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MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the meeting of the Council for the District of Dover held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Wednesday, 30 November 2016 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor S S Chandler

Councillors:

S F Bannister	R J Frost	S M Le Chevalier
T J Bartlett	B Gardner	K Mills
P M Beresford	B J Glayzer	K E Morris
T A Bond	D Hannent	D P Murphy
P M Brivio	P J Hawkins	M J Ovenden
B W Butcher	P G Heath	A S Pollitt
P I Carter	J M Heron	G Rapley
M D Conolly	S Hill	M Rose
M I Cosin	M J Holloway	D A Sargent
D G Cronk	S J Jones	F J W Scales
N Dixon	L A Keen	P Walker
M R Eddy	N S Kenton	P M Wallace
A Friend	P S Le Chevalier	P A Watkins

Officers: Chief Executive
Director of Environment and Corporate Assets
Director of Finance, Housing and Community
Director of Governance
Team Leader – Democratic Support

37 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J S Back, N J Collor, S C Manion and A F Richardson.

38 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 20 July 2016 and 21 September 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A S Pollitt made a Voluntary Announcement of Other Interest (VAOI) in Minute No. 46 (Motions) due to his brother being a former mine worker.

40 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman of the Council made the following announcements:

- (a) The death of former Councillor J M Munt

The Chairman announced the sad news of the death of former Councillor J M Munt. She had served on the Council from 1997 until 2011 representing initially the Priory Ward and later the Maxton, Elms Vale and Priory Ward. She had been a former Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet member for the Labour Group.

The Chairman called upon the group leaders present to speak and they paid tribute to the service and character of Councillor Munt. Councillor S F Bannister also spoke about Councillor Munt praising her commitment to Dover's heritage and environment.

The Council stood in silence as a mark of respect.

41 LEADER'S TIME

The Leader of the Council, Councillor P A Watkins, included the following matters in his report:

- (a) The on-going discussions on an East Kent 5 authority merger as a result of the financial pressures on 4 of the 5 authorities. The business case report was expected to be ready in January 2017 and it would go to Cabinet, Scrutiny and an extraordinary Council in March 2017.

The Chief Executives had visited other authorities looking at mergers and there had been a meeting with Kent Association of Local Council representatives to discuss the implications of a merger for the parishes. There had also been meetings with the business community and the 6 local Members of Parliament.

The proposals would not include a unitary authority for East Kent as it wouldn't be supported by the Government.

Any devolution of powers from Kent County Council would have to be appended separately and would need to be linked with finance.

- (b) The Council was waiting to see if the Autumn Statement had provision for infrastructure funding as the dualling of the A2 had not been included in the latest transport infrastructure projects.
- (c) Master Planning for the Dover Town area was underway covering the waterfront, Bench street and through to the Town Hall. The consultation had so far identified similar issues from respondents.
- (d) The St James' site had the foundations going down for the cinema and hotel and steel frames would be going up in early January.

The Leader of the Main Opposition Labour Group, Councillor M R Eddy, included the following matters in his report:

- (a) That the East Kent merger proposals had a huge impact on local residents. While he could see some of the advantages of the proposals in respect of highways and waste there was concern that the new authority would end up responsible for pot holes but not strategic highways planning.

There was a need for new revenue streams as Government finance for local government was reduced and this put pressure on local charitable services.

There were also implications for parish councils if services were passed to them without sufficient funding arrangements.

- (b) To welcome the progress being made on the St James' development and to express the hope that it would help with the Council's finances.

In the absence of the Leader of the Minority Opposition UK Independence Party Group, Councillor A F Richardson, no report was given.

The Leader of the Council exercised his right of reply.

42 SEAT ALLOCATION AND GROUP APPOINTMENTS

Councillor P A Watkins advised that Councillors N J Collor and K E Morris were to be appointed as the designated substitute members on the East Kent Services Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2016/17.

RESOLVED: That the appointment of Councillors N J Collor and K E Morris as the designated substitute members on the East Kent Services Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2016/17 be noted.

43 THANET PARKWAY PRESENTATION

The Chairman announced that the Thanet Parkway Presentation had been withdrawn.

44 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public received within the notice period.

45 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

In accordance with Rule 12(1) of the Council Procedure Rules, Members of the Cabinet responded to the following questions:

- (1) Councillor P M Brivio asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor P A Watkins:

“Last year this Council agreed to accommodate twelve Syrian refugee families in line with Government policy. How many families have been accommodated in the district and can the Leader outline the process of integration?”

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor P M Beresford advised that 2 families had been housed in the district and the Council was continuing to try and identify additional suitable housing in the private sector that was suitable. A comprehensive support package co-ordinated by Migrant Help was in place which include improving

their English language skills and registering them with GPs and local schools.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.5, Councillor P M Brivio exercised her right to ask one supplementary question.

- (2) Councillor A S Pollitt asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor P A Watkins:

“Can the Leader inform the Council what progress has been made towards providing a cinema again in the Regent Cinema building?”

In response the Portfolio Holder for Property Management and Public Protection, Councillor T J Bartlett, advised that the developers had been made aware of the Cabinet decision in October 2016 and he encouraged them to submit a planning application without further delay.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.5, Councillor A S Pollitt exercised his right to ask one supplementary question and asked for a written copy of the answer.

- (3) Councillor P Walker asked the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Waste and Planning, Councillor N S Kenton:

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Waste and Planning state in detail why the Dover Soup Kitchen has been banished from the Pencester Gardens Car Park site and what arrangements, if any, have been made by the Council to aid the Soup Kitchen's relocation?”

In response the Portfolio Holder for Property Management and Public Protection, Councillor T J Bartlett, thanked the Dover Soup Kitchen for the work they did and advised that a new site had been identified in Adrian Street.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.5, Councillor P Walker exercised his right to ask one supplementary question.

- (4) Councillor D A Sargent asked the Portfolio Holder for Access and Licensing, Councillor N J Collor:

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Access inform the Council of the reasons for the continued delay by Government in installing interactive speed signs on the A20 between Folkestone and Dover?”

In the absence of Councillor N J Collor the Leader of the Council, Councillor P A Watkins, advised that the Council had been lobbying decision makers to install the promised interactive speed signs without further delay and hoped that Highways England did not listen to those agencies objecting to the signage.

Councillor D A Sargent declined his opportunity to ask a supplementary question.

- (5) Councillor M R Eddy asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Wellbeing, Councillor P M Beresford:

“Can the Portfolio for Housing, Health and Wellbeing inform the Council of the Council's involvement in the NHS's Sustainability and Transformation Plan [STP] for Kent and Medway and are there any concerns about what the STP may mean for future health care in this area?”

In response the Leader of the Council, Councillor P A Watkins, advised that the aim of the STP was to put the NHS on a sound financial footing by 2020. A wide range of groups from health and social care were involved in developing the STP. The plans also included proposals for a new Accident and Emergency Centre located at a site identified in the Canterbury Local Plan.

The Council had been updated on the progress of the STP through the South Kent Coast Health and Wellbeing Board.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.5, Councillor M R Eddy exercised his right to ask one supplementary question.

46 MOTIONS

- (1) In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13, Councillor M R Eddy gave notice of his intention to move the following Motion:

“This Council views with concern the injustice whereby the Treasury receives 50% of surpluses from the Mineworkers Pension Scheme, accumulating over £3 billion to date. This Council requests that the Public Accounts Committee conduct an independent review of the situation to address this unfair arrangement and calls upon MPs to take up the case for further action in Parliament.”

The Motion was duly seconded by Councillor P J Hawkins.

On being put to the meeting the Motion was CARRIED and it was

RESOLVED: This Council views with concern the injustice whereby the Treasury receives 50% of surpluses from the Mineworkers Pension Scheme, accumulating over £3 billion to date. This Council requests that the Public Accounts Committee conduct an independent review of the situation to address this unfair arrangement and calls upon MPs to take up the case for further action in Parliament.

47 RESTORATION OF MAISON DIEU

It was moved by Councillor T J Bartlett, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the budget and policy framework be amended to increase the monies allocated to the restoration of Maison Dieu project from £2 million to £3 million in the capital programme.

48 APPOINTMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S EXTERNAL AUDITORS

The Director of Finance, Housing and Community presented the report on the Appointment of the Council's External Auditors.

It was moved by Councillor P G Heath, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Council accept the invitation from Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA) to be an "opted in authority" to enable the PSAA to appoint an auditor for the Council for each of the five financial years beginning from 1 April 2018.

49 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2017/18

The Director of Finance, Housing and Community presented the report on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18.

It was moved by Councillor M D Conolly, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the following revisions to the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (in respect of working age Council Tax payers) for the financial year 2017/18 be approved:

- (a) That the current minimum contribution towards their Council Tax made by recipients of Council Tax Support be increased from 6.0% to 10.0%.
- (b) That the maximum savings that a council tax payer liable to pay council tax can have and still claim Council Tax Support be reduced from £16,000 to £6,000.
- (c) That a minimum income be used within the calculation for Self-Employed Council Tax payers after 12 months of self-employment.
- (d) That the maximum level of Council Tax support is restricted to the equivalent of a Band D property charge.
- (e) That only the first two children in a family will be included in the calculation for children born after April 2017. (Some exceptions will apply).
- (f) That the Family Premium is not included in the calculation of Council Tax Support for all new working age Council Tax payers.
- (g) That the period for which a late claim can be backdated is reduced to one month.
- (h) That the period for which a Council Tax payer can be absent from Great Britain and still claim Council tax Support be reduced to 4 weeks (with some exclusions for certain occupations).

- (i) That the element of the work related component of Employment and Support Allowance not be included in the Council Tax Support Calculation.
- (j) That DDC works towards making determinations pursuant to section 17A(7) Local Government Finance Act 1992 of classes of cases in which the amount of council tax which a person is liable to pay will be reduced in accordance with section 13 A(1)(c) Local Government Finance Act 1992 from April 2017, in order to provide a safety net for council tax payers experiencing extreme difficulty paying their Council Tax.
- (k) That Members note the Equalities Impact Assessment as detailed in Annex 4.

50 REVISED 2016/17 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Director of Finance, Housing and Community presented the report on the Revised 2016/17 Treasury Management Strategy.

The Chairman advised that any discussions relating to the Property Investment Strategy would need to be conducted under that item in the agenda.

The consensus of opinion was that it would be helpful to discuss the Property Investment Strategy first and Members agreed to vary the order of the agenda to take that item next.

51 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor D Hannent, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business on the grounds that the items to be considered involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

52 PROPERTY INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Director of Finance, Housing and Community presented the report on the Property Investment Strategy.

It was moved by Councillor M D Conolly, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: (a) That a supplementary capital budget of £200 million, for the acquisition of commercial and residential assets for the economic regeneration and well-being of the district and for investment purposes, be approved.

- (b) That a supplementary revenue budget of £200,000 from the Regeneration Reserve, for the use of appropriate external

professional support to establish a framework and assist with acquiring properties, be approved.

- (c) That the implementation of the Investment Property Strategy, and the investment strategy criteria set out at Appendix 1 of the report, be adopted.

(Councillor D Hannent requested that his abstention from voting be recorded in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.5)

(Councillor R J Frost requested that his vote against be recorded in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.5)

53 READMISSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the press and public be readmitted to the meeting for the remaining items of business.

54 REVISED 2016/17 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

It was moved by Councillor M D Conolly, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the revised 2016/17 Treasury Management Strategy be approved.

(Councillor R J Frost requested that his vote against be recorded in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.5)

55 URGENT BUSINESS TIME

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm