

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **6th December 2018**.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);

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

Apologies:

Cllrs. Bell, Chilton, Dehnel, Link.

Also Present:

Cllrs Buchanan, Burgess, Hicks, Howard-Smith, Iliffe, Koowaree, Ovenden.

Chief Executive, Director of Law and Governance, Director of Finance and Economy, Head of Culture, Head of Finance, Senior Accountant (LF), Senior Accountant (MH), Communications Officer, Member Services Manager (Operational).

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman advised that Agenda Item 11- Trading and Enterprise Board Minutes – 3rd December 2018 – had been withdrawn from the Agenda as that meeting had been cancelled.

241 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 8th November 2018 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

242 Draft Budget 2019/20

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which presented the draft budget for 2019/20 for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. He advised that the draft budget was in line with the MTFP which was presented at the November Cabinet meeting and would form the basis of the budget scrutiny and budget consultation processes. The budget was based upon a £5.00 (3.17%) increase in Council Tax for Band D properties which would continue to see the Council maintain its position as the lowest in Kent. The report also included the draft Housing Revenue Account budget which incorporated the housing review proposals and the 30 year business plan assumptions. Reports on these two items would be considered later at this meeting.

The Leader said that this Council had a strong track record of delivering a balanced budget year on year and continued to deliver the lowest Council Tax in Kent and one of the lowest in the Country. This was at the same time as being one of the financially soundest Local Authorities in the Country and delivering on this Administration's pledges which included not only maintaining services, but enhancing them.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the budget context and risk advice be noted.**
 - (ii) the draft budget for 2019/20 be approved.**
 - (iii) the draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2019/20 (Section 3 of the report refers) be approved.**
 - (iv) it be agreed that the report be used as the basis for budget consultation with the public, the business community, Parish Councils and staff.**
 - (v) the draft budget as set out in the report should now be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Budget Task Group for formal scrutiny.**

243 Council Tax Base 2019/20

The report advised that the Council was required to approve the tax base used to calculate the level of Council Tax for 2019/20. The tax base had been calculated at 46,500 Band D properties, an increase of 820 (or 1.8%) on the current year. The Portfolio Holder also directed Members attention to the tabled paper which included the detailed tables from Appendices A-D of the report, taking account of the two new Parish Councils, and he thanked the Senior Accountant for her hard work in undertaking the tax base exercise.

Recommended:

- That**
- (i) the 2019/20 'Net' tax base of 46,500 Band D equivalent properties be agreed.**
 - (ii) the distribution across parished areas of the proposed grant to Parish Councils be agreed to help compensate for the negative impact caused by the Council Tax Support Scheme on Parish Councils' tax bases (see Appendix D of the report totalling £40,900).**
 - (iii) the possibility of further Cabinet and Council decisions being required before the end of January, should any material change in the tax base be required as a consequence of any further relevant funding announcements from Government, be noted.**

TAX BASE 2019/20
LOCAL TAX BASE (WHOLE/PART AREAS)

LOCAL TAX BASE 2018/19	WHOLE AREA	BAND D EQUIVALENT	NEW OCCUPATIONS	0.75% PROVISION	Less discounts Council Tax Support	LOCAL TAX BASE 2019/20
		49,189	1,883	(459)	(4,933)	45,680
	PARISH					
606	Aldington & Bonnington	674	8	(6)	(54)	622
338	Appledore	389	14	(4)	(48)	351
706	Bethersden	785	0	(7)	(55)	723
1,109	Biddenden	1,182	25	(11)	(76)	1,120
144	Bilsington	158	0	(2)	(6)	150
	Boughton Aluph and					
1,042	Eastwell	1,124	0	(11)	(63)	1,050
591	Brabourne	628	0	(6)	(20)	602
161	Brook	160	9	(2)	(1)	166
486	Challock	482	10	(5)	(14)	473
1,283	Charing	1,426	82	(14)	(143)	1,351
754	Chilham	822	8	(8)	(71)	751
92	Crundale (PM)	96	0	(1)	(1)	94
505	Egerton	529	10	(5)	(26)	508
169	Godmersham	179	0	(2)	(5)	172
	Great Chart with					
2,425	Singleton	2,621	150	(26)	(204)	2,541
113	Hastingleigh	121	0	(1)	(3)	117
734	High Halden	807	38	(8)	(58)	779
270	Hothfield	339	18	(3)	(64)	290
108	Kenardington	120	0	(1)	(10)	109
0	Kennington	3,927	0	(40)	0	3,887
4,341	Kingsnorth	4,561	71	(44)	(229)	4,359
129	Little Chart	135	0	(1)	(3)	131
829	Mersham and Sevington	1,088	224	(13)	(44)	1,255
108	Molash	119	0	(1)	(10)	108
100	Newenden	104	0	(1)	(6)	97
585	Orlestone	678	42	(7)	(55)	658
486	Pluckley	516	13	(5)	(35)	489
687	Rolvenden	725	24	(7)	(65)	677
335	Ruckinge	373	0	(4)	(19)	350
539	Shadoxhurst	564	6	(5)	(38)	527
653	Smarden	666	18	(6)	(36)	642
362	Smeeth	393	14	(4)	(32)	371
	Sth Willesborough &					
0	Newtown	1,482	0	(15)	0	1,467
751	Stanhope	1,043	0	(8)	(242)	793
202	Stone	224	0	(2)	(17)	205
3,593	Tenterden (TC)	3,847	131	(37)	(302)	3,639
172	Warehorne	162	0	(2)	(6)	154
325	Westwell	525	0	(5)	(12)	508
526	Wittersham	586	14	(6)	(46)	548
846	Woodchurch	904	6	(8)	(63)	839
1,028	Wye with Hinxhill	1,130	35	(10)	(117)	1,038
17,447	Unparished Area	13,545	500	(101)	(2,155)	11,789
45,680		49,939	1,470	(455)	(4,454)	46,500

244 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2018 - 2048

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which provided the annual update to Members on the financial projections associated with the HRA Business Plan. Overall, the plan remained affordable. Work had been undertaken to review the cost base of the HRA and model for the life of the business plan. The Plan had been updated to allow for the latest planned maintenance schedule and the approved capital schemes. In addition, the Business Plan model was in the process of being amended to reflect the recent Government announcement that, with effect from 29th October 2018, the HRA debt cap had been removed to allow Councils to build more housing. Officers would review the Business Plan in light of this announcement and would present an update to Members in the New Year.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the updated HRA Business Plan and financial projections be agreed, including the consequences of the inclusion of the AHP Programme on the level of HRA borrowing.**
- (ii) **it be noted that Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) are required to review the HRA Business Plan financial projections as part of the budget scrutiny process.**

245 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Affordable Housing Programme – Annual Update to Cabinet

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and thanked Officers for the amount of work that had gone in to producing the programme. In light of the scrapping of the HRA debt cap, it set out some ambitious proposals for delivery of new housing sites across the Borough in the short, medium and long term.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the progress with the Affordable Housing Programme 2015-2018, set out at Appendix 1 to the report, and street properties purchased set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be noted.**
- (ii) **the content of the proposed new Programme to 2022 – originally submitted as part of the HRA debt cap uplift bid to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, shown at exempt Appendix 3 to the report, be noted and approved.**
- (iii) **authority be delegated to the Head of Housing, the Head of Finance and in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders, to vary the programme as necessary to maximise use of one-for-one monies for the purchase of street properties, subject to resources being available within the HRA Business Plan.**

- (iv) the Head of Legal and Democracy be authorised, in consultation with the Head of Housing, to execute and complete all necessary documentation to give effect to the above recommendations including the execution of any agreement necessary for the receipt of grant.**
- (v) delegated power be granted to the Head of Housing, Head of Finance, Housing Operations Manager for Development and the Development and Regeneration Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to bid for and/or purchase land suitable for development, up to a value of £2m, independently of Cabinet approval.**

246 Leisure Procurement

The Portfolio Holder for Housing introduced the report as the Member who had taken the lead for the leisure procurement exercise. The report updated on the evaluation process that had been undertaken and asked for an endorsement of the decision to take forward two bidders to the next stage. The procurement exercise, undertaken in partnership with the Ashford Leisure Trust, continued and the report sought approval to agree the much needed capital investment in to the facilities to create high quality modern leisure facilities that would significantly increase participation levels and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the residents of the Borough.

The Leader wished to place on record his thanks to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Officers involved for all the work they had put in to this large and difficult task which was now nearing a satisfactory conclusion.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the progress made to date in procuring a new leisure operator, the timescales anticipated to complete the exercise and the legal framework to support the new arrangements, be noted.**
 - (ii) the Partnership Board's decision to take forward two bidders to the next stage of the procurement exercise be endorsed.**
 - (iii) it be agreed that appropriate Officers undertake all legal and project work to complete the procurement exercise and legal framework.**
 - (iv) it be noted that whilst the capital investment is planned to be financed from prudential borrowing, the capital financing costs will be met from the net savings to be realised across the lifespan of the contract within the leisure service budget.**
 - (v) responsibility be delegated to the Director of Finance and Economy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT and the Portfolio Holder for Housing (as Chair of the Partnership Board and Lead Member) to agree the final level of prudential borrowing,**

ensuring it is affordable to the Council and covers the necessary risk and resource implications.

247 Victoria Park – Heritage Lottery Fund Parks for People Bid

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which presented a detailed summary of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Parks for People Stage 2 bid totalling circa £4.4m. It asked Members to agree the release of £79,569.40 of Section 106 contributions for the development stage and to agree the allocation of £460,948 Section 106 contributions and £650,000 Council funding, subject to a successful Round 2 bid from the HLF, for the delivery phase. The Council would be informed of the result of the bid in June/July 2019.

The Leader said he welcomed this bid as it added to the plethora of measures being undertaken to improve the town centre. Just a few recent highlights included: - the Snowdogs trail which had been a great success and the auction of the dogs that past Monday had raised circa £150,000 for the Pilgrims Hospice; the new picturehouse cinema and Elwick gates which would be opened in the coming weeks; and the statue of Queen Marie of Romania, which would stand in the shadow of Victoria Park, and would also be unveiled during the following week.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the release of £79,569.48 S106 contributions, as identified under the Financial Implications section of the report, be endorsed to support the development stage phase to enable the bid to be completed and submitted.**
 - (ii) submission of the Heritage Lottery Fund Parks for People bid as outlined in the report be agreed, and the Council's total contribution of circa £1,370,398 split between identified S106 contributions, Council reserves, repairs and renewals budget and landscape maintenance costs, be approved.**
 - (iii) the Head of Culture be authorised to agree any minor changes, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture, to ensure a strong bid is submitted in February 2019.**

If the Council's Heritage Lottery Fund bid is successful to: -

- (iv) note that the amounts profiled that make up the Council's total contribution could alter given that additional S106 contributions may be secured.**
- (v) agree for the Director of Finance and Economy to consider and apply appropriate forward funding to offset S106 contributions secured but not received to ensure the delivery of the project is not put at risk.**
- (vi) delegate authority to the appropriate Directors and Heads of Service, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders, to put in place all**

relevant documentation, staff and financial resources, management and monitoring processes and communications, in order to deliver the project.

248 Ashford Town Centre Place Making Board Notes – 11th October 2018

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Ashford Town Centre Place Making Board on the 11th October 2018 be received and noted.

249 Ashford Strategic Delivery Board Notes – 26th October 2018

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board on the 26th October 2018 be received and noted.

250 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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