

Ashford Borough Council: Cabinet

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Cabinet held on Microsoft Teams on the **29th April 2021**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Barrett, Bell, Buchanan, Clokie, Feacey, Forest, Shorter.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Pickering, Ovenden.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Anckorn, Blanford, Burgess, Campkin, Chilton, Cornish, Harman, Hayward, Krause, Ledger, Michael, Spain, Sparks, C Suddards, Wright.

In attendance:

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications, Head of Culture, Leisure and Tourism, Head of Planning and Development, Head of Corporate Property and Projects, Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager, Communications Officer Member Services Manager.

314 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 25th February 2021 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

315 Leader's Announcements

The Leader said that as they were in the pre-election purdah period he would not make any particular announcements, but he did just want to mention the 100-mile World Record, and a number of others, which had been broken at an event at the Julie Rose Stadium recently. He was pleased to see the elite facilities at the stadium hosting events once more.

316 Local Development Scheme

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which advised that the draft Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2021 set out the project plan and timetable for preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Local Plan until mid-2022. The LDS was required under legislation and compliance with it was a matter of 'soundness' for Local Plans. It was therefore essential that it was kept up to date. The draft LDS 2021 and revised Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Local Plan timetable conformed with the regulations.

Recommended:

That the Local Development Scheme 2021 be adopted, as required under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011).

317 Kent Downs AONB Management Plan - Adoption

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which explained that the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 required Local Authorities to produce, adopt and keep under review Management Plans for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Kent Downs AONB covered much of the area of the Local Authority and, working with other Authorities in the Kent Downs AONB, a review had been undertaken to update the current plan for the period 2021-2026. He proposed an amendment to recommendation (iii) which would require consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

A Member, who was also the Council's appointed representative on the Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee, said she fully endorsed the document and knew how much work had gone in to updating it.

Recommended:

- That**
- (i) the revised Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 be adopted.**
 - (ii) the formal date for adoption be shortly after the last of the 11 Local Authorities resolves to adopt the Plan – this date will be confirmed to the Council by the Kent Downs AONB Unit,**
 - (iii) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, to make minor changes and accept reasonable changes made by other Local Authorities during the adoption process, subsequent to this Council's decision being made.**

318 Procurement Direction for Ashford Borough Council's Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Service

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which advised that the current contracted waste, recycling and street cleansing service for Ashford Borough Council would end in October 2023. The service was currently part of the Mid Kent Joint Waste Partnership (MKJWP) between Ashford, Maidstone and Swale as Waste Collection Authorities and Kent County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority. The report drew on modelling work that had been produced by a specialist external waste consultant working with staff from across the MKJWP, and had previously been presented to the Cabinet, to provide information to Members for an informed decision. The report also confirmed the opportunities for the next service, previously presented, for Members consideration.

A Member asked about references to better IT systems being introduced to drive up performance and how this would work in practice. The Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager said that this was about real time reporting from crews which would allow better data collection and identify issues with contamination much more quickly and precisely.

In response to a question about where the plastic put out for recycling was sent, the Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager advised that it was important to reassure residents that everything that was put out for recycling, and could be recycled, was indeed recycled. KCC managed the process and it would all go to a Material Recovery Facility. If a load was grossly contaminated it may have to go to Energy From Waste and be incinerated, which would be disappointing, but did still have a use.

Another Member asked if, given the success of Aspire, consideration had been given to setting up a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) to manage this contract in the same way that Canterbury City Council had recently, rather than remaining with the MKJWP? The Portfolio Holder advised that all options had been considered and on balance it had been decided to propose renewal of the existing arrangements. One of the chief factors had been resilience and the example of being able to pool resources after the fire at the Ashford depot. It would not have been possible to maintain the service at that time if the Council had not had access to the partnership. Also, having undertaken the cost review, there were also no guarantees of benefits for the tax-payer by pursuing a single Authority LATCo. This would have required multiple Authorities and neighbours had not been keen to pursue this at this time. The Council would though keep an open mind over options for the future

The Leader said it was only right to mention the current contractor, Biffa, who had worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic, including Bank Holidays, and through the serious fire at their depot last year, and they had continued to provide an excellent service to the people of the Borough at this tough time.

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Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the Authority continue to provide an externally contracted (procured) service for waste, recycling and street cleansing for Ashford Borough Council.**
 - (ii) the Authority continue providing the alternate weekly collection for co-mingled kerbside recycling, residual waste on alternate weeks, food waste collection weekly, and a separately chargeable garden waste service and bulk waste collection services.**
 - (iii) the Authority continue to provide services as a member of the Mid Kent Joint Waste Partnership including Ashford, Maidstone, Swale and Kent.**
 - (iv) the Head of Environment and Land Management be delegated authority to take this work forward, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Land Management.**

319 Joint Transportation Board – Minutes of 2nd March 2021

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on the 2nd March 2021 be received and noted.

320 Trading and Enterprise Board – Minutes of 23rd February 2021

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Trading and Enterprise Board held on the 23rd February 2021 be received and noted.

321 Economic Regeneration and Investment Board – Notes of 22nd February 2021

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Economic Regeneration and Investment Board held on the 22nd February 2021 be received and noted.

322 Climate Change Advisory Committee – Notes of 2nd February 2021

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee held on the 2nd February 2021 be received and noted.

323 IT and Digital Transformation Advisory Committee – Notes of 16th March 2021

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the IT and Digital Transformation Advisory Committee held on the 16th March 2021 be received and noted.

324 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group – Notes of 4th February and 25th March 2021.

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meetings of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group held on the 4th February and 25th March 2021 be received and noted.

325 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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