

Decisions effective from the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022 unless they are called in or are recommended to the Council for approval

## **Cabinet**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **29<sup>th</sup> September 2022**.

### **Present:**

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

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

### **Apologies:**

Cllr. Pickering.

### **Also Present:**

Cllrs. Burgess, Harman, Sparks, Wright.

### **In attendance:**

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Director of Customer, Technology and Finance, Assistant Director of Planning and Development, Head of Economic Development, Service Lead – Finance, Economic Development Manager, Senior Governance and Data Protection Officer, Senior Communications Officer, Member Services Manager.

## **152 Minutes**

### **Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.**

## **153 Leader's Announcements**

The Leader advised that a meeting of the ACER (Ashford Critical Emergency Resilience) group had taken place on 9<sup>th</sup> September. This had been chiefly to address various issues around the current economic situation. The meeting had agreed to form a Welfare Advisory Group, to be chaired by the Director of Customer, Technology and Finance, which would examine how the Council could assist residents and businesses in the current cost of living crisis. This work would be invaluable as the Council built its budget for 2023/24 and onwards.

## **154 Financial Monitoring – Quarter 1 Report**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and drew attention to the tabled papers which included a management response to the in-year deficit position. The report presented the Quarter 1 budget monitoring position which had been extended to the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022. The current economic outlook and conditions had significantly changes since the budget was set and this was reflected within the report and the projections it contained. The forecast position to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 indicated an overall pressure on the General Fund of £1.7m, with a pressure in services of £1.2m. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was reporting a saving of £351,000. A full break down of movements was shown in the report. The report also provided an update on the Collection Fund, Treasury Management, Reserves and progress on savings identified in the 2022/23 budget. There were also a number of items in the ‘Other Items’ section of the report for the Cabinet to consider.

The Portfolio Holder drew particular attention to paragraph 49 of the report and the explanation around borrowing not coming forward from the Council’s Subsidiary Company – A Better Choice for Property Ltd. He said the reasons for this were clearly explained, but it was important to draw attention to them so they were not misconstrued.

### **Resolved:**

- That**
- (i) the Quarter 1 forecast position for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account be noted**
  - (ii) the Collection Fund position be noted.**
  - (iii) the Treasury Management position be noted.**
  - (iv) the provisional reserve allocations, as highlighted at Table 5 of the report, be noted.**
  - (v) the use of delegations under the ‘Other Items’ section of the report be noted.**

## **155 Performance Report – Quarter 1 2022/23**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which summarised performance against the Council’s updated suite of Key Performance Indicators reflecting the Corporate Plan 2022-24. He thanked the Officers involved for pulling together such a clear and detailed report.

### **Resolved:**

**That the performance data for Quarter 1 2022/23 be received and noted.**

## **156 Update on Broadband and Digital Infrastructure Improvements in the Ashford Borough**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which advised that the Council had been very pro-active in the approach to improving broadband and digital connectivity across the Borough for a number of years. Whilst KCC obviously led on this work, ABC had built a reputation as an organisation that providers and developers could work with. The report outlined the specific projects that Officers had been working on over the past 12 months and he thanked the report author and others for their hard work in this area.

### **Resolved:**

- That**
- (i) the content of the report and the broadband work undertaken in the past year be noted.**
  - (ii) it be noted that the delivery of broadband is a key priority in the Council's draft Corporate Plan.**

## **157 Graduate Planner Programme**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which advised that in recent years the Planning and Development Service had run a graduate planner programme which recruited graduates to work within the service on a fixed term, two-three year contract. The report set out the details of the programme and some of its recent successes.

Members welcomed the report and the programme. In an environment of resourcing and employment challenges across the sector, it was seen as a responsibility for all large organisations to help develop graduates and apprentices.

### **Resolved:**

**That the contents of the report and the success of the Graduate Planner Programme be noted.**

## **158 Joint Transportation Board – Minutes of 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

### **Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022 be received and noted.**

## **159 Trading and Enterprise Board – Minutes of 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

### **Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Trading and Enterprise Board held on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022 be approved and adopted.**

## **160 Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board – Notes of 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

The Leader said he wanted to draw attention to the Platinum Jubilee Civic Awards that had taken place on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Staff had worked tirelessly to put on a very special evening which had provided an opportunity to recognise individuals who gave their time to do so much for the people of Ashford. The awards themselves had taken the form of a handmade crystal tree on a plinth of English oak, which had been a fitting tribute to Her Majesty the Queen in the year of her Green Canopy. Both the Leader and Chief Executive said it had been a joy to be present and a very humbling experience to meet the award recipients and their families and hear their stories.

### **Resolved:**

**That the Notes of the Meeting of the Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board held on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022 be approved and adopted.**

## **161 Compliance and Enforcement Board – Notes of 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

### **Resolved:**

**That the Notes of the Meeting of the Compliance and Enforcement Board held on the 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022 be received and noted.**

## **162 Climate Change Advisory Committee – Notes of 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2022**

The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Property and Recreation said he wanted to mention the 'Great Big Green Week 2022' which had launched the previous week and wanted to thank the Chairman of the Climate Change Advisory Committee, other Members and Officers who had been involved in the successful launch event in the Town Centre. It was vital area in which to engage residents and this had provided a good starting point.

**Resolved:**

**That the Notes of the Meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2022 be received and noted.**

## **163 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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