

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **28th April 2022**.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);
Cllr. Bartlett (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Buchanan, Clokie, Feacey, Forest, Iliffe, Pickering, Shorter.

Apologies:

Cllr. Bell.

Also Present:

Cllr. Sparks

In attendance:

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Assistant Director – HR, Customer Services, Communications and Digitalisation, Cultural Projects Manager, Communications and Marketing Manager, Member Services Manager.

379 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 31st March 2022 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

380 Leader's Announcements

The Leader said there were a few matters he wanted to mention this evening. Firstly, he was sure that colleagues would be pleased to know that Eurotunnel's parent company had last week reported a 57% rise in revenues on its railway network in the first quarter of 2022. It was indicated that this was primarily down to an upturn in Eurostar passengers. The operator had seen a steady increase in traffic since the travel restrictions had been eased. This was clearly good news and they would be pressing for the restoration of the full Eurostar Services from Ashford International as soon as possible.

Secondly, in more disappointing news, the Government had announced earlier that day that all physical and documentary checks at Inland Port Health facilities were being postponed for a year, allegedly because of the current economic situation, which was adversely impacting on the cost of living. This was particularly disappointing for Ashford where they had only recently moved their Port Health staff into their new accommodation at Sevington and were geared up to start in earnest on the 1st July. This decision, without any serious consultation, now gave a number of very real challenges which would need to be worked through. However, as always, Ashford would rise to the challenge and embrace the opportunities presented, whilst awaiting a full understanding of the new direction announced today, and the wider implications.

Finally, on a very much happier note, the Leader wanted to draw attention to the Commonwealth of Nations Globe and showed a picture of it. The Globe, which sat atop a silver crown base resting on a blue and gold cushion, was unveiled at the Tower of London on the 14th April and paraded through the grounds. It would now remain on public display in the White Tower, before being moved to Buckingham Palace in readiness for the Beacon Lighting on Thursday the 2nd June. Over 2000 beacons would be lit in towns, villages and cities across the UK and in all the 54 Commonwealth capitals, in celebration of Her Majesty's 70 year reign. The Globe would feature in the lighting of the principal beacon by a senior member of the Royal Family at Buckingham Palace, although full details are a closely guarded secret. The Globe featured silver, gold, diamonds and platinum, designed to incorporate the four jubilee milestones of the Queen's reign and rocks collected from the tops of the UK's four highest peaks, (Mount Snowdon in Wales, Ben Nevis in Scotland, Slieve Donard in Northern Ireland and Scafell Pike in England) which had been fashioned into the base. The Globe was designed and commissioned by Bruno Peek - the Queen's pageant master who described it as "Beautifully made, totally unique". The Globe was about the size of a bowling ball and had been made by "Ottewill Silversmiths in Evegate Business Park and Artisan Village, Ashford. He thought this was something the Borough should be very proud of.

381 Pay Policy Statement – Annual Review

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which advised of the requirement to publish an Annual Pay Policy Statement, ensuring it was up to date and reflected the Council's approach to pay. They also used this report to take the opportunity to review the Ashford Living Wage Allowance (ALWA) and the Ashford Apprenticeship Wage Allowance and this year's report highlighted the decision to consolidate the ALWA in to the pay scales as a longer term and more sustainable way to support the Council's lowest paid staff. It would also cement the Council's commitment to provide its lowest paid staff with a rate of pay that was better than the statutory National Living Wage rate. He thanked the Officers for the enormous amount of hard work they put in on the Council's pay structure.

Recommended:

That (i) the updated Pay Policy Statement be approved.

- (ii) **it be noted that the Ashford Apprentice Wage Allowance will increase to 20 pence per hour over the National Minimum Wage rate applicable to the age of the apprentice.**
- (iii) **it be noted that the Chief Executive had exercised her Urgent Matters Delegation to implement changes to the lower pay scales to address compression caused by the changes to the statutory living wage rates and to consolidate the Ashford Living Wage Allowance in to the pay scales.**

382 Transfer of Kiln Field (Tenterden) to Tenterden Town Council

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which advised that Tenterden Town Council (TTC) had confirmed their wish to proceed with a freehold asset transfer and were agreeable to discussing terms to allow this to go ahead. The report therefore recommended that the proposed freehold asset transfer be approved. TTC would then request ABC to declare Kiln Field a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and TTC would then have full forward control of the site, managed as a LNR.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) **the freehold asset transfer of Kiln Field to Tenterden Town Council be agreed.**
 - (ii) **the application for designation of Kiln Field as a Local Nature Reserve be supported.**
 - (iii) **the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer be authorised to negotiate, finalise and complete all necessary legal agreements and other documents to give effect to the above.**

383 Member Training Panel – Annual Report 2021/22

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman of the Panel, introduced the Annual Report of the Member Training Panel for 2021/22. He drew attention to the positive results of a recent internal audit which had produced four low priority recommendations, all of which had already been addressed. He thanked Officers for their resilience on Member training and ensuring it was kept on the radar at a difficult time during the pandemic.

Resolved:

That the Annual Report of the Member Training Panel for 2021/22 be received and noted.

384 Climate Change Advisory Committee – Notes of 24th March 2022

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee held on the 24th March 2022 be received and noted.

385 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.

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Member Services
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