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COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 19 October 2016 from 7.00pm - 8.00pm.

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

OFFICERS PRESENT: Katherine Bescoby, Estelle Culligan, Abdool Kara, Chris Lovelock, Mark Radford and Nick Vickers.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Monique Bonney, Bryan Mulhern and Ben Stokes.

947 PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain said Prayers.

948 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Mayor outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

949 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 September 2016 (Minute Nos. 886 – 994) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

In respect of Minute No. 889, a Member asked for it to be noted that he was a "life" member and not a "lifelong" member of Court Hall, Sittingbourne.

950 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

951 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor advised that there had been a very high standard in the South/South East in Bloom awards and congratulated everyone involved.

The Mayor had attended the Swale Business Awards Gala Evening where there had been some very deserving winners.

The Mayor reminded Members to respond to the email from the Mayor's Personal Assistant about their availability on Remembrance Sunday.

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Peter Marchington and his wife, Lynne, on their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

952 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC

The Mayor advised that one question had been received from a member of the public. As Mr Greenhill was not present at the meeting, the Mayor drew attention to the question and answer that had been circulated. This is attached as Appendix I to these Minutes.

953 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

The Mayor advised that five questions had been submitted by Members, the answers to which had been provided and are attached as Appendix II to these Minutes. The Mayor reminded Members that there was a three minute time limit for supplementary questions and their answers, and invited relevant Members to ask a supplementary question.

Question One

Before a supplementary question was asked, the Leader advised that he anticipated that the Council had spent around £39,000 on this, based on the number of hours spent by Planning and Legal officers.

Councillor John Wright thanked the Leader for his response, and suggested that Housing officers would also have spent time on this. He asked the Leader if the new Local Plan would be robust in stopping speculative development?

The Leader responded by saying that the Plan would be as robust as the Council could make it, subject to the Inspector's decision and legislation.

Question Two

Councillor Roger Truelove thanked the Leader for his response, but expressed disappointment that Sittingbourne and Sheppey's allocation appeared very small when compared with other districts. He asked if the Leader agreed that they needed more political pressure at Westminster, and more pressure from the Kent County Councillor for Sheppey?

The Leader responded by saying that he would not be drawn into discussion about Kent County Council elections, and that he did not consider more political pressure was required, but more "spade ready" schemes were needed, that could go forward when the opportunity arose.

Question Three

Councillor Roger Truelove asked if the Cabinet Member for Planning agreed that the Planning Committee Members may wish to see a more robust response?

The Cabinet Member for Planning said “No”.

Question Four

Councillor Cameron Beart referred to the temporary traffic flows in place, that were currently due to end on 31 October 2016. He asked the Leader if he could give an assurance that these would remain in place, and acknowledge that they were not a permanent solution to the problem, in particular given that the Planning Committee had given planning permission for 500 houses in the area, and the fact that KCC Highways had not raised a single objection on highway grounds?

The Leader advised that KCC would say that there was already an allowance for future growth.

Question Five

Councillor Cameron Beart expressed his disappointment that a democratic decision had been overturned when the development was wrong, and asked if the Council's disappointment could be made clear to Ministers at the Department for Communities and Local Government, referring to the answer to question one?

The Cabinet Member for Planning undertook to take this forward with Ministers, and expressed disappointment regarding the lack of grounds to take forward on appeal, as set out in the answer he had given to question one.

954 LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Leader presented his Statement, which focused on an update on Mid Kent Services; the Conservative Party Conference; and the Thames Gateway Strategic Group. The Mayor invited Members to ask questions on each topic.

The Leader of the UKIP Group advised he was disappointed that there was no mention of the Medieval Mops Festival, and asked the Leader if he had attended? The Leader advised that he had spent the day on ward case work.

The Leader of the Independent Group referred to the fact that the Thames Gateway Steering Group did not include Faversham, but that the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission did include Faversham, and asked the Leader how that would work? The Leader undertook to provide the Member with contact details of the office of Lord Heseltine, who was the Chairman of the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission.

955 CONSIDERATION OF THE TWO MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL TO THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The Leader introduced the report, and proposed the recommendations, referring to the full debate on the Motions that had taken place at the General Purposes Committee meeting. The recommendations were seconded by the Deputy Leader.

The Leader of the UKIP Group asked for the recommendations to be taken separately, and spoke in relation to recommendation 1, asking the Council to

support an amendment to the public participation scheme to give adjacent parish councils an opportunity to speak. He proposed the following amendment: "That the Council amend the constitution to allow adjacent parish/town councils to speak at the Planning Committee on items with adjacent parish/town council areas". This was seconded by Councillor Adrian Crowther.

The Leader encouraged Members not to vote for the amendment, given that parish councils had ample opportunities to bring forward their views on planning applications, and that extended time at Planning Committee meetings might lead to more pressure for allowing increased officer delegations.

The Leader of the Labour Group referred to the current public participation scheme, and the fact that the Chairman could use his discretion to allow more than one parish council representative in certain circumstances. The Leader of the Independent Group spoke in support of the amendment.

Other Members gave their views on the amendment, suggesting that it would make the democratic process unwieldy; that there were plenty of opportunities for parish councils to put forward their views, such as written representations or via their Ward Member; and that the Chairman could already use his discretion to allow more than one parish councillor to speak.

The Deputy Leader, as seconder of the original motion, spoke against the amendment, referring to the opportunities already available. In summing up, the Leader referred to the interpretation of the word 'adjacent', and urged Members to vote against the amendment. The amendment was put to the vote and was lost.

The Council then voted on the original motion (recommendation one), which was agreed.

The Leader of the UKIP Group referred to recommendation 2 in the report, and advised that his intention was to make sure that members of the public had an opportunity to speak. He advised that officers had said they would look at alternative options, and so he asked the Council to agree the recommendation in the report.

The Council then voted on recommendation two, which was agreed.

Resolved:

(1) That the Council does not update the constitution to allow adjacent parish/town councils to speak at Planning Committee on items with adjacent parish/town council areas.

(2) That the Council does not amend the constitution with regard to allowing additional speaking from any organisation that wishes to speak on a planning application presented.

956 CONSTITUTION REVIEW

The Leader introduced the report, and proposed the recommendations, suggesting an amendment to recommendation three to give an effective start date. This was seconded by the Deputy Leader.

Resolved:

(1) That the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Leader, be given the delegation to incorporate the revised national model procedure relating to the dismissal of statutory officers into Part 4.8 of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules within the Constitution.

(2) That the revised Scheme of Officer Delegation to the Head of Planning, as set out in the revised working paper attached to the report, be adopted.

(3) That the proposed amendments to the Contract Standing Orders, as set out in the working papers attached to the report, be adopted as part of the Constitution with effect from 1 January 2017.

957 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICT AND PLACES IN SHEERNESS AND WOODSTOCK WARDS

The Leader thanked the General Purposes Committee and Ward Members for their input, and proposed the recommendations within the report. This was seconded by the Deputy Leader.

Resolved:

(1) That the proposed changes to polling districts and the polling place for the Sheerness Ward be approved.

(2) That the proposed change to the polling place for the Woodstock Ward be approved.

958 TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Chairman of the Audit Committee introduced the report, which had been considered by the Audit Committee (Minute No. 875 refers), and asked Members to approve the recommendations. This was seconded by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance.

A Member referred to the discussion at the Audit Committee and congratulated officers on the report.

Resolved:

(1) That the Treasury Management stewardship report for 2015/16 be approved.

(2) That the prudential and treasury management indicators within the report be approved.

959 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Resolved:

(1) That the following recommendations be noted, as they have been subject to separate reports approved earlier in the meeting: Minute Nos. 875, 903, 904(a), 904(b), 904(d) and 904(e)

(2) That recommendation 904(c) be approved.

Chairman

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