

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Policy and Resources Committee**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2018**

**Present:** Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Boughton, M Burton, Clark, Cox (Chairman), Field, Mrs Gooch, McKay, McLoughlin, D Mortimer, Newton, Purle, Mrs Ring and Springett

**Also Present:** Councillors Kimmance

90. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies were received by Councillors Perry, Garland and Harvey.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Blackmore.

91. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was noted that the following members were present as substitute members:

- Councillor Ring for Councillor Perry
- Councillor Purle for Councillor Garland

92. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

93. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor Kimmance was present as a visiting member, but did not register to speak.

94. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

The following Members made declarations in relation to item 17 – Property Asset Review:

- Councillor Purle – who disclosed he lived close to one of the sites, but did not regard this a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Significant Interest.
- Councillors Clark and Mortimer disclosed that they were trustees of the Hayle Park Nature Reserve, but they did not regard this as an Other Significant Interest.

Note: Councillor Blackmore arrived at 6.36 p.m. during consideration of this item.

95. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

96. EXEMPT ITEMS

The Committee considered whether to take Item 17 – Property Asset Review in public, rather than in private due to the possible disclosure of exempt information as proposed. The reason given by the Committee was that the information was not sufficiently commercially sensitive to take in private, as the Committee had a duty of transparency to the public.

The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer advised that the Council had a duty to ensure best value and to take the item in public could harm the Council's negotiating position in relation to property assets in the future. It was confirmed that there would be full public engagement with respect to any site identified for change of use in accordance with the Council's normal practice.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. Item 17 - Property Asset Review be taken in public.

Voting: For - 8 Against - 5 Abstentions - 1

2. Item 16 – Minutes (Part II) of the meeting held on 24 October 2018 be taken in private due to the possible disclosure of exempt information.

Note: Councillor Gooch requested her dissent be noted for Resolution 1.

97. PROPERTY ASSET REVIEW

The Committee debated whether it was appropriate to consider this item at the meeting. It was felt that as the Committee had resolved to take the item in public, it would be preferable if the information could be made available to the public prior to the meeting it was due to be considered at. This would ensure transparency for the public. However before the decision was taken to consider the item in public, legal advice was requested on the implications for the Council of making this information publicly available.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Property Asset Review be deferred so the Committee can be advised by the Proper Officer on the implications of the item being taken in public at the next available Committee meeting.

Voting: For - 7 Against - 6 Abstentions - 1

Note: Councillor Gooch asked for her dissent to be noted on the resolution for this item.

98. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2018

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed.

99. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2018

Councillor Boughton informed the Committee that he had disclosed that he had been lobbied on the item relating to Flood Risk Alleviation, but this had not been recorded in the minutes.

**RESOLVED:** That, subject to the addition outlined above, the minutes be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed.

100. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

101. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)

There were no questions from members of the public.

102. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Mr Mark Green, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement, updated the Committee on its work programme. The following updates were noted by the Committee:

- The Commissioning and Procurement Strategy would now be considered by the Committee once the Strategic Plan had been agreed.
- The item on CCTV provision had been deferred until January.
- Budget Proposals were due to be considered by Policy and Resources Committee in January, as they would not be ready for consideration in December.

Mr William Cornall, Director of Regeneration and Place, confirmed that the Housing Delivery Partnership Proposal which had been referred to Policy and Resources Committee by the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee would be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee in January.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee Work Programme is noted.

### 103. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee considered Councillor Round's report of his work with the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board, and noted that it was a clear but brief report. It was requested that this report be circulated to members as a good practice example of how to fill out Outside Body reports.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### 104. 2ND QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

Mr Mark Green presented his report which provided an update on the Policy and Resources Committee's financial position at the end of the second quarter of the year. Additionally, the Committee was asked to provide guidance as to what level of budget variances they wanted reported to them, with the current level being variances of more than £30,000 being reported. The report recommended that this level remained the same.

The Committee noted that:

- The largest revenue underspend was for the homelessness prevention service, and the largest overspends were in Planning Fees and the Park and Ride Service.
- A number of capital projects were listed as having slippage – this was due to the projects not progressing as quickly as originally anticipated, however the spend was still projected to be required.

Mr Green was requested to carry out some work to assess the financial benefits of the resources the Council had invested into procuring its own Temporary Accommodation portfolio, as it was clear that this approach had been beneficial to the Council.

In response to a question from a Member of the Committee, Mr Green explained that reporting budget variances as a percentage of projected spend could mean a large number of operational decisions being reported to Committee. Equally, there was a risk that overspends that were significant to the authority's finances that related to large capital projects may also be missed due to not reaching the agreed threshold. Mr Green confirmed that £30,000 represented around 0.1% of the Council's revenue budget.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The second quarter budget monitoring report, attached at Appendix 1, be noted.
2. The threshold for reported detailed information against the variances against the revenue budget be set to £30,000.

Voting: Unanimous

105. REFERENCE FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE - SPORTS FACILITIES AND PLAYING PITCH STRATEGIES CAPITAL BUDGETS

The Chairman confirmed to the Committee that this reference had been made by the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee before the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee had resolved to undertake an in depth review of Sports Provision in the Borough. Therefore the appropriate time to consider Capital Budgets was when the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee had completed its review.

**RESOLVED:** That the reference from the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee is noted.

106. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

**RESOLVED:** That the press and the public be excluded from the meeting due to the possible disclosure of confidential information for the reasons outlined in the report, having taken into account the public interest test.

107. MINUTES (PART II) OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2018

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes (Part II) of the meeting held on 24 October 2018 are agreed as a correct record and signed.

108. DURATION OF MEETING

6.32 p.m. to 7.37 p.m.