

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2014

Present: Councillor Garland (Chairman) and
Councillors Greer, Moss, Paine and Mrs Ring

142. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor J.A. Wilson.

143. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that, in his opinion, the report of the Director of Environment and Shared Services relating to the introduction of a premium of 50% to the Council Tax payable for properties that have been empty and unfurnished for two years should be taken as an urgent item to enable a recommendation to be made to the Council at its meeting on 5 March 2014 with a view to the change being made from 1 April 2014.

144. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

145. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

146. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

147. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

148. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2014

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

149. STRATEGIC PLAN REFRESH 2014-15

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive regarding the refreshed Strategic Plan 2014-15.

RESOLVED:

1. That subject to typographical amendments and the results of the budget consultation being factored in, the refreshed Strategic Plan 2014-15 be approved for submission to Council.
2. That the response to the recommendations made by the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee arising from its consideration of the refreshed Strategic Plan 2014-15 be noted.
3. That it be noted that the performance measures and targets in the Plan will be updated and reported as part of the annual performance management cycle at the end of the financial year following consultation with the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
4. **To RECOMMEND to COUNCIL:**
 - a) That the refreshed Strategic Plan 2014-15 be approved; and
 - b) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to make minor amendments to the document as required.

150. **REFRESH OF THE CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2014-17**

DECISION MADE:

1. That the refreshed Corporate Improvement Plan 2014-17, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Head of Finance and Resources, be adopted.
2. That the recommendations made by the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee arising from its consideration of the refresh of the Corporate Improvement Plan (as set out in Appendix B to the report of the Head of Finance and Resources) be noted.
3. That arrangements be made for the Cabinet to receive six monthly progress reports on the Corporate Improvement Plan.

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=21452>

151. BUDGET MONITORING - THIRD QUARTER 2013/14

DECISION MADE:

1. That the details set out in the report of the Head of Finance and Resources relating to revenue, balances, the Collection Fund, capital, capital financing and treasury management be noted.
2. That £0.2m be set aside in order to sustain the proposed increase in staffing in the major planning applications team as set out in paragraph 1.4.8 (g) of the report of the Head of Finance and Resources.
3. That £50,000 of the projected under spend be utilised immediately on activity relating to the recent floods as set out in paragraph 1.4.9 (e) of the report of the Head of Finance and Resources.
4. That the proposed criteria for the use of revenue under spends at year end as set out in paragraph 1.4.10 of the report of the Head of Finance and Resources be agreed and that the Officers be instructed to develop proposals for prioritisation by the Leader of the Council in March 2014.

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=21193>

152. BUDGET STRATEGY 2014/15 ONWARDS

The Cabinet considered the report of Corporate Leadership Team regarding the Budget Strategy for 2014/15 onwards.

Following consideration of the financial risks over the medium term, as set out in the report, the Cabinet resolved to recommend to Council a budget based upon a 1.99% increase in the level of Council Tax.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to COUNCIL:

1. That the revised revenue estimates for 2013/14 as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Cabinet be agreed.
2. That the minimum level of General Fund Balances be set at £2m for 2014/15.
3. That the proposed Council Tax of £231.12 at Band D for 2014/15 be agreed.
4. That a premium of 50% to the Council Tax charge be introduced on 1 April 2014 for properties that have been empty and unfurnished for two years. This to include periods prior to 1 April 2014 but not payable on charges prior to 1 April 2014.

5. That the revenue estimates for 2014/15 incorporating the growth and savings items set out in Appendix A be agreed.
6. That the Statement of Reserves and Balances as set out in Appendix A be agreed.
7. That the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix A be agreed.
8. That the funding of the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix A be agreed.
9. That the Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendix A be agreed.
10. That the Medium Term Financial Projection, as set out in Appendix A, be endorsed as the basis for future financial planning.
11. That it be noted that the Council's Council Tax Base for the year 2014/15 has been calculated as 55675.1 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992.
12. That it be noted that in accordance with Government guidance the yield from business rates has been calculated as £54,171,300.
13. That it be noted that, as detailed in Appendix B to the report of the Cabinet, the Council Tax Base for each of the Parish Areas, calculated in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations, are the amounts of the Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a special item relates (Parish precepts).
14. That the distribution of Local Council Tax Support funding to Parish Councils, as set out in Appendix C to the report of the Cabinet, be approved.
15. That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2014/15 (excluding Parish precepts) be calculated as £12,867,601.
16. That the following amounts now be calculated by the Council for the year 2014/15 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011:-
 - (a) £83,406,934 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
 - (b) £69,251,582 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

- (c) £14,155,352 being the amount by which the aggregate at 16(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 16(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31A(4) of the Act).
- (d) £254.25 being the amount at 16(c) above (Item R), all divided by the figure stated at 11 above (Item T in the formula in section 31A(4) of the Act), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
- (e) £1,287,752 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per Appendix B).
- (f) £231.12 being the amount at 16(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 16(e) above by the Tax Base given in 11 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

17. That it be noted that for the year 2014/15 Kent County Council, the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner and the Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

<u>Valuation Bands</u>	<u>KCC</u> <u>£</u>	<u>KPCC</u> <u>£</u>	<u>KMFRA</u> <u>£</u>
A	712.44	96.19	46.20
B	831.18	112.22	53.90
C	949.92	128.25	61.60
D	1,068.66	144.28	69.30
E	1,306.14	176.34	84.70
F	1,543.62	208.40	100.10
G	1,781.10	240.47	115.50
H	2,137.32	288.56	138.60

18. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 16 (d), and 17 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, agrees, as per

Appendix D to the report of the Cabinet, the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2014/15 for each of the categories of dwellings shown.

153. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2014/15

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Communities regarding the Treasury Management Strategy 2014/15, including the Treasury and Prudential Indicators.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to COUNCIL:

1. That the Treasury Management Strategy 2014/15 be adopted.
2. That a review be undertaken at mid-year of the use of foreign banks for last resort, short term investments.

154. LICENSING PEER CHALLENGE

DECISION MADE:

1. That the contents of the report of the Peer Challenge Team, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Director of Regeneration and Communities, be noted.
2. That the action plan outlining the proposed approach for taking forward the Peer Team's suggestions, as set out in amended Appendix B to the report of the Director of Regeneration and Communities (circulated at the meeting), be agreed.
3. That the actions to implement the recommendations should form part of the relevant lead Officers' service plans as appropriate.

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=21498>

155. QUARTER 3 KPI PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Policy and Communications setting out details of progress made in the third quarter of 2013/14 in relation to the Council's key performance indicators ("KPI's").

RESOLVED:

1. That the out-turns of the KPIs, attached at Appendix A to the report of the Head of Policy and Communications, and the definitions included for reference at Appendix B to the report, be noted.
2. That the following additional indicators that are unlikely to achieve the annual target (by more than 10%) be noted:

- E&S 001 – Work experience placements delivered across the Council;
- E&S 002 – Number of employers that have engaged with NEETs;
- HSG 005 – Number of households prevented from becoming homeless through intervention of housing advice;
- CTC 001 – Average wait time for calls to the contact centre;
- PIT 002 – Satisfaction with complaint handling;
- CTC 004 – Proportion of avoidable contact;
- BIM 003abc – Percentage of customer contacts made a) in person, b) online, c) by phone;
- BIM 004 - Reduction in the number of out-going post items; and
- WCN 006 – Missed bins (per 100,000 collections).

3. That it be noted that there are no other areas where further action is required.
4. That it be noted that a review of performance indicators will be undertaken by the Head of Policy and Communications and the Performance and Scrutiny Officer in conjunction with Overview and Scrutiny Members as part of the refreshed Strategic Plan.

156. COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM FOR LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Environment and Shared Services concerning the introduction of a premium of 50% to the Council Tax payable for properties that have been empty and unfurnished for two years.

RESOLVED:

1. **To RECOMMEND to COUNCIL:**
 - a) That agreement be given to the introduction of a premium of 50% to the Council Tax payable for properties that have been empty and unfurnished for two years; and
 - b) That the change be introduced from 1 April 2014 taking account of any prior periods that properties have remained empty when considering the two year threshold.
2. That these recommendations be incorporated into the Cabinet's report to Council relating to the Budget Strategy 2014/15 onwards.

157. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.20 p.m.