
COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 15 February 2017 from 7.00pm - 9.49pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Sarah Aldridge, Mike Baldock, Cameron Beart, Bobbin, Andy Booth, Tina Booth, Lloyd Bowen, Bowles, Katy Coleman, Mike Cosgrove, Richard Darby, Mike Dendor, Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Mark Ellen, Paul Fleming, Mick Galvin, Sue Gent, James Hall, Nicholas Hampshire, Mike Henderson, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Lesley Ingham (Mayor), Ken Ingleton, Nigel Kay, Samuel Koffie-Williams, Gerry Lewin, Bryan Mulhern, Padmini Nissanga, Prescott (Deputy Mayor), Ken Pugh, George Samuel, David Simmons, Ben Stokes, Roger Truelove, Anita Walker, Ghlin Whelan, Ted Wilcox and John Wright.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Katherine Bescoby, Abdool Kara, Chris Lovelock, Donna Price, Mark Radford, Gary Rowland and Nick Vickers.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Monique Bonney, Roger Clark, Derek Conway, June Garrad, Harrison, Peter Marchington and Mike Whiting.

1189 PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain said Prayers.

1190 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Mayor outlined the emergency evacuation procedures.

1191 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 January 2017 (Minute Nos. 1126 – 1140) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

1192 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

1193 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that two nominations had been received for Deputy Mayor, namely Councillors Samuel Koffie-Williams and Ghlin Whelan, and outlined the arrangements for the secret ballot. (See Minute No. 1201).

The Mayor advised that she had sent a civic card of condolence to Councillor Harrison, following the passing of her father.

The Mayor was honoured to have presented the French Legion d'honneur medal to 92 year old D-Day Veteran Ernest Townsend, formerly of Bomber Command. The

Mayor would be attending the funeral for the late Chris Ewell from Milton Regis and advised that details of the funeral would be sent to Members when known.

The Mayor reminded Members of her 'Sparkle Ball' being held on Saturday 11 March 2017, and encouraged Members to purchase tickets.

The Mayor advised that this would be Abdool Kara's last Council meeting, and thanked him for all his help and support, and wished him the best for the future. Mr Kara thanked the Mayor and paid tribute to all the Mayor's he had worked with, and wished all Members the best for the future.

1194 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC

The Mayor advised that two questions had been submitted by members of the public, the answers to which have been provided, and can be viewed on the Council's website and are attached as Appendix I to these minutes. The Mayor invited the members of the public to ask a supplementary question.

Question One

Mr Simon Clark asked the Leader did he not agree that the money being borrowed would be better used to encourage retailers to occupy the 21 empty properties in Sittingbourne High Street and build Council housing on Council-owned land? Did the Leader not agree that the suggestions had merit and would be more readily accepted by residents in the Borough?

The Leader responded by saying that the suggestions would not put the Council in a better financial position. He referred to the assurances given by the Section 151 Officer, internal audit and external audit regarding the option of borrowing; that smarter shops on Sittingbourne High Street would not attract retailers as they had a corporate idea of floorspace, etc; and whilst he would love to build housing, it would not generate income for the Borough.

Question Two

Mr Vic Wintergreen thanked the Leader for his reply, but clarified that he was concerned about the narrowness of the pavement by the bridge, for people walking from the Box retail units north of the railway. He also referred to the Local Plan examination and the report from Kent County Council (KCC) Highways and Transportation team, and their request for a 'stay of execution', and asked the Leader what improvements would he like to see in the future?

The Leader apologised for misinterpreting his question. He agreed that the road under the bridge was not moveable, and whilst he did not see it would be a problem, it was not perfect. In respect of the Local Plan, he did not agree with the terminology 'stay of execution' but said it was regrettable that Highways England and KCC Highways and Transportation had changed their position 24 hours before the examination.

1195 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

The Mayor advised that three questions had been submitted by Members, the answers to which had been provided, and can be viewed on the Council's website and are attached as Appendix II to these minutes.

Question One

Councillor John Wright thanked the Cabinet Member for his response. He referred to the proposals being developed with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and asked if this would be widely advertised so that local groups within the community-led housing sector could take advantage of it? In response, the Cabinet Member agreed and said that they were working closely with social landlords and housing associations, and were trying to help encourage small builders to build on small pieces of land. It was possible that more funding would be available next year.

Question Two

Councillor Roger Truelove thanked the Cabinet Member for his response, and advised that the Labour Government had exceeded their target for extra GPs but the problem was a generation gap due to the time it took to train doctors and the volume retiring. He reiterated that the Swale NHS Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) funding gap was £6m, and asked the Cabinet Member if he agreed that more money was needed for the local health service?

The Cabinet Member disagreed that the funding gap was £6m; it was £2.4m and would break-even by the end of the financial year. From the research that he had undertaken, little had been done to resolve the problem 10 years ago, and he was pleased that the criteria for funding had been changed which had resulted in an uplift in funding for the Swale CCG.

Question Three

Councillor Ghlin Whelan thanked the Cabinet Member for his response.

1196 LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Leader presented his Statement, which gave updates on the Swale Borough Local Plan; LG Challenge; Rural Policing; and HGV Fly Parking. The Leader invited Members to ask questions.

Swale Borough Local Plan

The Leader of the UKIP Group referred to the latest hearing on the Local Plan and the early revision date of 2022, and asked the Leader if he agreed that it was necessary to go back to the drawing board, and that the Borough should be treated as one place?

The Leader explained the reason why the area had been split, to reflect that two thirds of the Borough were in the Thames Gateway area and so had benefited from

improved infrastructure. This may change in the future but only after there was investment in infrastructure in the east of the Borough. In terms of starting again, he advised that this would be done if the Inspector requested it, but the Local Plan offered some protection and so he did not understand why he argued that point.

The Leader of the Labour Group paid tribute to the work of the Local Plans team. He referred to the hearing and shared disquiet that it appeared an objection from a developer (in his ward) had been treated with credence, and said that the increase in housing numbers proposed was not deliverable because of the road network. He expressed concern that KCC Highways and Transportation's view on this had changed. He considered that the number of new houses would be nearer to 540 than 760 but expressed concern that developers would want to cherry-pick. He asked the Leader for his view on this?

The Leader considered that 540 houses was most deliverable and expressed his great disappointment that the Council had been asked to increase this. A change of view by Highways England had put KCC Highways and Transportation in that position. He did not want more than 540 houses to be built and referred to the planning policy system. He did not have the same impression regarding the Inspector's consideration of the objection, and they awaited the result of the Inspector's report.

The Leader of the Independent Group added his thanks to the Local Plans team, and asked if the Local Plan was in place by middle of June 2017, would the Council be 'under the cosh' to make its own decisions on planning applications. Could the Council start to demand better houses, in terms of design, quality and reducing the carbon footprint, from developers?

The Leader advised that they had been previously overruled by the Planning Inspectorate regarding requiring 'better' development, but he would love to see better quality housing for sale and rent. He wished he shared the Member's optimism regarding not being 'under the cosh', but only if they were not required to build more than 540 houses. In terms of cherry-picking, which was mentioned in an earlier question, he referred to the Compulsory Purchase Order powers available, and a recent report to the Cabinet. He would ask the Council to support using them if necessary.

Rural Policing

The Leader of the UKIP Group referred to the Kent Association of Local Council's Swale Area Committee, and advised that the Police and Crime Commissioner would be attending their next meeting in June 2017. The Leader said he would make every effort to attend, and asked to be notified of the date of the meeting. A Member asked if the Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras could track quad bikes, referring to an issue in Teynham.

HGV Fly Parking

The Leader of the UKIP Group welcomed the update and said he would be leaving the meeting at this point, as he had another meeting to attend.

The Leader of the Independent Group referred to 579 notices issued, and drew attention to an area where a lorry was often parked. The Leader advised he was aware and would make sure this was not missed. He acknowledged that illegal and inappropriate lorry parking was not a problem that could be solved 100% by fines.

A Member advised that there were no dedicated sites and suggested that this should be looked at in Minster and Iwade. The Leader acknowledged that, and referred to problems experienced by the behaviour of some lorry drivers, and said he had been active in suggesting potential sites. Another Member suggested that there should be a site in Queenborough, and asked how many of the 579 mentioned were on the Isle of Sheppey. The Leader advised that the majority were on the A249 corridor and on the A2, near Gate Services, but the KCC Leader had specifically mentioned the corridors into and out of Sheerness.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs advised that the issue was raised at regular policing meetings, and asked the Leader if he agreed that the issue needed to be addressed Borough-wide? The Leader agreed and said the right sites needed to be put in place; the Police were concentrating on the areas that caused the most problems to residents and road-users. Another Member referred to the support on this issue from Helen Whateley MP, and asked if more pressure could be put on KCC and the Government for lorry parks and appropriate enforcement action. The Leader advised that pressure was already being applied, and also welcomed the support from Helen Whateley MP.

In response to a question regarding how many of the fines had been issued to foreign lorry drivers, the Leader advised he was aware that 100% of fines had been collected, and would ask for a breakdown of the figures. Another Member advised that fines for foreign vehicles were collected at the road-side.

1197 BUDGETS AND COUNCIL TAX FOR 2017/18

The Director of Corporate Services outlined the procedure for the debate on the budget and that there was a need for an additional recommendation, due to the lateness of the final Local Government Finance Settlement. He also advised that amendment no. 2, as tabled at the meeting, had been withdrawn.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance introduced his report by paying tribute to those who ensured that the Council maintained its sound financial position. In particular, he referred to the Members who had attended the finance meeting held in April 2016 and their sensible suggestions, some of which had been included in the budget; the work of the Budget Task Force and officers who attended those meetings. He also thanked officers and staff for ensuring efficiencies, and gave special thanks to Mr Kara, Mr Radford, Miss Wiggins, Mr Vickers and his finance team; his Deputy Cabinet Member and his Cabinet and Deputy Cabinet colleagues.

The Cabinet Member said that every penny that was spent as a local authority was someone else's money, whether it came from Council tax, rent, business rates or fees and charges. He was pleased to advise that Swale Borough Council was in a sound and secure financial position, which had been confirmed by the External Auditors. He referred to the nationwide issue of homelessness, and welcomed the

presentation of any project that would help with this and allow repayment of the principal, interest and expenditure. He referred to the requirement for the Chief Financial Officer to report on the adequacy of reserves, which were at a reasonable level, and the key principles for the management of reserves moving forward. The Council was efficient and had been for some time; referring to the fact that Council Tax had been frozen for six years. Assuming that Council Tax would have increased by 2% per year, this represented a real term tax cut of £140k per year amounting to £840k over six years.

The Cabinet Member referred to the Medium Term Financial Plan, which in the words of the External Auditors, demonstrated sound financial management, and enabled the Council to plan for the future and to identify and to meet the challenges faced as a result of, for example, the reduction in the Revenue Support Grant. He was pleased to present a balanced budget for 2017/18, which offered the same high quality service. For the first time in seven years, an increase in Council Tax of £4.95 in Band D was proposed. This increased tax to £164.88 per annum just £3.17 per week, which he considered to be excellent value for the range of services provided, and would help towards securing this council's immediate future.

The Cabinet Member warned, however, that there were dark days ahead. In recent years, the Council had benefited from increased income in its major income streams such as new homes bonus (NHB), National Non Domestic Rates (business rates), and, local fees and charges. The reduction without consultation in the total funding for NHB was disadvantageous to the Council, and strong representations had been made back to Government on the change. This was compounded by the longer term changes to the NHB which significantly reduced its incentive effect. Due to the volatility of business rates, and outstanding appeals, the Council had set aside a financial provision of £8m in the likelihood of them being successful. He also expressed caution that the Government might change the benefits that the Council should receive in making the Borough an attractive place for businesses. Furthermore, the amount of revenue support grant that the Council received from central government was being cut from £2.08m in 2016/17 to £1.24m in 2017/18, and to nothing by 2020/21.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Council could stop providing discretionary services in 2019/ 20 and make redundancies to enable the provision, in the short term, of statutory services only. Alternatively, the Council could invest to have an income to provide services the public needed, and to become less dependent on Government funding. Whilst investing was not without risk, he considered that the Council had the skills and determination to succeed and to manage risk in the same way as it had done during the recession. It would also make every effort to keep Council Tax at the lowest level possible. By planning ahead, the Council would not be forced to make knee-jerk reactions, as had been the case elsewhere.

The Cabinet Member advised that this was not an easy task. The Council was efficient, but there was always more that could be done, referring to ongoing work to identify areas where further efficiencies could be made, but acknowledging that this became more difficult where the base budget was reduced. However, the digital agenda had opened-up new possibilities and he referred to the changing way in which people wished to access services. He referred to the work of the Transformation Programme which was investigating options available, as well as

identifying ways to improve performance. The Council had a good track record of managing income and expenditure, but to protect both statutory and non-statutory services and become financially self-sufficient, the Council must enhance its income streams and explore new ways and new opportunities of generating income.

The Cabinet Member then spoke about the proposals for borrowing. He clarified that they were only undertaking long-term borrowing to finance an asset base with a significant proportion of it being related to revenue generating assets. This was not saddling future generations with borrowing, but providing for their future. It was sensible and prudent management of resources which placed a fair burden on those that benefited from the improved service outcomes both now and in the future. If the Council did not borrow for investment purposes, there would need to be curtailment in delivery of some of the aims and objectives of this Council. This was why he considered it important for the Council to agree to the possibility of borrowing an additional £30m on top of the previous amount agreed. He further clarified that the Council undertook long-term borrowing for capital purposes only, which meant that the expenditure which was to be financed by borrowing needed to be of a long-term nature and related to a tangible asset. He gave the example of property acquisition to demonstrate this, referring to revenue to "service the borrowing" (i.e. to repay the loan and to pay interest) being obtained from the asset itself, e.g. car park charges, service user charges, rent from property, or from Council Tax and business rates.

The Cabinet Member explained that the ability for the Council to raise additional borrowing to finance capital expenditure was severely constrained by its lack of ability to raise Council Tax. There was the capping regime and the "affordability" level determined by the Council. The latter constraint was the most significant, in that Council Tax levels should be kept to within reasonable bounds, having regard to the community's ability to pay. He confirmed that current planned borrowing was within the revenue affordability limit set by the Council. The focus in recent months had been on investment in revenue generating assets, to assist the Council in securing the long-term sustainability of the Borough in accordance with its approved strategies. The Section 151 Officer would not have given advice to proceed if he had felt it would be detrimental to the Council.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Council would work with partners, for example, Mid-Kent Services and Public Sector PLC, because it gave an additional tool and resources, and possibly additional funding, whilst carrying no risk to our objectives of achieving self-sufficiency thereby not completely relying on government funding. He referred to the briefing on this topic the previous year.

The Cabinet Member said it was a robust, yet tough budget. It built on the Council's ambitions and pioneering approach to delivering services. It would help to ensure that the Council could continue to make Swale an even better place to live, work in, and visit; and most importantly a place that knew and remained focused on its vision and priorities. He reiterated that income generation would help sustain services without relying on central government funding and could help, for example, towards tackling the homeless. All Members had the responsibility to ensure the future of the Council by directing its own destiny. Decisions would be taken that were not only in the best interest of

residents and businesses, but to encourage new businesses, investment, support tourism and secure the financial security of our borough.

The Cabinet Member referred to the fact that the Government would not make the final announcement on the Local Government Finance Settlement until the week beginning 20 February 2017. Therefore all the proposals in this budget were based upon the Provisional Settlement and whilst no changes were expected, he drew this to Members' attention.

In summing-up, the Cabinet Member advised that he would hold a meeting later in the year to give all Members an opportunity to put forward ideas to achieve self-sufficiency and proposals to find an additional £1m of income, which must be independent from unreliable government funding. He referred to a quote from Amelia Earhart and encouraged Members to support the budget. He proposed the following recommendations

- (1) That the Head of Finance's opinion on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves be noted.
- (2) That Minute No. 1162/02/17 of the Cabinet Meeting held on 1 February 2017 on the report on the Medium Term Financial Plan and the 2017/18 Revenue and Capital Budgets be approved.
- (3) That the resolutions contained in Appendix I of the report be approved.
- (4) That a delegation be given to the Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, to deal with the implications of any changes in the final Local Government Finance Settlement for the 2017/18 budget.

This was seconded by the Leader.

Amendment No. 1

The Leader of the Independent Group proposed, and the Leader of the Labour Group seconded, "that expenditure be increased by £295,000 on the following areas:

1. Homelessness increase by £50,000. This is prudent given the heavy pressures in this area.
2. Grounds Maintenance increase by £50,000. There does not appear to be any clarity as to where the £50,000 savings proposed in the budget can be achieved.
3. Tourism increase by £75,000. No allowance has been made in the budget for the proposals arising from the Scrutiny review, the proposals of which are clearly needed.
4. Economic Development increase work with employers to promote apprenticeships £10,000. This will restore the reduction in expenditure during 2016/17 in this vital area for learning and skills.
5. Play area maintenance and updating increase by £100,000. The requirement for this work has been widely agreed but not implemented.
6. AQMA increase by £10,000. The worsening pollution is not adequately addressed and action should not have to rely on Councillor grants.

And reductions in expenditure and increases in income of £175,000 on the following areas:

1. Planning fees increased income £100,000. This is prudent given that every year for at least the past four years, income has exceeded the budget. Again in 2016/17 there will be substantial income above the budget and housing pressures will promote major planning applications in 2017/18.
2. Parking charges increased income £75,000. The increased income in 2016/17 already covers the whole of the increase at present proposed for 2017/18.

The overall increase to the budget of £120,000 is to be met from reserves. These proposals are made for the year 2017/18. It will no doubt be considered next year whether they should be carried forward.”

The Leader advised that he would be accepting the professional advice of officers and therefore, whilst he congratulated the Member on putting forward an amendment, he would not support it. Members then debated the amendment, during which the following points were made:

The use of reserves for a one-year change, would place more demand on officers; the reason for the reduction in spending in the grounds maintenance contract, which the Cabinet Member offered to discuss outside of the meeting; an in-depth review of play areas was underway and an application could be made to the performance fund for additional resources, as well as using Section 106 monies; an AQMA strategy was being developed; disappointment that only one amendment had been put forward; the suggestion to increase spending on Tourism and the Scrutiny Committee’s review; the reason for the underspend in apprenticeships due to a change in government policy; homelessness was a top priority, in particular prevention of use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation; the difficulty in anticipating expenditure on planning appeals etc and the Housing White Paper; and the forthcoming White Paper regarding pollution control.

The proposer of the original motion did not wish to speak on this.

In accordance with SI 2014 No. 165, a recorded vote was taken on the amendment and voting was as follows:

For: Councillors Richard Darby, Mark Ellen, Paul Fleming, James Hall, Mike Henderson, Roger Truelove and Ghlin Whelan. Total equals 7

Against: Councillors Sarah Aldridge, Cameron Beart, George Bobbin, Andy Booth, Tina Booth, Lloyd Bowen, Bowles, Katy Coleman, Mike Cosgrove, Mike Dendor, Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Mick Galvin, Sue Gent, Nicholas Hampshire, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Lesley Ingham, Ken Ingleton, Nigel Kay, Samuel Koffie-Williams, Gerry Lewin, Bryan Mulhern, Padmini Nissanga, Prescott, Ken Pugh, George Samuel, David Simmons, Ben Stokes, Anita Walker, Ted Wilcox and John Wright. Total equals 31

Abstain: 0

After discussing the amendment, debate returned to the substantive motion.

The Leader of the Labour Group referred to the proposed increase in the borrowing facility from £30m to £60m, referring to examples of other Councils that had borrowed money to invest in profitable projects. He referred to the level of risk

involved, the lack of officer skills in this area, and the potential for Council Tax Payers to foot the bill if it went wrong, and asked what the Council was planning to do with the additional £30m? Discussions at Scrutiny Committee meetings on this topic had failed to placate their concerns, in particular around long-term defaults and the commercial viability of a multi-screen cinema, and he asked for more serious thought to be given to the risks of investing in Sittingbourne Town Centre.

The Leader of the Independent Group disagreed that there had been no cuts in service, and considered that it was wrong that the Council had frozen Council Tax for so long. If Council Tax had been increased over the last seven years, the Council would be £840k 'better off'. Given that Swale had the second lowest Council Tax in Kent, it was not unreasonable to increase the Council Tax. He also commented that had the Council decided to invest in projects five years ago the Council would also be in a better position. It was difficult for him to support the proposed budget.

A debate ensued, during which the following comments were made: congratulating the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance for holding a finance meeting with all Members to discuss ideas for the budget; thanking the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, the Head of Finance and his team on the proposed budget; questioning the reduction outlined on page 29 regarding A249 litter picking, which the Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs responded to; the proposed increase in the borrowing facility was good house-keeping should the right opportunity arise; and the level of risk in borrowing £30m.

The Leader, as seconder of the original motion (who had reserved the right to speak), also paid tribute to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, the Deputy Cabinet Member, the Head of Finance and his team. He would have liked to have kept the Council Tax frozen for another year, but an increase was necessary due to increased charges from the Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board (LMIDB) of £442k. He suggested that the LMIDB should be a precepting authority. Whilst he was disappointed that Council Tax could not be frozen, he was pleased with the proposed budget which was a solid base to move forward on. He did not agree with the Leader of the Independent Group that cuts had been made and suggested that they discussed this outside of the meeting. He referred to the need for the Council to invest for the future, and the integrity of the Section 151 Officer and External Auditors. The Council was set fair, due to the way in which the budget had been managed. He was proud of the budget and was confident that it provided for good quality services at an affordable cost.

The Cabinet Member summed-up by thanking Councillor Mick Galvin for his question, that he would discuss outside of the meeting. He referred to comments made by the Leader of the Labour Group and said that sound investment was the right and only way forward. He thanked Members for their contributions at the finance meeting held last April, some of which had been taken on-board, and advised this would continue.

In accordance with SI 2014 No. 165, a recorded vote was taken and voting was as follows:

For: Councillors Sarah Aldridge, Cameron Beart, George Bobbin, Andy Booth, Tina Booth, Lloyd Bowen, Bowles, Katy Coleman, Mike Cosgrove, Mike Dendor, Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Mick Galvin, Sue Gent, James Hall, Nicholas Hampshire, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Lesley Ingham, Ken Ingleton, Nigel Kay, Samuel Koffie-Williams, Gerry Lewin, Bryan Mulhern, Prescott, Ken Pugh, George Samuel, David Simmons, Ben Stokes, Anita Walker, Ted Wilcox and John Wright. Total equals 31
Against: Councillors Richard Darby, Mark Ellen, Paul Fleming, Mike Henderson, Padmini Nissanga, Roger Truelove and Ghlin Whelan. Total equals 7
Abstain: 0

Resolved:

(1) That the Head of Finance's opinion on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves be noted.

(2) That Minute No. 1162/02/17 of the Cabinet Meeting held on 1 February 2017 on the report on the Medium Term Financial Plan and the 2017/18 Revenue and Capital Budgets be approved.

(3) That the resolutions contained in Appendix I of the report be approved.

(4) That a delegation be given to the Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, to deal with the implications of any changes in the final Local Government Finance Settlement for the 2017/18 budget.

1198 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2017/18

The Chairman of the Audit Committee proposed the recommendation in the report, which was seconded by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance.

Resolved:

(1) That the Treasury Strategy 2017/18 and the Prudential and Treasury Management indicators be approved.

1199 SCRUTINY UPDATE - REVIEW OF LEISURE AND TOURISM

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee spoke in support of the relationship between the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee, but expressed disappointment with the Cabinet's response to the review.

The Leader of the Independent Group, who had been the review co-ordinator, referred to the work undertaken for the review, and his disappointment that there was still not a proper response from the Cabinet, given that the report had been submitted to them in October 2016.

The Leader expressed his disappointment that Scrutiny Members were dissatisfied. There had been a response, and he hoped that when the Visitor Economy Strategy came forward, Members of the Scrutiny Committee would realise that their work was appreciated and that they played a vital role.

Resolved:

(1) That the report be noted.

1200 DRAFT TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2017/18

The Leader proposed, and the Deputy Leader seconded, the recommendation in the report which set out a draft programme of meetings for 2017/18.

The Leader thanked the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager and her team for their work in producing this.

Resolved:

(1) That the timetable of meetings for 2017/18, as set out in Appendix I to the report, be agreed.

1201 ELECTION OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

The Mayor advised that one nomination had been received for Mayor, namely Councillor Prescott, which had been proposed by Councillor Andy Booth and seconded by Councillor Alan Horton.

The Mayor advised that two nominations had been received for Deputy Mayor. Councillor Ghlin Whelan had been proposed by Councillor Roger Truelove and seconded by Councillor Harrison; and Councillor Samuel Koffie-Williams had been proposed by Councillor Mike Dendor and seconded by Councillor Mike Whiting. The Mayor reported that 24 votes had been cast in favour of Councillor Samuel Koffie-Williams and 12 votes cast in favour of Councillor Ghlin Whelan. There were two spoiled ballot papers.

Resolved:

(1) That the Mayor elect for the civic year 2017/18 is Councillor Prescott

(2) That the Deputy Mayor elect for the civic year 2017/18 is Councillor Samuel Koffie-Williams.

1202 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL

The Council was asked to note the recommendations, as separate reports on the items had been considered earlier in the meeting.

Resolved:

(1) That Minute Nos. 1162 and 1163 of the Cabinet Meeting held on 1 February 2017 be noted.

Chairman

Copies of this document are available on the Council website <http://www.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. If you would like hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact Swale Borough Council at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT or telephone the Customer Service Centre 01795 417850.

All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel