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MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the meeting of the Council for the District of Dover held as a Teams Live Events remote meeting on Wednesday, 21 October 2020 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor M D Conolly

Councillors:

D Hannent	N J Collor	D P Murphy
J S Back	D G Cronk	O C de R Richardson
T J Bartlett	J P Haste	J Rose
M Bates	M J Holloway	M Rose
D G Beaney	S J Jones	C A Vinson
S H Beer	P D Jull	R S Walkden
E A Biggs	L A Keen	P Walker
T A Bond	N S Kenton	H M Williams
P M Brivio	S C Manion	C F Woodgate
S S Chandler	K Mills	C D Zosseder

Officers: Chief Executive
Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)
Strategic Director (Corporate Resources)
Solicitor to the Council
Democratic Services Manager
Democratic Services Officer

16 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

17 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

19 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor M D Conolly, made the following announcements:

- (a) That he had hosted a virtual thank you presentation for Together4Dover which had been attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent (Lady Colgrain), the High Sheriff of Kent (Mrs Millwater), the Chairman of Kent County Council (Councillor Gibbons) and the Mayor of Dover (Councillor Cowan).
- (b) To advise that Councillor J P J Burman (Mill Hill Ward) had recently resigned and to thank him for his service and wish him well for the future.

- (c) To advise Members of the news of the death of former Mayor of Dover, Bob Markham.
- (d) That he had sent a message of condolences to the family of Mandy Pile, Waste Services Manager, following the sad news of her unexpected death. The Chairman spoke about her great service to the council and how she would be missed and was joined by the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition in paying tribute to her.

The Chairman asked Members to observe a minute of silence as a mark of respect.

20

LEADER'S TIME

The Leader of the Council, Councillor T J Bartlett, included the following matters in his report:

- (a) To remind Members of the 'Hands. Face. Space' message from the government and the need for everyone to do their part in combating the spread of Covid-19.
- (b) To express his sympathy for those who had lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic and he noted that this had hit the young particularly hard.
- (c) To advise that the Council had been awarded funds from the Heritage Lottery to undertake restoration work at the Maison Dieu. This would include the development of a new visitor entrance and a café in the former cells. He extended his thanks to everyone involved in the project and praised the contribution of the Council's consultants on the project.
- (d) To advise that a meeting of the Dover Town Regeneration Advisory Board (PAG) would be held in December 2020.
- (e) To advise that although the Council's budget would be balanced for 2020/21 there were tough choices to be taken in 2021 for the 2021/22 budget.
- (f) To highlight the works on the new entrance for the Dover Museum and its Dunkirk exhibit.
- (g) To thank volunteers for their hard work in a recent litter collection.
- (h) To praise the projects funded by the Community Grant Scheme and thank community services for their work.
- (i) That he had informed about the planned lorry park in the Dover District but had been unable to say anything publicly as the information was confidential.
- (j) That the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation would commence in January 2021.
- (k) That he opposed the increased housing target set by the Government.
- (l) That the Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott, had visited the Council's new CCTV centre and had been advised of its successes. In addition, there would be an additional six police officers allocated to the Dover District.

- (m) To welcome the housing service return in-house and to thank ICT for their work in ensuring a smooth handover.
- (n) That the Council had made two bids for funding to tackle homelessness, including a capital funding bid for accommodation for rough sleepers.

The Leader of the Opposition Labour Group, Councillor K Mills, included the following matters in his report:

- (a) To welcome the news concerning the works for Maison Dieu.
- (b) To suggest that the co-innovation hub could be expanded to other areas of the district.
- (c) To point to the increasing need for grants arising from the impact of Covid-19 and the pressure on the Council's grants scheme.
- (d) To welcome the news of increased police numbers in the district but to emphasise that this needed to be an increase in front line staff rather than managers.
- (e) To thank former councillor J P J Burman for his contribution during his time as a councillor and to wish him the best for the future.
- (f) To welcome the return of the housing service to council control. There were many lessons to be learnt from East Kent Housing's management of the service and it was not clear what the final cost of bringing the service up to standard would be. In addition, there was a need to rebuild confidence in the service although he pointed to the previous management for this rather than officers.
- (g) To welcome the news of a government minister's visit to Dover and request a presentation for Members on EU Exit, including details of the Kent Access Permit.
- (h) To ask if there had been any progress on the issue of consultation for rural car park charging.
- (i) That the parking capacity at Dover Priory was not sufficient to meet demand and parking was spilling out into surrounding streets and impacting on residents. While a journey time of under 1 hour to London would open Dover to investment there was a need to be mindful of the needs of local residents.
- (j) To recognise the distress crime can cause victims and recognise the courage of those who come forward to report crimes despite this pressure.

In response the Leader of the Council advised:

- (a) That he shared concerns on the demand for grants and encouraged more people to join the DDC lotto as the money raised from this was used for grant funding. A cross-party group was looking into the matter.

- (b) That he would check on the details of additional policing provision for the Dover District.
- (c) That he had asked the Government for clarification on the Kent Access Permit and would provide Councillor K Mills with details once he had received a response. The Chief Executive suggested that a briefing could be provided for Members on this and other related matters.

21 SEAT ALLOCATION AND GROUP APPOINTMENTS

It was moved by Councillor K Mills, duly seconded by Councillor P M Brivio, and

RESOLVED: That Councillor C F Woodgate be appointed to the Planning Committee to fill the vacancy in the Labour Group allocation arising from the resignation of Councillor J P J Burman.

22 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

- (1) In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11 (as amended by Council Procedure Rule 28.9), a question from Keith Sansum was put to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Corporate Property, Councillor O C de R Richardson:

“What DDC proposes to do to rectify the shortage of toilets in Dover?”

In response Councillor O C de R Richardson stated that he would like to thank Mr Sansum for his question and that in summary Dover District Council did not envisage more public lavatories within Dover in the near future.

He advised that since becoming a district councillor the provision of public lavatories within the District was an issue that was close to his heart. In the Autumn of last year he had undertaken a tour of all 17 public lavatories in the District with his wife in response to a request from the then Leader and had written a paper on how they could be improved. He recognised how important public lavatories were for people across the district, especially the elderly and disabled.

Public lavatories were not a statutory responsibility of the Council and elsewhere in the country many had been passed to Town and Parish Councils or closed completely. Indeed, the BBC had said that in 37 areas, major councils no longer ran any public conveniences. Within Dover Town there were presently three public lavatories, two run by the District and one run by Dover Town Council. There had been a fourth run by Dover Town Council but it had decided to close it. The two run by Dover District Council (Stembrook Carpark & Connaught Park) were open from dawn to dusk, 365 days a year and cleaned three times a day. The one run by Dover Town Council had opening hours that were not regular. The two District lavatories cost over £20,000 per year to operate and despite extremely tight finances at Dover District Council the Connaught Park lavatories had recently been repainted externally by the Council’s in-house Asset Maintenance Team, who received much positive feedback from those using Connaught Park.

Dover Harbour Board were responsible for the lavatory on the seafront, but they had demolished it and made no replacement provision.

He stated that he would endeavour to ensure that the lavatories in the hands of the District Council continued to be free, well maintained and accessible by all.

- (2) In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11 (as amended by Council Procedure Rule 28.9), a question from Sarah Gleave was put to the Leader of the Council, Councillor T J Bartlett:

“Across Kent, this year, there is immense concern about the disempowerment of Kent District and Borough Councils / LPAs by Conservative central govt through Johnson / Jenrick’s English Planning Reform White Paper, and standard housing proposals which double Kent housing targets. We hear ‘Dover faces the greatest increase of all, a scarcely credible 125% hike on its current target potentially 1279 homes per year’. Alas, Dover’s MP is not one of the 11 Kent MPs protesting that ‘new Local Plans will be left in tatters... empowering developers to determine which sites are prioritized for construction and sidelining... democratic planning process’. Have all 19 Conservative cllrs and all opposition cllrs, protested about Johnson / Jenrick’s Planning White Paper, (possibly with reference to the LGA report ‘Delivery of Council housing: developing a stimulus package post-pandemic’ - for high quality, genuinely affordable homes in communities) and if not, why not?”

In response the Leader of the Council thanked Ms Gleave for raising this issue as it provided him with an opportunity to assure both the questioner and local communities that the Council shared her concerns regarding the government’s planning proposals. The Cabinet had considered and agreed a detailed response to the consultation at the meeting on October 5th and given the level of opposition being voiced by many stakeholders it was hoped that the government would reconsider and amend its plans.

- (3) In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11 (as amended by Council Procedure Rule 28.9), a question from Alison Kuznets was put to the Leader of the Council, Councillor T J Bartlett:

“There have been two recent instances of initiatives being implemented without genuine public consultation among local residents who are affected personally. One is the new fast-track bus road due to join the Dover Rd in Guston, (which is expected to run across the site proposed for a clearance lorry park), the other is the bus & cycle lane on the Maison Dieu Road, Dover. In the future will DDC introduce a local Dover climate forum, so that residents, groups and parish councils, have a means of commenting on climate-change mitigation and adaptation measures before they are decided on?”

In response the Leader of the Council stated that the Council was committed to engagement with the wider community and that any proposal which had an impact on the community was expected to be subject to some form of public consultation.

In regard to the FastTrack bus route, the proposal was featured in the current Local Plan and had been developed over several years leading to the allocation of a grant from Home England in 2018 to support its delivery. As the detailed design work progressed a further engagement exercise had

been undertaken earlier this year to which over 250 people responded despite this taking place during the pandemic. The proposals were now the subject of a planning application which provided a further opportunity for public comment.

In regard to the bus and cycle lane in Maison Dieu Road, the Leader was unable to comment on the consultation process as this was a scheme developed by Kent County Council as the highway authority not Dover District Council.

In respect of the request for the establishment of a Dover Climate Forum, the Council had already established a Climate Change Working Group within the Council which was meeting regularly to drive forward the Council's response to the climate emergency. This group had cross-party representation and included a delegate from the Green Party. He stated that he hoped that this group, by engaging with interested groups across the District, could offer a means of commenting on proposals and ensuring that consideration was being given to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

- (4) In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11 (as amended by Council Procedure Rule 28.9), a question from John Ward was put to the Leader of the Council, Councillor T J Bartlett:

“My name is John Ward and I am a supporter of the Dover Horse Trough Group. We were pleased to learn from our Chairman, Cllr Graham Wanstall, that you have supported the Project after our formation last January. As this is now 9 months ago, we ask, what steps do you intend to take to progress this project further? As you are aware the intention of the group is to have the trough returned to its rightful place in Folkestone Road, at the Elms Vale Junction.”

In response the Leader of the Council stated that he was aware of the proposal of the Dover Horse Trough Group that the horse trough currently located in Market Square could be returned to its original location in Folkestone Road, at the Elms Vale Junction as part of the Market Square redevelopment project. The detailed designs for the new scheme were still being finalised. The decision as to whether the horse trough could be moved to the suggested location would of course be a matter for Kent County Council as the highway authority. He advised that he would bring this matter to the attention of the design team and ask that it be given detailed consideration.

- (5) In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11 (as amended by Council Procedure Rule 28.9), a question from Graham Wanstall was put to the Leader of the Council, Councillor T J Bartlett:

“I understand to date, Dover District Council have no plans to mark the life of Dame Vera Lynn. This is surprising and sad. As Vera Lynn was so closely associated with the White Cliffs of Dover, to commemorate her long life, I propose that the section of public footpath from Athol Terrace at the Eastern Docks to the Top of the cliff to the National Trust site which forms part of the Saxon Shore Way be named “Vera Lynn Way” so her name will always be connected with the White Cliffs in a most appropriate way by those walking from the Town to the white cliffs of Dover? Therefore, I ask will you support

this simple proposal for the name to be adopted and the relevant signage put in place for the spring of 2021?”

In response the Leader of the Council stated that the Council had not yet developed any plans to mark the life of Dame Vera Lynn although she did already feature on the portrait bench on Dover seafront, recognising her links with the town and the White Cliffs of Dover.

The idea of naming a section of pathway in her memory was an interesting one, but before committing to any proposal the Leader of the Council advised that he would want to engage with Dame Vera Lynn’s family to discuss ideas with them and hear their views as to how they might wish to see her association with Dover commemorated.

23 APPROVAL OF REVISED 2020/21 GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET AND PROJECT PROGRAMMES

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the Revised 2020/21 General Fund Revenue Budget and Project Programmes report.

The report presented the revised 2020/21 General Fund revenue budget and the updated Capital and Special Project Programmes, which had taken into account the forecast impact of Covid-19, the lockdown period and the on-going impact on the economy.

It was moved by Councillor C A Vinson, duly seconded by Councillor S S Chandler, and

RESOLVED: That the revised 2020/21 General Fund Revenue Budget and the Capital and Special Projects Programmes be approved, including:

- (i) Forecast increase in the General Fund revenue budget deficit;
- (ii) Reduction in proposed transfers to reserves and the use of Government funding to offset the forecast deficit; and
- (iii) Addition, removal and amendments to projects.

24 AMENDMENT TO THE SCHEME OF OFFICER DELEGATIONS

The Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer presented the Amendment to the Scheme of Officer Delegations.

A number of amendments to the scheme were required as a result of the council transferring the housing service back in-house and in respect of public health matters arising from BREXIT and Covid-19.

It was moved by Councillor P D Jull, duly seconded by Councillor J S Back, and

RESOLVED: That amendments to the Scheme of Officer Delegations, made by the Leader be noted and incorporated within the Constitution.

25 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 M Bates asked the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Waste, and Planning, Councillor N S Kenton:

“Obviously during these difficult times many things have been affected. Could the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Waste, and Planning, outline how recycling collections have fared during the pandemic, and how this compares with our neighbours?”

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Waste and Planning stated that despite the challenges posed by the pandemic he was pleased to report that Veolia were able to maintain a normal service throughout the lockdown period and the months that had followed. This was in stark contrast to some of our neighbouring authorities where services such as garden waste collections had been suspended or routine collections had been delayed.

The Leader of the Council had visited Veolia’s depot to thank the staff personally in recognition of their outstanding efforts to maintain normal services despite significant staff shortages due to self-isolation and waste volumes increasing by as much as 25% at this time.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.5, Councillor M Bates exercised his right to ask a supplementary question.

- (2) Councillor H M Williams asked the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Waste, and Planning, Councillor N S Kenton:

“Please explain why the planning committee were not informed about the major changes to Planning proposed by the White Paper which came out on August 6th with responses to be submitted by 13 October. Members of the committee were not involved at any stage in discussion nor were they able to ask questions about the proposals or DDC’s response. Nor were other interested councillors informed or invited to participate in any way. Are you able to advise why this happened like this?”

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Waste and Planning stated that while officers had delegated authority to respond to consultations by Government on matters such as this it was agreed that due to the impact of the proposals, both interim and longer term, that a report should be taken to Cabinet to inform Members about the detail of the proposals and to get high level endorsement of the proposed response. The timescales associated with the consultation on the interim proposals meant that this had to be sent prior to the Cabinet on 5 October, however the response was shared with, and agreed by, appropriate Members. A briefing was held to inform Members of both proposals on 13 October 2020 and the outcomes of that were reported to Cabinet on 19 October 2020 prior to the response being sent.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.5, Councillor H M Williams exercised her right to ask a supplementary question.

- (3) Councillor S H Beer asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Digital, Councillor C A Vinson:

“When reviewing our property assets are social values applied as well as financial values?”

In response the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Digital confirmed that the social value is recognised as an important consideration when the Council reviewed the value of its property assets.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.5, Councillor S H Beer exercised her right to ask a supplementary question.

- (4) Councillor P M Brivio asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health, Councillor D P Murphy:

“Can the Portfolio Holder advise what the progress is on the sale of the shared ownership properties at the new development at Harold Street?”

In response the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health stated that the 29 shared ownership units were being marketed by the estate agents Countrywide (CDRS) in accordance with Homes England guidelines and that he understood that the agents were virtually ready to relaunch the marketing campaign post-COVID.

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

- (5) Councillor P M Brivio asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health, Councillor D P Murphy:

“Does he have any view on the new shared ownership eligibility as outlined by Homes England.”

In response the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health set out the rules for shared ownership adopted by Homes England. These rules would increase the number of people eligible to purchase a property and enable people to acquire further shares in their home more easily in the future which it was hoped would make shared ownership a more attractive tenure for people on lower incomes.

Councillor P M Brivio did not exercise her right to ask a supplementary question.

- (6) Councillor C D Zosseder asked the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Community, Councillor N J Collor:

“To provide the costs of the ill thought out cycle/bus lane in Maison Dieu road?”

In response the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Community stated that he did not have any information on the costs of the scheme as it was a proposal developed by Kent County Council as the highway authority under the Active Travel Plan.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.5, Councillor C D Zosseder exercised her right to ask a supplementary question.

26 MOTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13, Councillor E A Biggs moved the Motion of which he had given notice as followed:

“Providing information on Brexit Lorry parks in the District

This Council notes:

1. That all Councillors are elected by the Community to decide how the Council should carry out its various activities and to represent the public interest.
2. That Councillors have not been informed of plans for a Lorry Park in the District.
3. That Department of Transport has been conducting on the ground research for sites in March this year.
4. That Senior Officers and the Leader were party to these discussions and were informed of a site selected in March this year.
5. That the Opposition Leader and the Shadow Portfolio for Transport were excluded from any discussions.
6. That Michael Gove made a statement to the House of Commons on 13th July ‘I stress that there are no plans to build a new lorry park at Dover’
7. That on 14th July a Senior Officer of the Council responded that Highways England has undertaken a trawl of sites in the District but the conclusions have not been shared with DDC.
8. That on 15th July Portfolio Holder for Transport responded ‘I only know what we are picking up from Michael Gove’s comments in Parliament’.

This Council believes:

1. That in order for Councillors to fulfill their elected mandate major infrastructure plans such as Lorry Parks should be subject to full disclosure.
2. Any Lorry Park proposal should be subject to all current planning standards and satisfy issues, including impact on the road network, proximity to existing built up areas, avoidance of harm to open landscape and unacceptable harm to ecology, water quality and heritage/archaeology.
3. Any disruption to the Local Plan should be fully compensated by Central Government.

The Motion was duly seconded by Councillor H M Williams.

It was pointed out by several Members that the proposals related to an inbound customs clearance centre rather than an outbound traffic lorry park.

It was moved as an AMENDMENT by Councillor T J Bartlett, and duly seconded by Councillor N J Collor that

- (a) Points 4 and 5 be deleted
- (b) Points 1 to 3 following 'this Council believes:' be deleted and replaced with the following text:

This Council believes:

Whilst recognising the intention of legislation that gives the government powers to use Special Development Orders this Council believes that, in order for Councillors to fulfil their elected mandate, there should be as much disclosure and consultation as possible on major infrastructure plans such as lorry parks and border control points.

Any such proposals should take account of impact on the local road network, proximity to existing built up areas, avoidance of harm to open landscape and potential harm to ecology, water quality and heritage and archaeology.

Councillor E A Biggs and his seconder agreed to accept the AMENDMENT.

The SUBSTANTIVE Motion was put to the meeting and

RESOLVED: Providing information on Brexit Lorry parks in the District. This Council notes:

1. That all Councillors are elected by the Community to decide how the Council should carry out its various activities and to represent the public interest.
2. That Councillors have not been informed of plans for a Lorry Park in the District.
3. That Department of Transport has been conducting on the ground research for sites in March this year.
4. That Michael Gove made a statement to the House of Commons on 13th July 'I stress that there are no plans to build a new lorry park at Dover'.
5. That on 14th July a Senior Officer of the Council responded that Highways England has undertaken a trawl of sites in the District but the conclusions have not been shared with DDC.
6. That on 15th July Portfolio Holder for Transport responded 'I only know what we are picking up from Michael Gove's comments in Parliament'.

This Council believes:

Whilst recognising the intention of legislation that gives the government powers to use Special Development Orders this Council believes that, in order for Councillors to fulfil their elected mandate, there should be as much disclosure and consultation as possible on major infrastructure plans such as lorry parks and border control points.

Any such proposals should take account of impact on the local road network, proximity to existing built up areas, avoidance of harm to open landscape and potential harm to ecology, water quality and heritage and archaeology.

27 URGENT BUSINESS TIME

There were no items of urgent business for consideration.

The meeting ended at 8.26 pm