

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **30th June 2022**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Bell, Feacey, Forest, Iliffe, Shorter.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Buchanan, Pickering, Barrett, Chilton.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Burgess, Harman, Knowles, Ovenden, Sparks, Wright.

In attendance:

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Director of Health and Wellbeing, Director of Place and Space, Assistant Director of Planning and Development, Interim Service Lead for Finance, Customer Service and Digital Project Manager, Property Building Services Manager, Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development), Senior Governance and Data Protection Officer, Specialist Management Support Officer, Environmental Health Officer, Communications Officer, Member Services Manager.

74 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 26th May 2022 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

75 Climate Change Action – a Systemic Approach

The Portfolio Holder read out a statement from the Chairman of the Climate Change Advisory Committee endorsing the report and the work already undertaken and planned for the future. The report outlined the Council's framework for climate action and demonstrated acceptance of the urgency, challenge and collective responsibility to act in order to meet agreed carbon reduction targets. This delivery would contribute to local decarbonisation, in pursuit of national and global targets. The report also highlighted the extensive work the Council had already undertaken to

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reduce the carbon impact of its own assets, and its “Ashford to Zero” journey. He concluded by thanking the Officers for the sheer amount of work undertaken so far - it was impressive and welcomed.

In response to questions about the Community Stakeholder Group, it was explained that this would be a sounding board of around 100 people from across the local community. It would not be exclusive, but it was currently viewed as the most effective way to begin to understand the views of the community and consult in a meaningful way.

Resolved:

- That (i) the proposed Climate Change Strategy document and Climate Action Plan for 2022-24 be approved.**
- (ii) the spend of £125k to set up the Climate Action Team, be approved.**

76 Ashford Borough Council Annual Performance Report 2021/22

The Leader introduced the report which presented the Council’s Annual Performance Report - looking at the achievements and milestones the Council had realised over the last year in the context of the Recovery Plan 2020-22; and summarising performance against the Council’s suite of Key Performance Indicators for the year 2021/22. He thanked the Officers involved for pulling together such an illuminating report.

Resolved:

That the contents of the Annual Performance Report be noted and approved for publication on the Council’s website.

77 Financial Outturn 2021/22

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which presented the outturn revenue position for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account for the 2021/22 financial year. It also presented the outturn for capital works and how these works had been financed, the Collection Fund position, reserves position and a treasury management update.

The Portfolio Holder wanted to draw particular attention to the “looking forward” section of the report (paragraphs 25-33), which he believed was essential reading for all Members, as well references to the Kent Business Rates Pool and the sections on Reserves and Treasury Management. He thanked Officers in the Finance and Revenues and Benefits teams for their diligent and dedicated work in monitoring and controlling the Council’s finances.

The Leader directed Members' attention to the Update Report which included an amended last table in Appendix A to the report.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the financial outturn for 2021/22 be noted.**
 - (ii) the Capital Outturn, Collection Fund position, and Treasury Management update be noted.**
 - (iii) the provisional reserve transfers and position (Table 4 of the report refers) be approved.**
 - (iv) the 'Looking Forward' section of the report be noted.**
 - (v) the responsibility to make any minor changes to reserves be delegated to the Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT.**

78 Food Service Plan 2022/23

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which presented the Council's Annual Food Service Plan 2022/23. It included a review of performance in delivering official food controls during 2021/22 and set how the food authority proposed to deliver them in the year ahead. The Plan incorporated the Council's policy approach as a designated Competent Authority. He concluded by praising the staff who had experience a tough couple of years working through the pandemic, but would have completely caught up with their inspections schedule by the end of July.

Resolved:

That the Food Service Plan 2022/23 be approved.

79 Customer Service, IT and Digital Strategy

The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Property and Recreation read a statement from the Portfolio Holder in his absence in introduction of the report. The updated Strategy set out the Council's vision for putting the customer at the centre of the services it provided. It explained how they would develop their services digitally and inspire confidence in digital services to make them accessible to all and enable the Council to deliver outstanding customer services. A high level digital strategy brochure would also be available to view and download on the Council's website in accessible formats.

Members welcomed the strategy but stressed the importance of not "leaving behind" those who could not engage digitally. The importance of cyber security and continuing to develop the use of mobile devices and technologies was also emphasised.

Resolved:

That the Customer Service, IT and Digital Strategy be approved and adopted.

80 Local Development Scheme (LDS) Update 2022

The Portfolio Holder introduced the draft Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2022 which set out a project plan and timetable for preparation of Local Plan documents. He drew particular attention to the proposal to combine the work on the separate Gypsy and Traveller SPD into a future Local Plan review.

In response to questions it was explained that the decision to combine this work was linked to the complexities associated with resolving nutrient neutrality. Work on the next iteration of the Local Plan was scheduled during the next Administration.

Recommended:

That the Local Development Scheme 2022 be adopted by Full Council, as required under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011).

81 Ashford Borough Council Fire Safety Management Policy

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which sought agreement of a revised Fire Safety Management Policy. This was last issued in 2018 and was due for review. The Policy had been revised and updated to provide additional clarity relevant to Officer responsibilities and to further strengthen governance of fire safety management within the Council. The revised policy also streamlined arrangements to enable the organisation to respond quickly to anticipate changes to legislation.

There was a discussion about storage of gas canisters in properties following the tragic explosion in a Council property last year. It was clarified that tenancy agreements strictly forbade this and it was also being checked for on routine visits. Annual gas safety checks were undertaken at all properties and the Council had a right of access.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the revised Fire Safety Management Policy be agreed.**
 - (ii) the Assistant Director of Safety and Wellbeing be authorised to agree any minor amendments to this policy.**

82 Greater Ashford Environment and Land Mapping Commission – Notes of 10th May 2022

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Greater Ashford Environment and Land Mapping Commission held on the 10th May 2022 be received and noted.

83 Joint Transportation Board – Minutes of 7th June 2022

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on the 7th June 2022 be approved and adopted.

84 Trading and Enterprise Board – Minutes of 28th June 2022

Recommended:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Trading and Enterprise Board held on the 28th June 2022 be approved and adopted.

85 Climate Change Advisory Committee – Notes of 17th May 2022

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee held on the 17th May 2022 be received and noted.

86 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group – Notes of 13th May 2022

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group held on the 13th May 2022 be received and noted.

87 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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88 Joint Transportation Board – Nomination of Membership

Resolved:

**That the following Members be appointed to the Joint Transportation Board:
Councillors Cornish, Feacey, Bernard Heyes (VCh), Tina Heyes, Krause,
Meaden and C Suddards.**

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Member Services
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