

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **11th January 2018**.

Present:

Cllr. Bell (Vice-Chairman in the Chair);

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

Apologies:

Cllrs. Burgess, Clarkson, Knowles, Link, Ovenden

Also Present:

Cllrs. Dehnel, Howard-Smith, Wedgbury.

Chief Executive, Director of Law and Governance, Director of Place and Space, Director of Finance and Economy, Head of Planning and Development, Head of Legal and Democracy, Head of Housing, Cultural Projects Manager, Facility Development Manager, Communications and Marketing Manager, Senior Member Services Officer.

308 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 7th December 2017 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

309 Revenues and Benefits – Recommended Write-Offs Schedule

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which proposed the formal write-off of 491 debts totalling £391,454.75. The proposals were in line with the Council's Revenues and Benefits Write Off Policy. Existing bad debt provisions already more than covered the sums involved.

The Portfolio Holder mentioned that this report would be the last written by Peter Purcell, the Revenues and Benefits Manager who had served the Council so diligently for nearly 42 years and was retiring later this month. He wanted to pass on the Council's thanks for all his hard work over the years and wished him well for his retirement.

Resolved:

That (i) the action that accounts totalling £63,506.67 have been written off under delegated powers (Financial Regulations 11.1) be noted.

- (ii) **the write-offs listed in the Exempt Appendices to the report totalling £327,948.08 be approved.**

310 Singleton Environment Centre – Lease With Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council

The Portfolio Holder explained that since its opening in 2008, the Singleton Environment Centre had become a focal point of the local community, providing a hub for a wide range of volunteering and events. Unfortunately, The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) had given notice to exercise the break clause in their contract to manage Singleton Environment Centre and would vacate on the 10th March 2018. Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council wished to enter into a lease with the Ashford Borough Council and intended to form a Trust to run the Centre in the future and continue its good work as a quality community facility with an environmental focus.

One of the adjoining Ward Members said that the proposals afforded the best possible opportunity to keep the Centre open and continue the good work that it undertook, and he fully supported the recommendations.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) **a lease of 25 years be granted to Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council from 11th March 2018 including break clauses in favour of landlord and tenants after three years, and enable them to form a Trust to take over management of Singleton Environment Centre.**
 - (ii) **up to £10,000 of subsidy be allocated to support the Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council, where a deficit in the first year is unavoidable due to a delay in rate relief being granted to a voluntary management entity.**
 - (iii) **the Head of Culture, in conjunction with the Head of Legal and Democracy and the Head of Corporate Property and Projects, be authorised to agree terms and complete all necessary agreements, lease and documentation, to give effect to the above recommendations.**

311 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The report advised that the Homeless Reduction Bill had received Royal Assent on the 27th April 2017 and had an enactment date set as the 3rd April 2018. It provided an overview of the new duties arising under the Act, together with the Council's action plan to prepare for implementation. In addition, the report set out the impacts and risks arising from the new Act and the proposed resource implications that the Council would need to consider to meet its obligations. The Portfolio Holder said that the proposed arrangements had been carefully thought through, but they were a work in progress and would need to be kept under constant review.

Resolved:

- That** (i) the arrangements for the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 be noted.
- (ii) the Implementation Programme be endorsed.

312 Trading and Enterprise Board – 4th December 2017

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Trading and Enterprise Board held on the 4th December 2017 be received, noted and adopted.

313 Economic Regeneration and Investment Board – 21st November 2017

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration and Investment Board held on the 21st November 2017 be received and noted.

314 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group – 22nd November 2017

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group held on the 22nd November 2017 be received and noted.

315 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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