

Public Document Pack

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the meeting of the Council for the District of Dover held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Wednesday, 2 March 2022 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor M D Conolly

Councillors:

T J Bartlett	N J Collor	D P Murphy
M Bates	D G Cronk	O C de R Richardson
D G Beaney	D R Friend	M Rose
S H Beer	J P Haste	C A Vinson
E A Biggs	M F Hibbert	R S Walkden
T A Bond	P D Jull	P Walker
P M Brivio	L A Keen	H M Williams
S S Chandler	S C Manion	C D Zosseder

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

70 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Hannent, D A Hawkes, S J Jones, K Mills, N S Kenton and C F Woodgate.

71 SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 18.3 (VOTING - SHOW OF HANDS)

The Democratic and Corporate Services Manager advised Members that the report on the permanent arrangements for the broadcast of meetings would be presented to the next meeting of the full Council and this would contain the provisions required for enabling electronic voting in the Constitution. In the meantime, if Members wished to use the electronic voting system, it would be necessary to suspend Council Procedure Rule 18.3 (Show of Hands).

It was moved by Councillor D P Murphy, duly seconded by Councillor S S Chandler, and

RESOLVED: That Council Procedure Rule 18.3 be suspended for the duration of the meeting.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 25.1(2) at least one half of the members of the Council were present.)

72 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2022 were approved as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

73 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

74 ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

- (a) To thank the Commander of HMS Kent for his hospitality when the ship was docked at Dover in February 2022. A reception was also held by the Council.
- (b) To advise the sad news of the death of former district councillor Janet Birkett. During her time on the Council, she had been a dedicated public servant and had served amongst other positions as a Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet Member. She had been a passionate advocate in respect of housing issues.

The Chairman offered the condolences of the Council to her family and invited Councillor P M Brivio (Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group) and Councillor T J Bartlett (Leader of the Council) to speak about her service.

- (c) The Chairman reflected on the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and spoke of his experiences of visiting Kyiv on business in the past, including during the Orange Revolution. He remembered the people of Ukraine and the hopes the future that they had expressed.

The Chairman called upon the Council to stand in silence as a mark of respect for the death of former Councillor Janet Birkett and for the people of Ukraine.

75 URGENT BUSINESS TIME - MOTION ON UKRAINE

The Chairman advised that he had received a request from Councillor C A Vinson and Councillor C D Zosseder for a Motion on Ukraine to be taken as a matter of urgent business.

It was moved by Councillor D P Murphy, seconded by Councillor H M Williams, and

RESOLVED: That Council Procedure rule 13.1 (Motions on Notice) be suspended to enable the Motion to be moved.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 25.1(2) at least one half of the members of the Council were present.)

(1) Motion on Ukraine

Councillor C A Vinson moved the following Motion without notice:

“This Council condemns the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and calls on President Putin to immediately withdraw all troops from the country. We deplore the reported use of cluster munitions and other horrific weapons against the civilian population of

the Ukraine and support the International Criminal Court's announcement of an investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We support the actions taken by the United Kingdom and other nations to provide aid and military equipment to bolster Ukraine's defence against the Russian invasion. We also support the firm financial sanctions imposed on Russia that will materially affect its economy and hinder its ability to trade with the international community.

We recognise the steps taken by the British Government to introduce a bespoke humanitarian route to the UK for refugees fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, including the relaxation of visa requirements and eligibility criteria alongside additional staff and application centres in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

We call upon the British government to continue working alongside other countries to provide urgent temporary refuge for those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor C D Zosseder.

The overwhelming majority of Members spoke in support of the Motion. Councillor J P Haste spoke in opposition to the Motion.

In response to a question from Councillor N J Collor, the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) confirmed that the Council had no direct investments related to Russia.

On being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED: This Council condemns the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and calls on President Putin to immediately withdraw all troops from the country. We deplore the reported use of cluster munitions and other horrific weapons against the civilian population of the Ukraine and support the International Criminal Court's announcement of an investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We support the actions taken by the United Kingdom and other nations to provide aid and military equipment to bolster Ukraine's defence against the Russian invasion. We also support the firm financial sanctions imposed on Russia that will materially affect its economy and hinder its ability to trade with the international community.

We recognise the steps taken by the British Government to introduce a bespoke humanitarian route to the UK for refugees fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, including the relaxation of visa requirements and eligibility criteria alongside additional staff and application centres in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

We call upon the British government to continue working alongside other countries to provide urgent temporary refuge for those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

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

- (a) That it had been Fairtrade Fortnight the previous Saturday. The Deal Fairtrade group had a stand in Deal Market and one outside the Co-Op in Sandwich. He emphasised the importance of promoting Fairtrade.
- (b) The ground-breaking ceremony for Dover Fastrack had been held that day.
- (c) That he continued to work with Natalie Elphicke MP, the Port of Dover and Kent County Council to improve the Whitfield and Duke of York roundabouts and to upgrade the A2. The Council was asking the government to urgently prioritise the work.
- (d) To express disappointment that Dover TAP was still being used as it was only intended to be temporary measure. It had been activated in excess of 420 times since 2016 and this was unacceptable, particularly for people living in Aycliffe.
- (e) The importance of taking pride in the district. The local street scene would provide promote, encourage, and empower individuals, communities, and businesses to create, improve and manage their local streetscape. There were also steps being explored to make it easier for councillors to report issues.
- (f) To congratulate the Pick Deal Clean community group on being recognised for their work by becoming finalists in the 'Litter Heroes' award category at the Keep Britain Tidy Network Conference 2022. He also thanked the regular litter pickers who supported the Council in keeping the District clean.
- (g) That he was pleased to report that following a £1 million investment in street lighting the district had brighter, safer and more environmentally friendly lights. The works included the replacement of approximately 2,750 streetlights units with energy saving LEDs and 200 lighting columns.
- (h) That on 11 February 2022 he raised the first Green Flag at Kearsney Abbey and Russel Gardens. He took the opportunity to thank the dedicated team, including apprentices and local volunteers for helping the Council achieve its first ever Green Flag Award.
- (i) That in support of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations he encouraged all organisations to go on line for help and advice on planning a street party or community event. He emphasised that any road closures would need to be applied for by no later than 25 March 2022. In addition, funding for Members to help with Jubilee Celebrations was being finalised and would be announced shortly.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition Labour Group, Councillor P M Brivio, included the following matters in her report:

- (a) To express support for needed works to improve the road network in the district.

- (b) That the problems with the use of TAP needed to be resolved urgently for the sake of local residents. She expressed the view that the reasons given for not moving the location of TAP away from Aycliffe were not justifiable.
- (c) To welcome the announcements in respect of the local street scene.
- (d) To congratulate Pick Deal Clean on their recognition and award. She also expressed support for efforts by officers to support local litter picks and advised that a litter pick would be held in the Tower Hamlets Ward on 26 March 2022.
- (e) To express disappointment that there were no plans to introduce charges for rural car parks, especially in light of the request from Wingham that charges be introduced to stop people using it as a free parking location to go into Canterbury rather than shop in Wingham.
- (f) To enquire whether the Council proposed to build a crematorium in the district.
- (g) To enquire as to whether there was any further news in respect of the Regent Cinema.

In response the Leader of the Council advised:

- (a) That he would press for changes to the TAP scheme as a top priority.
- (b) That there had been good feedback from the local litter picks and it had led to increased interest in people becoming community caretakers.
- (c) That he had been advised that Wingham Parish Council no longer wanted charging to be introduced at the car park in the village.
- (d) That the Council was in talks in respect of a local crematorium.
- (e) That he had met with the owners of the Regent Cinema but slow progress was being made in respect of the development.

77 SEAT ALLOCATION AND GROUP APPOINTMENTS

There were no changes to seat allocations or group appointments.

78 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, a question from Tommy Johnstone was put to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property, Councillor O C de R Richardson:

“Does the Portfolio Holder believe that the newly erected detention centre/security facility-esque fencing erected on part of the boundary of Aylesham Cemetery is appropriate for such a reverent and reposeful community asset or does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that it is disproportionate, inapposite and in severe need of removing and, if necessary, replacing with a more aesthetically pleasing alternative?”

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property stated:

“The fence was installed by the neighbouring landowner to prevent dog walkers and others crossing his land to reach the public right of way. The Council was contacted before the fence was erected and having seen the finished work that has been undertaken, I must advise you that I do not see this fencing as being inappropriate and actually consider it to be entirely suitable for its purpose.”

A supplementary question was asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.8.

79

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 T A Bond asked the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Regulatory Services, Councillor M Bates:

“Whilst I endorse the need to protect the environment and to achieve the Carbon Zero targets, it is important to ensure that the burden of cost does not be unfairly placed on those that can least afford it. The current large discounts on parking permits afforded to owners of electric cars is unfair on residents who have low incomes and who are unable to afford electric cars which are a lot more expensive than other cars. Can the Portfolio Holder please review these charges?”

In response the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Regulatory Services stated:

“The decision to link the charges for resident permits to the vehicle emissions, was taken to encourage car owners to buy lower emission vehicles, whichever fuel type, not just electric cars.

Higher CO2 emitting vehicles are being phased out, have higher road tax, cannot use Ultra Low or low emission zones without a significant charge and have more expensive fuel. It still remains a choice whether to own a car and where the owner chooses to park their vehicle. As you are aware this Council takes the Climate Change Emergency declaration that it made in 2020 very seriously and has augmented several measures to assist the government in reaching its target for carbon emissions.

The introduction of Parking Permit charges based on emission levels was one of them and was set last year at a very modest level. Those who own vehicles with the highest levels pay a charge of £150 a year which equates to only £2.88 a week. Most car owners lie within emissions Bands B and C and thus receive discounts reducing their payments to an equivalent rate of between £1.34 and £2.40 per week depending on the permit zone. Owners of electric cars only pay £35 to £60 pa and I recognise that, initially, there are only a few that fall within that category. However, the numbers are rising as more people seek to change to electric either through purchasing or lease arrangements and we are seeking to incentivise this even further through the introduction of

on street and off-street EV charging points throughout the district. Finally, Dover is not the first council to introduce this initiative. It is already in place in several other local authorities including Cambridge, Brighton, Horsham, York, Chichester, and many of the London Boroughs.

With respect to this year the Cabinet has only just reviewed the permit fees as part of the annual review of parking charges. It has been content to support the retention of this initiative but will not be seeking to increase the charging rates for parking resident permits during the next financial year.”

A supplementary question was asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.6.

80 GROWUP FARMS PRESENTATION

The Council received a presentation from Kate Hoffman, Co-Founder Strategy and Brand, of GrowUp Farms about the £100 million investment GrowUp Farms was making in Sandwich.

Following the presentation, Members asked questions relating to GrowUp Farms development at Sandwich.

The Chairman of the Council thanked Kate Hoffman for her informative presentation.

81 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Chief Executive presented the Pay Policy Statement.

It was moved by Councillor C A Vinson, duly seconded by Councillor M Rose and

RESOLVED: That the Council approve the Pay Policy Statement as set out at Appendix 1 to the report prior to its publication on the Council's website.

82 COUNCIL BUDGET 2022/23 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23-2025/26

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the Council Budget 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022/23 – 2025/26.

Members were reminded that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1972 applied to this item of business.

In response to a question from Councillor C A Vinson as to whether the Council Tax increase was 2.51% as opposed to the 2.6% set out in the report recommendations, the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) advised that it should have stated 2.51% and that this would need to be reflected in the final recommendation.

It was moved by Councillor C A Vinson, duly seconded by Councillor O C de R Richardson,

- (a) That the General Fund Revenue Budget, the Capital and Special Projects Programmes, the Housing Revenue Account Budget, the Council Tax Resolution and the content of the MTFP be approved;
- (b) That the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Digital be authorised to draw on the Earmarked Smoothing Reserve to meet in year variations in the budget.
- (c) That a Council Tax increase of 2.51% for DDC purposes be approved, resulting in an increase on Band D properties of £4.95 per year and an annual DDC Council Tax of £202.14.
- (d) To note that it was the view of the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources), the Section 151 Officer, having due regard to the circumstances and the range of uncertainties, that the budget had been prepared in an appropriate and prudent manner and that as far as could be determined, and based upon the information available at the time of producing the report, the estimates were robust and the resources were adequate for the Council's spending plans in 2022/23;
- (e) That the various Council recommendations at the end of the sections within the attached budget and MTFP, and summarised in Annex 10 to Appendix 1, be approved.

Councillor S H Beer, duly seconded by Councillor D G Cronk, moved an AMENDMENT to the Motion as followed:

Community Grants Fund

1. The sum of £200k is allocated for community grants in the Revenue Projects budget in 2022-23.
2. There is a better way to use DDC grant funding for the wider benefit of our residents.
- 3 Targetted funds which improve the lives of vulnerable people should be a priority.
4. DDC should make a multi-annual grant to certain organisations, who come to us every year for support and which we give money to each year, because we value what they do. Bechange, Pegasus and Dover SMART are obvious contenders, as they always ask for a grant and we always award one. So are the three Age Concern operations in the district, who currently get little or nothing but deliver a significant service.

These organisations provide significant support to vulnerable people and need predictability of income. They should be supported on a long term basis instead of their having to apply for small amounts of money from the Community Grants (Neighbourhood Forums) fund each year.

See Annex 9 of the Budget for a list of organisations we already fund every year, no application needed.

Recommendation

- 1 A rise in Community Grants 2022-23 to £200k.

2. £50k of this to be added to the long term grants programme, as in Annex 9, to be distributed to agreed organisations providing services to vulnerable people.

3 The Grants Committee to be consulted before the Portfolio Holder for Finance forms a view as to precisely how long term grants will be distributed

Proposal for a new “Public Toilets PLUS” Capital Project

1 Dover district urgently needs better quality public toilets. While they are not a statutory duty, they are an essential service for community health and wellbeing and are well used by the elderly, by parents and carers and by vulnerable people of all ages.

2 Urban areas in particular need a completely new style of toilet, which is warmer, cleaner and fully accessible. If well designed and situated, they will need less attention from DDC and will cost less to manage.

3 As well as serving local people they will serve tourists, many of whom, we know, are actually influenced by the quality of public toilets when they decide on a day trip or short break.

Recommendation

1 That council invests in a new three year capital project (2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25) aiming to replace the most run down and inadequate public conveniences in the district with new buildings incorporating toilets or with facilities incorporated into new builds.

2 That priority is given to those in urban areas, where a new facility can be built on a DDC owned site, which includes an opportunity to produce a return on investment.

3 That the new “Public Toilet PLUS” buildings also include affordable housing for sale or for rental, short term housing for vulnerable people, or commercial premises for sale or for rental etc, depending on the location.

4 That every effort is made to incorporate public toilets in new developments led by or influenced by DDC

Public Toilets PLUS - Project Proposal

Introduction

1. Freely available public conveniences are essential to public health and wellbeing. A lack of clean accessible public conveniences has a severe impact on vulnerable people, especially people with mobility problems and on people with young children.

2 Elderly people often restrict the time they spend out and about, shopping, socialising and exercising, because they are not able to use a suitable public toilet. So the availability of public toilets is important for the physical and mental health of our residents but particularly for the elderly.

3. Dover District Council owns and manages a range of public convenience buildings across the district (sometimes supported by parish councils). Some are in good condition and need no extra attention (e.g. Reach Road, St Margarets conveniences, the relatively new WC with disabled access in Marine Road, Deal.)

Several are in urgent need of refurbishment (e.g. the toilets in Marke Wood Recreation Ground in Walmer and Granville Road, Walmer)

A number need to be knocked down and replaced with a completely new facility, (e.g. South St and King St toilets in Deal, Stembrook toilet in Dover).

4. Deal Pier café toilets provide a good example of how high quality toilets can be designed into a new building, resulting in them being managed efficiently. These are less likely to suffer from anti-social behaviour and less likely to need regular repairs.

5. The revenue cost to the local authority can be significantly reduced if toilets management is worked into any rental agreement for commercial occupiers of the premises.

Site specific solutions

1 **South Street Deal** needs to be addressed as a priority since the site is potentially unsafe. The works due to take place on the adjoining site of the Regent will be affected by and will affect the work. A complete reconfiguration of the bus waiting area and the toilets with further floors for other purposes will enhance the site and make a big contribution to the improvement of the street scene in this unloved area of the town.

2 The new **Tides** swimming pool building will provide an excellent opportunity to design in a new toilet facility, to be available to the public during Tides opening hours, removing the need for Victoria Park toilet, which could become a kiosk bringing in seasonal rental. (Parents and carers with children using the play area will find this especially helpful - they are very unwilling to use the Victoria Park toilet at present.)

3 Stembrook Dover

The whole area is marked for regeneration and development, so this public toilet will have to be removed eventually. An improved facility inside or attached to a new building will need to be provided if anti-social behaviour is to be prevented. DDC should be proactive in encouraging developers to provide this as part of the sale agreement.

Estimated costs

Deal South St rebuild – three storey building.

Feasibility study, design, professional fees etc £35k

Building £750k

Tides

Extra costs to include public toilets - £50k maximum

Dover Stembrook

DDC costs – working with developers/professional fees £20k

Extra costs to include public toilets - £50k (born by developer)

Deal King Street

To be considered for rebuild in year 4

COSTS PROFILE over three years - Capital and Revenue

Costs (£000s) Revenue and Capital	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Feasibility study and preparation work for South Street (Rev)	35		
Tides adjustment – to build in public toilets (Cap)	50		
Building works South St (Cap)		750	
Building works Tides (already financed)		N/A	
DDC work on Stembrook provision (Rev)			20
Contingency			50
Project total	£85	£750	70
	£905		

Revenue implications for 2024 onwards:

- 1 Income will be produced from the South St building (could be Capital or Revenue depending on what is built)
- 2 Cleaning costs will reduce as vandalism is reduced.
- 3 New facilities might be more attractive to town councils who would then take over the service.

Funding sources for a balanced budget

CAPITAL - £800k

- 1 Sale of assets – Ex CAB building in Victoria Road is likely to raise £700k on sale.
- 2 Reclaim of refurb costs for Park Ave building from insurers - £100k

REVENUE - £55k

Project Feasibility costs £35k to be added to 2022-23 and £20k to 2024-25

Resource – Project feasibility Studies - £500k is allocated in new projects

CONTINGENCY - £50k from the Revenue Contingency fund

On being put to the meeting the AMENDMENT to the Motion FELL.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 18.6 (voting on budget decisions) a recorded vote was held. The manner of voting was as followed:

FOR (8)	AGAINST (17)	ABSTAIN (0)
S H Beer	T J Bartlett	
E A Biggs	M Bates	
P M Brivio	D G Beaney	
D G Cronk	T A Bond	
J P Haste	S S Chandler	
L A Keen	N J Collor	
H M Williams	M D Conolly	
C D Zosseder	D R Friend	
	M F Hibbert	
	P D Jull	
	S C Manion	
	D P Murphy	
	O C de R Richardson	
	M Rose	
	C A Vinson	
	R S Walkden	
	P Walker	

The original Motion was put to the meeting and

- RESOLVED:
- (a) That the General Fund Revenue Budget, the Capital and Special Projects Programmes, the Housing Revenue Account Budget, the Council Tax Resolution and the content of the MTFP be approved;
 - (b) That the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Digital be authorised to draw on the Earmarked Smoothing Reserve to meet in year variations in the budget.
 - (c) That a Council Tax increase of 2.51% for DDC purposes be approved, resulting in an increase on Band D properties of £4.95 per year and an annual DDC Council Tax of £202.14.
 - (d) To note that it was the view of the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources), the Section 151 Officer, having due regard to the circumstances and the range of uncertainties, that the budget had been prepared in an appropriate and prudent manner and that as far as could be determined, and based upon the information available at the time of producing the report, the estimates were robust and the resources were adequate for the Council's spending plans in 2022/23;
 - (e) That the various Council recommendations at the end of the sections within the attached budget and MTFP, and summarised in Annex 10 to Appendix 1, be approved.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 18.6 (voting on budget decisions) a recorded vote was held. The manner of voting was as followed:

FOR (25)	AGAINST (0)	ABSTAIN (0)
T J Bartlett		
M Bates		
D G Beaney		
S H Beer		
E A Biggs		
T A Bond		
P M Brivio		
S S Chandler		
N J Collor		
M D Conolly		
D G Cronk		
D R Friend		
J P Haste		
M F Hibbert		
P D Jull		
L A Keen		
S C Manion		
D P Murphy		
O C de R Richardson		
M Rose		
C A Vinson		
R S Walkden		
P Walker		
H M Williams		
C D Zosseder		

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm