

## Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **9<sup>th</sup> March 2017**.

### **Present:**

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);

Cllr. Bell (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Bennett, Mrs Blanford, Bradford, Clokie, Galpin, Knowles, Shorter.

### **Also Present:**

Cllrs. Buchanan, Burgess, Chilton, Heyes, Hicks, Link, Michael, Ovenden, Wedgbury.

Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Law and Governance), Head of Finance, Head of HR, Communications and Technology, Head of Housing, Communications Officer, Senior Member Services Officer.

## **327 Minutes**

### **Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.**

## **328 Renewing Existing Housing Assistance Policy and Adopting Fuel Poverty Strategy**

The report advised that the Council was required to set out its policy on grant assistance for home owners and tenants in a Housing Renewal Policy and an updated policy was presented which removed obsolete clauses and clarified the grant funding available. In addition, the Council was required to have a fuel poverty strategy and the report recommended adopting the Kent Wide strategy called "Delivering Affordable Warmth – A Fuel Poverty Strategy for Kent."

The Portfolio Holder endorsed the recommendations in the report and said it was sensible to adopt the Kent Wide Fuel Poverty Strategy.

### **Resolved:**

**That (i) the renewed Housing Assistance Policy at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.**

- (ii) **the Kent Wide Fuel Poverty Strategy – “A Fuel Poverty Strategy for Kent” at Appendix 2 to the report be adopted.**
- (iii) **an option for Relocation Grants, set at a maximum of £7,000 per case as an alternative to a disabled facilities grant, be included within the Housing Assistance Policy where it provides a more appropriate solution for a disabled applicant.**

### **329 The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 – Statement of Principles**

The report sought approval to implement a statement of principles under the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 which would allow the Council to address fire safety and prevent incidents of carbon monoxide poisoning within the private rented sector. The Portfolio Holder advised that implementing the statement would allow the Council to issue fixed penalty notices of up to £5,000 for landlords who failed to provide smoke and carbon monoxide alarms within their rented properties in accordance with the Regulations. He advocated the importance of such alarms and urged all colleagues to consider the provision in their own homes.

In response to a question the Head of Housing advised that the Council had regular communications with landlords and the statement of principles would be widely publicised with them. Details of non-compliance and fines issued could be included within the quarterly Housing performance reports.

#### **Resolved:**

**That the Statement of Principles at Appendix 2 to the report be approved.**

### **330 Permanent Appointment of Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service**

The Chief Executive left the Council Chamber during consideration of this report.

The report advised that the Appointments Committee had recommended that the Interim Chief Executive be made an offer of permanent appointment to the role of Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service. This would be considered at the Council meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017. In accordance with Regulations and the Council's Constitution the report invited Cabinet Members to consider the matter.

The Chairman confirmed that on behalf of Cabinet he was happy to report that the Members individually and collectively had no objection to the making of said offer. Indeed the offer had their full support and backing.

#### **Resolved:**

**That the Cabinet receive and note the recommendation of the Appointments Committee to Council that the current Interim Chief Executive be appointed**

permanently to the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service role and confirm that neither the Leader of the Council nor any Member of the Cabinet has any objection to the making of said offer, indeed the offer had their full support and backing.

### **331 Ashford Strategic Delivery Board – 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

**Resolved:**

**That the Notes of the Meeting of the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board held on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017 be received and noted.**

### **332 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.**

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## Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **6<sup>th</sup> April 2017**.

### **Present:**

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

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Bennett, Mrs Blanford, Clokie, Galpin, Knowles, Shorter.

### **Apologies:**

Cllrs. Bradford, Clarkson, Link.

### **Also Present:**

Cllrs. Barrett, Buchanan, Burgess, Hicks, Ovenden, Smith.

Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Law and Governance), Director of Development, Head of HR, Communications and Technology, Head of Housing, Accountancy Manager, Communications Officer, Senior Member Services Officer.

## **367 Declarations of Interest**

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Minute No.</b>
Smith	Made a Voluntary Announcement as he was a retired Unison member.	369

## **368 Minutes**

### **Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.**

## **369 Pay Policy Statement – Annual Review**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which advised that the Council was required to publish an Annual Pay Policy Statement by the Localism Act 2011. The report advised that this year's review would ensure the current statement was up to date and reflected the Council's approach to pay. The Council also took this annual review as an opportunity to review the rates of the Ashford Living Wage Allowance (ALWA) and the Ashford Apprentice Wage Allowance (AAWA). The report therefore made recommendations on rates for the 2017/18 allowances.

A Member said he was concerned that the ALWA had been maintained at £8.00 per hour rather than being raised in line with other allowances. Whilst he understood that this was still 50 pence higher than the Statutory National Living Wage (which had risen from £7.20 to £7.50 per hour), he considered that everybody deserved a pay rise, however modest, particularly the lowest paid staff. The Vice-Chairman in the Chair said that whilst the comments were noted, it was important to note that the Council had already committed to its lowest paid staff by paying above the minimum rate and whilst it did only affect a small number of staff, any detour from the agreed mechanism could be a dangerous route to take. It was also noted that at the Joint Consultative Committee, the Employees' Side Representatives had been appreciative of the nature of this year's pay award and there had been broad acceptance of the mechanism applied.

**Resolved:**

- That**
- (i) the Pay Policy Statement be approved.**
  - (ii) the Ashford Living Wage Allowance be maintained at £8.00 for 2017/18.**
  - (iii) the Ashford Apprentice Wage Allowance be maintained at 15 pence per hour over the National Minimum Wage rate applicable to the age of the apprentice.**
  - (iv) the forthcoming legislation that will impact on the Council's Pay Policy be noted.**

### **370 Major Projects Progress Review**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and advised that at the mid-way point of the Council's agreed Corporate Plan 2015-2020, it was a good opportunity to take stock of progress on key projects and set the direction for future work. As well as providing an update on the 'Big 8' projects, the report also included updates on other strategic projects within the Delivery Programme which contributed to the Council's four Corporate Plan priorities. Also highlighted in the report were upcoming projects that were expected to be included in the Programme in the second half of the Corporate Plan period. The Portfolio Holder noted that what the Council had already achieved with regard to its major projects was quite remarkable and he wanted to acknowledge and thank the staff involved who had excelled in taking on such a large task. He said this process was a significant investment in Ashford and a catalyst to encourage others to invest in Ashford and was future proofing the health of the Borough.

Other Members said they agreed with the Portfolio Holder's comments and wished to congratulate the Council's Officers for all they had achieved thus far.

In response to a question the Portfolio Holder advised that plans for the Ashford International Model Railway and Exhibition Centre (AIMREC) were still on course. The site at Klondyke had been deemed unviable due to contaminated land, but the Council would be assisting the AIMREC Trustees to identify a suitable site.

**Resolved:**

- That**
- (i) the current Delivery Programme be endorsed and the current progress of the projects within the Programme be noted.**
  - (ii) the substantial progress made in delivering key projects over the last two years be noted.**
  - (iii) the 'working list' of emerging projects that support the Council's priorities be endorsed and this be the focus for activity over the next two years.**
  - (iv) the earmarking of £200,000 of reserves to support the Lottery bid for improvements to Victoria Park be approved.**

## **371 Senior Management Team Structure**

The report proposed a revised senior management structure for the Council. The proposed structure sought to further enhance cross functional working, improve resilience, increase capacity at senior levels and improve the drive for the Authority to take a more commercial approach in the delivery of public services.

**Resolved:**

**That the new senior management team structure detailed at Appendix 2 to the report be approved.**

**Recommended:**

**That the pension costs set out at Appendix 5 to the report be approved and that the pension monies are released in the event that staff at risk cannot be re-deployed.**

## **372 Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which advised that at the end of last year the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan was the subject of an independent examination and, subject to a number of amendments, was considered suitable to progress to a local referendum. On 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017 the amended and final version of the Neighbourhood Plan was subject to a local referendum in the Parish and 88.2% of those who voted did so in favour of the Plan. Following the successful referendum it was now the Local Planning Authority's responsibility to formally 'make' (adopt) the Plan, which would confer full Development Plan status for decision making purposes. This must be agreed by Full Council so the report asked Cabinet to endorse the Plan and recommend Council 'make' it.

Members said it was no mean feat to get to this stage and there had been Neighbourhood Plans rejected in other areas so it was easy to get the process

wrong. The successful outcome was testament to the years of hard work of the Parish Council and this Council's Planning Officers. Indeed Pluckley Parish Council had asked that their thanks for the support of the Planning team be recorded and Members said they echoed those sentiments.

**Recommended:**

**That Full Council 'make' the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**

### **373 Response to the Government's Housing White Paper**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which comprised the Council's response to the main points arising from the recently published Housing White Paper – 'Fixing Our Broken Housing Market'. It highlighted and addressed those matters which may potentially have significant implications for the Local Plan and housing delivery through the planning system generally. The report also set out comments on main topic issues which would comprise a formal response to the Government and he drew attention to recommendation (ii) which delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder and the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development to finalise the response to Government by the consultation deadline of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.

A Member said he wanted to give credit to the Policy Planner who had written the report as he had clearly addressed all of the important issues.

**Resolved:**

- That**
- (i) the summary of the Housing White Paper be noted and the comments in respect of the key points set out within the report be agreed as the basis of a response back to Government by the consultation deadline of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.**
  - (ii) delegated authority be granted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development to finalise the response to Government.**
  - (iii) it be noted that the Council has formally accepted the offer from Government of a 20% increase in planning application fees.**

### **374 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group – 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017**

**Resolved:**

**That the Notes of the Meeting of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 be received and noted.**

## **375 Joint Transportation Board – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

**Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017 be received and noted.**

## **376 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.**

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