
Economy and Property Committee

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Tuesday, 8 July 2025 from 7.00 pm - 7.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Monique Bonney (Chair), Hayden Brawn, Ann Cavanagh, Shelley Cheesman, Alastair Gould (Substitute for Councillor Terry Thompson), Angela Harrison (Substitute for Councillor Simon Clark), Peter Marchington, Kieran Mishchuk, Lee-Anne Moore, Richard Palmer, Carrie Pollard, Sarah Stephen, Mark Tucker and Ashley Wise (Vice-Chair).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Martyn Cassell, Joanne Johnson and Kellie MacKenzie.

OFFICER PRESENT (VIRTUALLY): David Johnson.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Simon Clark, Alex Eyre and Terry Thompson.

153 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

154 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 April 2025 (Minute Nos. 797 – 805) and the Meeting held on 14 May 2025 (Minute Nos. 22-23) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

155 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Monique Bonney declared an interest in respect of 34 High Street, Sittingbourne – Disposal, as she was a Director of the company that held the property to be considered. Councillor Bonney left the meeting when the item was considered, and the item was chaired by the Vice-Chair.

156 **Forward Decisions Plan**

The Head of Place introduced the Forward Decisions Plan (FDP) and referred to the new items: Sheerness Revival (Levelling-Up Fund) – Update and interim evaluation for consideration at the 8 October 2025 meeting, and the Queenborough and Rushenden (Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)) – update and interim evaluation, and it was hoped that representatives from Homes England would be able to attend when the item was considered.

Members welcomed the addition of both items, and the Chair asked that the Queenborough and Rushenden HIF update be considered as soon as possible.

A Member requested that Fountain Street, Sittingbourne and any other property the Council was disposing of be included on the FDP. The Chair said that an update email would be circulated to Members.

Resolved:

- (1) ***That the Forward Decisions Plan be noted.***

157 Change to the Order of Business

The Chair altered the order of business as minuted.

158 Beach Hut Phase 1 Tender Award Update

The Head of Environment and Leisure introduced the report which informed members that despite numerous attempts to contact the successful company following the award for Lot 1 in December 2024, the Council had gone back to tender in February 2025. The report set out the tender process and recommended the appointment of a new contractor.

The Head of Environment and Leisure explained that he was not aware of this situation happening before and the Council's Management Team had explored ways of mitigating against this situation happening again and remove the need for the item to be considered by Committee again and go through a new tender process. He said a standard recommendation within procurement reports had been suggested, whereby if unable to award to the 'winning' contractor, that officers had delegated powers to award to the second tender. The Council's Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer had proposed a paragraph, which the Head of Environment and Leisure proposed to be included as a second recommendation: That the Committee allow delegated authority to the Head of Service to award to a suitable alternative tenderer in the event that a contract cannot be executed with the highest scoring tenderer.

The Chair proposed the following amendment: "...to award to **the next** suitable alternative..." This was seconded by Councillor Richard Palmer.

Members considered the amendment and points raised included:

- Needed to be clearer that it would be considered in order of the evaluation scoring;
- Should add that the Economy and Property Committee Chair and Group Leaders be notified;
- would prefer the relevant committee spokesperson be notified, not Group Leaders; and
- the proposed recommendation was fine for this tender, but may not be for future tenders.

In response, the Head of Environment and Leisure agreed to seek further clarification from the Council's Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, on the wording of any 'standard' recommendation for future tenders. However, he also felt that it was upon the report author to state in the body of the report, whether other contractors who took part in the tender would be suitable or not. That would give Members the confidence to approve the recommendation. The Chair confirmed that the proposed recommendation was 'specific' to the Beach Hut Phase 1 Tender Award.

The Chair moved the following amendment to the amendment: That the Chair and group spokespeople of the Economy and Property Committee be notified. This was seconded by Councillor Ashley Wise.

The Chair moved the recommendation in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Richard Palmer.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Committee approves the appointment of Company D for completion of Lot 1 at a sum of £223,588.***
- (2) That the Committee allow delegated authority to the Head of Service to award to the next suitable alternative tenderer in the event that a contract cannot be executed with the highest scoring tenderer. That the Chair and Group spokespeople of the Economy and Property Committee be notified.***

159 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The confidential appendix was not discussed so there was no need to go into closed session.

160 Appendix I - Beach Hut Phase 1 Tender Award

The confidential appendix was not discussed so there was no need to go into closed session.

161 34 High Street, Sittingbourne - Disposal

The Vice-Chair took the chair for this item.

The Interim Property Services Manager introduced the item as set out in the report.

Councillor Mark Tucker proposed the recommendations, and these were seconded by Councillor Richard Palmer.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Council in its role as shareholder in Opportunities for Sittingbourne Limited agree with its partner U+I Ltd to dispose of the freehold interest in 34 High Street, Sittingbourne.***
- (2) That the property be declared surplus and placed on the open market to affect a freehold disposal.***
- (3) That the Head of Place be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services, to negotiate a freehold sale of the property and implement any subsequent winding up of Opportunities for Sittingbourne Limited and to complete the necessary legal formalities.***

Recommended:

- (1) That the Policy and Resources Committee endorse the winding up of Opportunities for Sittingbourne Limited on a successful disposal of 34 High Street, Sittingbourne.***

162 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The confidential appendix was not discussed so there was no need to go into closed session.

163 Appendix 2 - 34 High Street, Sittingbourne

The confidential appendix was not discussed so there was no need to go into closed session.

Chair

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