eligibility policy to ensure best use of available funding and better prioritisation of works based on need. There was also a proposal for the Head of Community and Housing to establish an appropriate budget for each year within the overall HRA Budget Cap to deliver the adaption works within recommended Best Practice timescales within 2 years.

The Portfolio Holder explained that it was proposed that the current budget of £320,000 be increased by £80,000 to ensure that no adaption works took more than one year. Furthermore the tendering process would be looked at. The Portfolio Holder for Community, Wellbeing and Education said that in his capacity as Chairman of Ashford Access he was aware that the Housing Improvement Manager had been very helpful in terms of taking on board the comments made by Ashford Access. He considered that communication was essential in the process of managing requests for disabled adaptions and he was of the opinion that this should be conducted in a sensitive manner.

In terms of the section of the report dealing with the right of appeal, he considered that the Appeals Panel should be completely independent and suggested that this be added to the final recommendation within the report.

The Head of Communities and Housing indicated that she considered the Council's Appeals Panel would be the appropriate forum for considering such appeals, however the Chairman indicated that the Chairman of the Panel should be independent of Ashford Borough Council.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the policy affecting all Council tenants who applied for disabled adaption works to their new home now or in the future, be approved in principle.**
 - (ii) the impact of the policy be reviewed in 2 years' time.**
 - (iii) the Head of Community and Housing be granted authority to set up an appropriate budget each year to deliver adaption work within recommended best practice timescales. (This to be achieved within two years).**
 - (iv) the Head of Community and Housing to agree the details in relation to the proposed policy in respect of the prioritisation and the Appeals Panel, taking on board the Cabinet wish that the Chairman of the Appeals Panel be independent from Ashford Borough Council.**

76 The Council Implementation of the Community Right to Bid (Assets of Community Value) under the Localism Act 2011 (the “Act”)

The purpose of the report was to ensure that the Council had the necessary powers and delegations in relation to the Community Right to Bid so as to enable community groups to exercise that right and so ensure that it complied with the Act and the regulations.

Recommended:

That delegated authority be granted to:

- 1. the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Principal Solicitor, Strategic Development to substitute) to:**
 - (i) act in all matters relating to any appeal to the First-Tier Tribunal against an Internal Listing Review and an Internal Compensation Review.**
 - (ii) act in all matters required for the entry and removal of any entry at the Land Registry and on the Land Charges Register required as a consequence of the inclusion or removal of land or property from the List of Assets of Community Value.**
 - (iii) sign and issue a Certificate of Compliance on the lawful disposal of land or property that is included on the List of Assets of Community Value.**
 - (iv) act in any matter required in relation to the Community Right to Bid under the Localism Act 2011 and the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012.**
- 2. The Head of Finance (Principal Accountant to substitute) to determine compensation claims.**
- 3. The Head of Communications and Technology (Deputy Chief Executive to substitute) to carry out and determine internal compensation reviews.**

77 Joint Transportation Board – 10th June 2014

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on the 10th June 2014 be received and noted.

78 Planning Task Group – 17th June 2014

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Task Group held on the 17th June 2014 be received and noted.

79 Schedule of Key Decisions to be taken

The report set out the latest Schedule of Key Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet.

Resolved:

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

(KRF/VS)

MINS:CAXX1428

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Keith Fearon:
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