

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **10th May 2018**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Bennett, Bradford, Clokie, Galpin, Pickering, Shorter.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Burgess, Hicks, Ovenden, Wedgbury, White.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Bartlett, Buchanan, Howard-Smith, Link.

Director of Finance and Economy, Director of Place and Space, Head of Legal and Democracy, Head of Planning and Development, Head of Corporate Property and Projects, Head of Housing, Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications, Health, Parking and Community Safety Manager, Environmental Protection and Licensing Team Leader, Property and Development Surveyor, Communications Officer (SS), Communications Officer (SP), Senior Member Services Officer.

459 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Clarkson	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Director of A Better Choice for Property Ltd	
Shorter	Made Voluntary Announcements as a Director of A Better Choice for Building Consultancy Ltd and Kent Play Clubs	

460 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 12th April 2018 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

461 Housing Statement 2018 - 2023

The Head of Housing introduced the report and explained that it set out a new approach to developing the Council's housing related strategies and plans in the future. This would be by presenting an overarching Housing Statement that was supported by detailed strategies and plans addressing particular areas of housing delivery and management.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT said that in the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Housing, he wanted to draw attention to Paragraph 8 of the report which contained the three overarching priorities of the statement, which were the key elements of the document.

Resolved:

- That (i) the draft Housing Statement be circulated to key partners and stakeholders for comment.**
- (ii) the Portfolio Holder and the Head of Housing be authorised to approve any minor changes arising from the consultation prior to the publication of the Housing Statement (any significant changes would be reported back to Cabinet for approval).**

462 Street Trading Policy

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which presented an updated Street Trading Policy to the Cabinet for subsequent approval by the Council. He outlined the three main changes to the policy and advised that it also contained general formatting/layout changes and minor amendments for the purpose of clarity.

Recommended:

That the Council approve the Street Trading Policy 2018.

463 Gambling Statement of Principles

The Portfolio Holder and the Environmental Protection and Licensing Team Leader introduced the report which presented an updated version of the Council's Statement of Principles for Gambling. The new policy reflected changes in legislation and good practice. The Portfolio Holder thanked Officers for their hard work in developing such a comprehensive policy in conjunction with the Gambling Commission.

Resolved:

That the Statement of Principles for Gambling be noted and agreed for publication for the purposes of consultation.

464 Demolition of Bockhanger Community Hall

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which proposed the demolition of Bockhanger Community Hall and reinstatement with either turf or hardstanding until the next phase of the project was complete. Phase two of the project would evaluate the redevelopment options for the site. The cost of demolition and reinstatement would be in the region of £150,000 and would come from the repairs and renewals budget. The report also addressed a number of the current Anti-Social Behaviour issues in the Bockhanger Square area. The Portfolio Holder said he wanted to thank the Officers involved and the Bockhanger, Bybrook and Ashford South Advisory Committee for the hard work they had undertaken in exploring all options for the site. The inescapable conclusion was that they could not justify retaining the hall in the face of ever increasing maintenance costs. He wanted to reassure everyone that the hall would not be demolished before the summer, so the successful early years reading scheme with the library service there could continue and the Council would continue to work with KCC libraries as there was no intention to disrupt that service.

A tabled paper included the written comments of the Portfolio Holder, which were not included within the report, in support of the recommendations.

The Ward Member for Bybrook (where the hall was located) and Chairman of the Advisory Committee said that he had been involved with this issue for a number of years and they had explored every possible option to make the facility economically viable, but this had simply not been possible. It was with regret, but he did support the recommendation for demolition. He said that his only remaining concern was one of Anti-Social Behaviour in and around the hall whilst it was being demolished and hoped this would be taken in to consideration.

The Ward Member for the neighbouring Bockhanger Ward advised that he did not believe demolition was the right option. The hall was still used by an number of groups and volunteers, as well as the library, and usage had only diminished slightly because of a lack of investment in the facility. He believed removal would take some people's community circles away, particularly the elderly in the area who were already facing cuts to their bus services. He asked that before a final decision was taken on demolition, further work was undertaken to make sure provision was in place to fill these gaps.

The KCC Member for the area said he wanted to echo the comments on the library and the early years summer reading challenge and said that these would continue. There were already mobile library services in Kennington that could be extended and they were looking to ensure a permanent provision, either at the Children's Centre or elsewhere nearby.

In response, the Portfolio Holder said that he understood some of the comments raised but said that they had to be taken in context and demolition of the hall was actually considered the most responsible thing to do given its current state and the escalating costs in maintaining it into the future. The Leader advised that removal of a facility from residents was always a tough judgement call to make, but they had to

be responsible when there was a potential drain on the public purse and they would continue to look to develop new facilities in all areas across the Borough.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the demolition of the Bockhanger Community Hall Building be approved.**
 - (ii) the Head of Legal and Democracy and the Head of Corporate Property and Projects be authorised to serve notice on KCC to vacate the premises in accordance with the lease.**
 - (iii) the Portfolio Holder and the Head of Corporate Property and Projects be authorised to approve any expenditure incurred.**
 - (iv) the works be funded from the repairs and renewals budget.**

465 Response to Government Consultation on Planning Issues

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which set out a proposed response to two consultations – firstly the proposed revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the second, to suggested changes to the Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regime. The responses (subject to any amendments from Cabinet) would be sent as the Council's formal response to consultations.

The Leader advised that the draft responses had been developed following a robust discussion at the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group and Members had made a number of suggestions to strengthen the initial draft of Officers. Everyone understood that more housing was needed, but he said it was vital that development continued to be plan led and only in areas that benefitted the community as a whole. The Government did seem to be taking notice of Local Authorities on the points they were making about CIL and Section 106 payments, but it was important to continue to make the point that if Local Authorities made land available, Developers needed to be pressured by Government to deliver housing in a timely fashion and not land bank.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) Officers respond to the Government consultation on the *'Proposed Revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)'* in the terms set out in the report.**
 - (ii) Officers respond to the Government consultation on *'Supporting Housing Delivery Through Developer Contributions'* in the terms set out in the report.**

466 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 Danny Sheppard:
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