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## COUNCIL

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**MINUTES** of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 9 October 2019 from 7.00pm - 8.29pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mike Baldock, Cameron Beart, Monique Bonney, Lloyd Bowen, Derek Carnell, Roger Clark (Deputy Mayor), Simon Clark, Richard Darby, Steve Davey, Mike Dendor, Mark Ellen, Tim Gibson, James Hall, Ann Hampshire, Nicholas Hampshire, Angela Harrison, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Ken Ingleton (Mayor), Carole Jackson, Elliott Jayes, Denise Knights, Peter Macdonald, Peter Marchington, Benjamin Martin, Ben J Martin, Lee McCall, Pete Neal, Richard Palmer, Ken Pugh, Ken Rowles, Julian Saunders, David Simmons, Paul Stephen, Sarah Stephen, Bill Tatton, Roger Truelove, Tim Valentine, Ghlin Whelan, Mike Whiting, Tony Winckless and Corrie Woodford.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Billy Attaway, Katherine Bescoby, David Clifford, Nick Vickers and Emma Wiggins.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Simon Fowle, Alastair Gould, Hannah Perkin and Eddie Thomas.

### 277 PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain said prayers.

### 278 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Mayor outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

### 279 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 September 2019 (Minute Nos. 212 – 221) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

### 280 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

### 281 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor advised that he and the Deputy Mayor had represented the Council at 24 functions, none of which had been out-of-borough charitable events. Two had been out-of-borough, namely the Lord Lieutenant of Kent Awards reception and the High Sheriff of Kent Annual Justice Service, which had been held at Canterbury Cathedral.

He drew attention to the first weekly Park Run on The Leas at Minster and the celebration of 50 years since the handover of Bowaters Railway to the Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway Company.

The Mayor thanked Members for agreeing to attend Remembrance Day Services on 10 November 2019 to lay wreaths on behalf of the Council.

The Mayor reminded Members that his Civic Christmas Church Service would be held at Borden Church on Saturday 21 December at 6.30pm. He also drew attention to the Sittingbourne Fusion Festival on 11 October 2019 and the Faversham evening carnival on 12 October 2019.

## 282 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC

The Mayor advised that one question had been submitted by Mrs Hilary Apps and invited her to ask her question.

### Question:

“Why are there so many neglected, uncultivated plots at the East Hall Farm Allotments when the SBC Website states they are no longer accepting requests to join the waiting list as plots rarely become available and the existing waiting list is very long?”

### Response - Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Tim Valentine:

“Many thanks to you for raising this issue with us.

This site is one of the few we continue to manage as most allotments are now rightly sitting with parish and town councils. We inspect them periodically but haven't done so for a little while. Officers have assured me they will do so as a matter of urgency and report back to me.

The process will involve inspection of plots then writing and warning those plot holders who have not worked their plots and seeking assurance they that will in future. If not, then we will remove permission and work towards reallocating the site to the next in line on the waiting list.”

### Supplementary question and answer

Mrs Hilary Apps asked the Cabinet Member if the weeds could be cut down to stop the spread to other allotment plots, and asked if vacant plots could be tidied-up before being offered to new plot holders so they did not look like such hard work?” The Cabinet Member responded by saying he would raise this with officers.

## 283 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

The Mayor advised that seven questions had been received from Members. Each Member was invited to put his/her question, which was responded to by the relevant Cabinet Member. The questioner was then invited to ask a supplementary question.

Details of the questions and responses are set out below:

**Question 1 – Councillor Alan Horton**

“Would the leader inform the Council of the meetings he has attended or undertaken since the last Council meeting, in particular with external bodies and inform Council of the outcome of those meetings?”

**Response – Leader**

“Thank you for the question.

It is a very open-ended question and I could seriously spend the whole half hour allocated answering it, but I will try to summarise as best I can, out of regard for the patience of the Council and the other questions to be asked. However, I hope the Council will appreciate my including some major correspondence in the answer. I have also used the Leader’s Statement later in the meeting to expand on a few of the issues covered.

Soon after our last meeting I had a regular meeting with Gordon Henderson the MP for Sittingbourne and Sheppey, where we discussed Homelessness, the Council’s Biffa contract, Sittingbourne Town centre, education, the Frank Lloyd Unit closure and poverty locally. I have seen Gordon several times since May and I have also indicated a wish to meet the MP for Faversham and Mid Kent but there has been no response, though I have written to her on preparations for Brexit and on homelessness, rough sleeping and the need for social housing. I have also written to Ms Whateley on the Council’s behalf, reporting our declaration on the Climate Change and Ecological emergency and calling for Government to make carbon reduction central to the planning system, empowering councils to set higher standards for new buildings, improving standards in private rented accommodation, supporting on-shore wind energy(in appropriate locations) the deployment of solar panels, community energy and other environmental improvements. Letters have also been sent to Gordon Henderson and to the Prime Minister, which has been acknowledged.

With others, I have been involved in a series of meetings to try to take forward the Sittingbourne Town Centre scheme and to divine more clarity for the future. These meetings have been with the Chief Executive of U and I, with various parties to move forward on lettings in the Leisure area, and with Light Cinema. I will expand a little on these matters in the Leader statement, later in the meeting.

Tackling homelessness and bringing forward more affordable housing, in particular genuine social housing, is an urgent priority for the administration. I had a helpful meeting with two staff members from the Quays. We have also met with Moat Housing and Optivo since the last meeting to move further forward with the notion of partnership working and to specifically consider known sites. These were very productive meetings but the Council will understand that at this stage I cannot detail what the emerging ideas might be.

Since the last Council I have had meetings with KCC officers in advance of county-wide meetings. I was represented by Cllr Bonney at the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership as I thought it more appropriate to attend our own PDRC meeting where the Corporate Plan and proposals for Area Committees were on the

agenda. There was a presentation on Local Industrial Strategy for the South East which is largely platitudinous. It will be more productive for us to look at our own district economy rather than trying to think regionally. There was some discussion on the Open Golf at Sandwich next July. There is potential for us in this and Cllr Bonney is already aware of bookings being made in Swale.

I have also attended meetings of the Greater North Kent Leaders and the meeting of all Leaders across Kent, including KCC and Medway. At the former I was most interested to hear how much funding is still available in the TIGER fund that helps new start up businesses. It was to the credit of the previous administration that Swale made a number of successful bids for this funding in the past and it is a source of small-scale investment that we should explore.

At the Kent Leaders meeting there was an upbeat report from the current Police and Crime Commissioner and I have suggested to him that he should come and meet us in Swale in the not too distant future and before election campaigns for that post start in earnest. However, the overwhelming focus of that meeting was a discussion on a KCC proposal to put an Infrastructure First proposition to Government. This is not the same thing as the Kent and Medway Housing Strategy. Most Leaders, including myself, expressed reservations and concerns and so the Chair, the then Leader of KCC, with some insouciance concluded that we should go ahead with an approach to Government. I will explain a little more in the Leader's statement. I will also report on my attendance at the South East LEP meeting last Friday.

Of course, through the last month I have had a plethora of in-house meetings. I hope it is not required of this question that I list them all or all my activities as a ward councillor. Three internal communications I would like to mention. Firstly, I keep in regular contact with our Chief Executive, who is on sick leave but offers me valued informal guidance. I also had a most productive and enjoyable meeting with our in-house Swale Managers. We have also had the first of monthly meetings of the Delivery Board, where Senior Managers update the Deputy Leader and myself on progress on some of key and urgent priorities. The first meeting focussed on the Special Project Fund, the Waste contract with Biffa, Community Projects, Homelessness and the plan to increase our resources for planning and in particular the delivery of affordable housing.

During the month, I was also invited by a local developer applicant to attend a meeting along with the Cabinet Member for planning. Such requests can only be made on the assumption that the Leader of the Council might want to influence planning applications, other than those in the ward he or she represents. I have no intention of fostering such a delusion and rely instead on the appropriate Cabinet members to respond. I have not attended any such meetings and will not do so unless this Council is likely to be a partner in bringing forward a development and has a financial stake.

I apologise for the length of this answer. I have been as succinct as the question allowed".

**Supplementary Question and Response**

There was no supplementary question.

**Question 2 – Councillor Alan Horton**

“Last year Swale Borough Council conducted a review of the deployment of CCTV cameras throughout the Borough as required by the regulations and the surveillance code of practice. The review highlighted that in two cases there was no longer a justification for the continued deployments and the cameras were decommissioned. Members of the then minor opposition party challenged the decision both in members questions and also at Policy Development and Review Committee, with a clear message that they did not accept the Cabinet member's interpretation of the code of practice. Can the Cabinet Member advise the Council how many requests for a review of that interpretation and reinstatement of the cameras he has received since May and if appropriate the outcome of his review and the decisions made, in particular whether he has reinstated a camera or not?”

**Response – Cabinet Member for Community**

“I can confirm that I have not received any requests to review your (Cllr Hortons) interpretation of the code of practice.

I have not received directly any request for the reintroduction of any CCTV however I know that

- 1) Howard Avenue residents have sought the return of a CCTV camera
- 2) I have been approached by a Councillor on behalf of the Parish Council in Leysdown re the reintroduction of CCTV in Leysdown, but no formal request has been made via the Parish Council.

No cameras have been reinstated.

I have reviewed the Council's procedure for decommissioning cameras and I feel this is a sound well-constructed process which complies with current guidance.

I can confirm that the Council adheres to the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice and follows Home Office and the Information Commissioners Office guidance in relation to CCTV. All request for new or replacement/reintroduction of CCTV will be based on the guidance and facts prevailing at the time any such request is received”.

**Supplementary Question and Response**

There was no supplementary question.

**Question 3 – Councillor Tim Gibson**

“If I can take you back to your leader's statement to council on 11 September. You referred to the Council's obvious interest in the Sittingbourne town centre project as

the chief provider of funds with the greatest risk. Can you explain how Swale Borough Council finds itself in this position?"

### **Response – Leader**

"Thank you for your question and I will try and summarise my understanding of how the Council got where it is. Given that there are so many new Councillors who were only elected in May, I think it helpful to clarify the background.

In 2012 the Council signed a development agreement for an ambitious redevelopment of parts of the town centre. We then got 4 years of updates trumpeting lots of activity but no progress whatsoever was made in delivering anything.

The principal reason nothing happened was that there wasn't financial viability for a commercial funder in the development-so the people who Spirit approached would not provide the capital funding.

There was clearly a point in 2016 when the whole project could have been aborted. However, the then Cabinet decided to some opposition surprise that the Council would become the investor and owner of the Retail and Leisure development.

It was a period when many local authorities were attempting property investments as a provision against future budgetary challenges. As the opposition pointed out at the time, some of these investments were fraught with risk and indeed outcomes have not always been to the benefit of councils and their communities.

However, there was a financial case for doing it that was signed off by the section 151 Officer. There were expectations of a potential return of more than 6% if all went well. But although the maths could work out, there was clearly risk involved if market expectations proved too optimistic. We could argue that risk was not sufficiently balanced against possible gains. It can be further argued that the reputational risk of delivering nothing geared the argument towards taking the risk.

Having said this, it is in the interest of everyone on this Council to take a positive view of this project and to work to make it successful. It is a major property investment, where very little such investment has taken place before. It has the potential to be a success and to add to the cultural lives of people in the Borough".

### **Supplementary Question and Response**

There was no supplementary question.

### **Question 4 – Councillor Steve Davey**

"Can the cabinet member for housing explain the current procedures for assessing a priority case for homelessness, and give details of the officers that make that assessment?"

**Response – Cabinet Member for Housing**

“Prevention and Homelessness services provided by the Housing Options team is regulated by many statutory duties that prescribes those households who are entitled to local authority assistance, including what type of accommodation has to be provided and for how long.

Priority need is one of the tests which a homeless person needs to pass for the Council to decide what help with housing that they might be entitled to. Others include whether the person is eligible for homeless assistance in terms of their immigration status, actually homeless, homeless through no fault of their own or intentionally homeless and has a local connection with the local authority where they are making their application.

A homeless person with children (or pregnant) will automatically be in priority need.

A single, homeless person aged 16 or 17 (or under 21 and have been looked after at any time when between the ages of 16 and 18) will be in priority need, unless assessed as a looked after child.

In every other situation a single person will have to be assessed as 'vulnerable' in order to be in priority need.

Each assessment must focus on the impact of homelessness on the client when compared to a 'robust and healthy' ordinary person if rendered homeless i.e. how they are more at risk. This is by no means an easy job, the staff in the housing options team do their best to help people in what are stressful and emotional times for the individuals concerned. I think it important that we thank those in the housing option team & the partner agencies for the work they do.”

**Supplementary Question and Response**

In response to a question regarding the timescale, the Cabinet Member advised that the new Prevent Team should be active this month.

**Question 5 – Councillor Ken Rowles**

“What happened to Arriva Click?”

**Response – Cabinet Member for Economy and Property**

“The Company has stated that it is currently reviewing the ArrivaClick Sittingbourne pilot that has been operating since March 2017. As part of that review it is speaking with staff and analysing customer journeys and against the wider fixed bus network to look at overlaps. The company is also using customer insight that it has gained through regular engagement over the course of the pilot. As soon as the company has completed this review, which is anticipated to be by mid-October, ArrivaClick has confirmed that the position will be clarified. The company has indicated that it will write to the Council when the outcome of the review is confirmed and would be happy to answer any Member queries at that stage. We will, of course, remain in

touch with the management at ArrivaClick and update Members as more information becomes available”.

### **Supplementary Question and Response**

There was no supplementary question.

### **Question 6 – Councillor Benjamin Martin**

“In July the Council asked the cabinet to consider the best way of encouraging trade and festive good will. Has the cabinet considered this and if so what action will the cabinet be taking and why?”

### **Response – Cabinet Member for Environment**

#### **Response:**

“Cabinet have considered this matter carefully and received full information on the evaluations of the previous Christmas parking concessions. The evaluations identified that the cost of free parking, park and ride schemes and shuttle buses were not good value for money. Moreover, these measures did not achieve their intended aim of increasing footfall to the high streets.

The park and ride service cost about £63 per person per journey, for 111 passengers in 2017. The shuttle buses cost about £35 per person, for 371 passengers in 2017.

Although we acknowledge the matter of free parking is a well-received message by residents, there has never been any evidence from our surveys, or from retailer feedback, that the schemes have worked in their objective of increasing footfall, and of course spend, in the local economy. All day free parking provides a free parking option for those working in the high streets or residents living close by. This often led to car parks being full prior to the start of shoppers arriving.

Furthermore, surveys showed that over 99% of those asked said they would have come to the town regardless of the concession. Many respondents did not know about the concession before they arrived, despite expansive marketing efforts.

82% of customers said they would have driven and parked in the town centre and paid if the free parking concession had not been made available. The highest percentage in this category was 92% at Faversham. 16% of visitors responded that they would have travelled into the town centres by bus with a further 1% walking or cycling. This equates to a total of 99% of visitors coming into the towns regardless of any concession being applied. Furthermore, providing incentives for people to use their car to drive into town, rather than use a bus, walk or cycle is contrary to objective of the Climate and Ecological Emergency motion that Council recently passed.

The motion proposed by Cllr Hampshire would result in a projected loss of income of £80,000 plus an estimated additional cost of £20,000 for the provision of buses between the towns. This is clearly not a wise use of public money as the evidence



shows the measures are entirely ineffective in achieving the stated aim. No doubt, that is why the previous administration did not offer any parking concessions in 2018.

In light of the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency motion, Cabinet did consider supporting buses from the rural areas rather than encouraging more cars into the town centres. However, the evidence I have already described suggests that ad-hoc provision of services is not cost effective. It takes time to establish the routes, and enable residents to form the habit of using bus services regularly. This is something we will be researching further for the future.

The cabinet do wish support attendance at ceremonies and services on Remembrance Sunday. To that end we have resolved to provide free parking in council car parks on 10<sup>th</sup> November.

Cabinet have decided to return to the Festive Grants scheme for 2019 and have recently launched the application process. £25,000 will be available to town and parish councils, retailer groups or resident organisations, in order to plan and prepare Christmas events, late night shopping events, or for the purchase of Christmas lighting and decorations. We feel that involving the retailers and community in the use of this funding will be much more effective in bringing trade to our shopping locations than token offers of free parking. Events can be planned when parking is already free in the evenings and where the benefits of Christmas lights and decorations can be seen.

We acknowledge the need to support our local traders and my Cabinet colleague for Economy and Property is working on plans for the high streets. Our special projects fund is also looking to improve the public realm and facilities that will encourage further people into our towns".

### **Supplementary Question and Response**

There was no supplementary question.

### **Question 7 – Councillor Cameron Beart**

"The Council Beach Hut Policy went before the Policy Development and Review Committee on the 6th November 2018 and received positive cross-party support. It was subsequently added to the Cabinet Forward Plan on the 1st March 2019. Could the Cabinet Member for Communities please explain why this item has not been taken forward and is now not due before Cabinet for determination in this civic year?"

### **Response – Cabinet Member for Economy and Property**

"Cllr Beart is correct in the timescales and that the draft principles 'document' (not policy) gained good support from PDRC. These principles needed to be turned into a sound policy and action plan and whilst this work was undertaken in draft, it was agreed with the previous Cabinet Members that the policy would be taken for formal adoption after the elections.

With key projects in the leisure department of Faversham Recreation Ground and leisure centre refurbishments taking up staff resource, combined with the wide scale change in the Council's administration, the policy has not been brought forward at the current time.

Work however continues and key officers recently attended a Minster Parish Council meeting as part of the administration's new approach of consulting wider with the community. This included draft plans for a new toilet block at Minster Leas which will be going for planning permission in the coming months.

Informal Cabinet will be receiving further information in the coming months and will then decide when it is appropriate to bring the policy forward.

We have noted recent press articles which contain some misinformation, and this is exactly why the policy needs to come forward. It is vital that these seafront assets are available and enjoyed by residents and tourists alike".

### **Supplementary Question and Response**

The Member clarified that he did not own a beach hut, and asked the Cabinet Member if she condemned the vandalism of the beach huts at Minster Leas, and asked whether the new toilet block would be ready in time for the 2020 tourist season?

The Cabinet Member condemned and shared her frustration regarding the vandalism. In respect of the new toilet block she was aware of some concerns raised and advised that it was high on her priority list.

## **284 LEADER'S STATEMENT**

The Leader advised that last Friday he had attended the Strategy Board meeting in Purfleet of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on behalf of Kent and Medway. This was one of 38 such partnerships across the country, responsible to government for funding enterprise, investment and economic growth in Kent, Essex and East Sussex.

The Leader South East LEP was the largest LEP outside London and it had been felt for a long time that it was too large. The concept that a community of common economic interest could include three large counties had been questioned for several years but the Government had refused to adapt. The Leader was sure that there must be common ground of some sort between us and, say, Braintree in Essex but he was not convinced it was local.

More recently the Government had decreed that each LEP should be reduced to 20 permanent members, whatever their comparative sizes. When SELEP questioned the viability of this they were told to conform or get no funding. The Leader said that this was quite alarming for Kent. It reduced Kent and Medway to only seven representatives and since five of them were from the business community and as Kent County Council (KCC) and Medway Unitary were higher tier authorities, this meant that Kent District Councils like Swale were excluded from direct representation.

Given the very significant funding role of the LEP, the Leader said that the Council must do what it could to play a role in Kent and Medway groups that could act as a lobbying force. SELEP made key decisions on the allocation of Local Growth Funds, and the Growing Places Fund that provided capital to start-up and growing businesses.

The Leader advised that extensive discussions were taking place between them and U and I of the Spirit of Sittingbourne on those considerable parts of the Development Agreement that were yet to be executed. Because the outcome was far from clear and not yet one that we would favour, the Cabinet on 25 September 2019 extended the period in which the partners could resolve where they stand in relation to the agreement. That extension lasted until 19 October 2019 and that would be the last such delay in resolving where we might go. Meanwhile, progress was being made on phase 1. As indicated at the last meeting, the Leader said it would be necessary for the Planning Committee to consider an amendment to the original planning agreement, and this would happen soon.

Interesting discussions had taken place about making the best aesthetic use of the public space between the development and the station. They would need to consider the budget implication of any project and consider the artistic expectations of the thousands of people we hope it will attract.

It was a major concern of this Council to ensure that all the units were let, and there were now four out of seven. Cabinet Members had had a very well-informed briefing from Savills who were acting as consultants. The reality was that the market for the kind of diners originally envisaged for all seven units had declined in the last two years and it might be sensible to consider more realistic alternatives to national chains, looking more regionally or at other options consistent with an attractive leisure use. Cllrs Monique Bonney, Sarah Stephen and the Leader had a very encouraging meeting on Monday with Light Cinema and had explored other exciting options for the leisure area.

Earlier in the meeting the Leader referred to a KCC proposal to Government to bring forward major infrastructure investment in the County in return for the County delivering on Government housing targets. The variation on what the Council had come to expect was that instead of each district attempting to meet separate targets, many like us in the face of infrastructure restraints but also in a market where such figures were unrealistic, the Government would be expected to take a commitment from the County as a whole, so that districts delivering above expectation would compensate for those that could not meet the target. It was expected that the East Kent Districts would add new housing above their Local Plan targets, through the adoption of garden community investments. They would do so with the expectation that they would be the principal beneficiaries of infrastructure investment. That implied that if Swale was below target, it would get less infrastructure, but there were instances where the location of infrastructure in Swale might have a significant impact on the East Kent economy, Brenley Corner for example.

The Leader considered that this was superficially attractive, depending on whether the Government would ever buy into this. However, he did express caution at the Kent Leaders meeting. There was an obvious concern that this looked like a

concession to Government, that the Government would take the bonus of extra East Kent homes but did not relax the pressure on councils to take the additional housing with no regard for infrastructure. There was also the inevitable danger that the East Kent districts did not meet those targets and that would have consequences.

The Leader advised that KCC had a new leader, and he hoped that the Council would build a stronger relationship with the new leader.

The Leader concluded his statement by saying that this was the last full council meeting to be graced by our head of democratic services Katherine Bescoby. Those of us who have been here for many years have become used to her extraordinary competence and humour. It would be strange to hold election counts at the soulless Sports Hall in Sittingbourne without seeing Katherine gliding calmly from table to table. Our loss would be Canterbury City's gain and he was sure that Members all wished her happiness in the future.

The Leader of the Conservative Group was invited to respond. He began by thanking the Leader for the update, acknowledging the comments regarding SELEP and that representation by district councils in Kent on SELEP was woeful. He welcomed Roger Gough as the new Leader of KCC, and he hoped the Council could build a productive relationship with him, and wished him well for the future. He also recognised the work undertaken by Paul Carter CBE throughout his career throughout local government both at district and county level, in particular being Leader for 14 years during unprecedented times, and his influence nationally referring to his work as Chair of County Council's Network and the Grenfell Task and Finish Group. He also recognised the contribution made by Katherine Bescoby and personally thanked her for her support and guidance over the years and wished her well for the future in her new role. The Mayor said that Katherine had been an outstanding officer and also added his thanks.

The Leader advised that time had not allowed for him to talk about Paul Carter in his update, but praised him for his ability to grasp detail quickly (regardless of the politics) and his sound judgement, and his pride in Kent, and wished him well for the future.

## **285 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2018/19**

The Leader introduced the report, which had been considered by the Audit Committee on 18 September 2019, praising officers for the way in which the treasury management role was undertaken. He proposed the recommendations in the report. This was seconded by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance.

The Leader of the Conservative Group endorsed the comments made by the Leader, drawing attention to paragraphs 2.8, 2.12 and 2.22, and asked for thanks to be relayed to the team.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee added his thanks to officers and spoke of the Audit Committee's agreement of the report.

**Resolved:**

**(1) That the Treasury Management Stewardship Report for 2018/19 be approved.**

**(2) That the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators within the report be approved.**

**286 BREXIT PREPAREDNESS**

The Leader introduced the report which gave an update on preparations for Brexit, referring to the work of the Resilience Team and the coordination of work with KCC and the Police. He emphasised the importance of community leadership and the role that councillors would need to play in communicating with residents, regardless of their own political views on the subject.

The Leader drew attention to various sections of the report, in particular paragraph 2.4, referring to the uncertainties around what would happen and the potential problems identified in the report that may or may not occur. Whilst Members might have strong opinions on the subject, he encouraged Members to play their part in helping residents to understand what was happening. He emphasised that key priorities for the Council were to maintain services, in particular for waste collection and food safety and certification, and drew attention to the funding that been provided to assist with the preparations. He asked Members to note the report.

This was seconded by the Deputy Leader who reserved his right to speak.

The Leader of the Conservative Group thanked the Leader for the update and agreed that Members had an important role to play in communicating with residents and that political allegiances should be put aside. He clarified that if extra police were required, resources would not be diverted from local policing.

A discussion ensued on the report which was welcomed, during which Officers were thanked for their work on this. Debate centred around the following themes:

- Acknowledgement of the fishing and pharmaceutical industries;
- The method of communication with parish councils that were not members of the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC);
- How much money had been allocated to the Port of Sheerness;
- The report was useful and would help to reassure members and residents;
- Clarification that KCC had been given powers to direct traffic but not to enforce, which remained the responsibility of the Police;
- The need for community cohesion and to show community leadership, and for Members to work together;
- Encouragement to use social media to communicate with residents;
- Whether problems with waste collection in Teynham and Lynsted would be resolved before 31 October 2019;
- The need to coordinate work via the Kent Resilience Forum;
- Whilst social media was a useful tool, many residents did not have access and so other methods of communication were needed.

- Given the potential for problems on the highway, the need for KCC to keep their work programme under review. It was confirmed that only essential and emergency work would take place; and
- Confirmation that arrangements for access to fuel had been considered.

In seconding the proposal, the Deputy Leader confirmed that KALC had been involved at an early stage and that Members had a role to play in communicating with their Parish and Town Councils too, and encouraged Members to liaise with any community halls in their areas. He encouraged Members to follow the Swale Borough Council Facebook and Twitter accounts and to share posts/re-tweet.

In summing-up, the Leader emphasised the importance for Members, KCC and the Police to work together, and that he was sure the issue of access to fuel had been considered by the Kent Resilience Forum. He confirmed that the amount allocated by the Government to Sheerness Port was £1million.

***Resolved:***

***(1) That the update on the work being undertaken on Brexit preparedness be noted.***

**287 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NOTING**

The Council was asked to note the recommendations from the Audit Committee Meeting held on 18 September 2019, as separate reports on the item had been considered earlier in the meeting.

***Resolved:***

***(1) That recommendations in Minute No. 234 of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 18 September 2019 be noted.***

Chairman

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