

# **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **CABINET**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2024**

#### **Attendees:**

<b>Committee Members:</b>	<b>Councillors Burton (Chairman), Cooper, Garten, Parfitt-Reid, Perry and Russell</b>
<b>Visiting Members:</b>	<b>Councillor Cleator (Vice Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee)</b>

#### 116. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

#### 117. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that an urgent item and three urgent updates had been accepted. These were:

- Item 19 – 1,000 Homes Programme – Individual Scheme Updates (Five sites) would be taken as an urgent item as it was a time sensitive decision;
- An update to Item 17 – Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update and Item 18 – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Funding Settlement and Final Saving Proposals, which contained updated recommendations from Policy Advisory Committees; and
- An update to Item 19 – 1,000 Homes Programme – Individual Scheme Updates (Five sites) which contained updates to the exempt appendix.

#### 118. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Cleator was present as a Visiting Member for Items 12 - Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement Review, 18 - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Funding Settlement and Final Saving Proposals and 19 - 1,000 Homes Programme – Individual Scheme Updates (Five sites).

Councillor J Wilkinson was present as a Visiting Member for Item 19 - 1,000 Homes Programme – Individual Scheme Updates (Five sites).

#### 119. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS OR OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

#### 120. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

121. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED:** That all items be taken in public, unless any Cabinet Member wished to refer to the information contained within Exempt Appendix to Item 19 - 1,000 Homes Programme – Individual Scheme Updates (Five sites) in which case the Cabinet would enter into closed session due to the likely disclosure of exempt information, for the reason specified having applied the public interest test.

122. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2024

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

123. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

124. QUESTIONS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS TO THE LEADER OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

There were no questions from Local Residents.

125. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE LEADER OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

There were no questions from Members.

126. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET FOR RECONSIDERATION

There were no matters referred to the Cabinet for reconsideration.

127. REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ENVIRONMENTAL AND WASTE CRIME ENFORCEMENT REVIEW

The Vice Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny presented the report and stated that a lot of cross-party work had gone into it asking the Cabinet to approve the recommendations.

The Cabinet accepted the report and the Leader stated that a response would be given in due course.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be received; and
2. A substantive response to the report be provided via the completion of the SCRAIP report.

128. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE BY ANOTHER COMMITTEE

There were none.

129. ANY MATTER RELATING TO A SERIOUS SERVICE FAILURE OR NUISANCE

There were none.

130. RECEIPT OF WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

There were none.

131. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

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

132. BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Leader of the Council introduced the report, stating that the response had been generally favourable from all the Policy Advisory Committees (PACs). The projects were not instantaneous, but gradually progressing with grant applications for lower carbon heating upgrades to Council buildings close to seeing results.

The Corporate Services and Community, Arts and Leisure PACS had suggested an additional recommendation for the relevant committees to be given action plans for the items contained in point 2.4 of the report before September 2024. This was considered, but the Cabinet and Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager determined that the annual report and twice-yearly updates should be sufficient to provide the information.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that biodiversity and climate change was considered through cross cutting for every item on an agenda and promoted the Carbon Literacy training for any Members who had not yet completed it.

**RESOLVED:** That the strategic considerations for tackling net zero borough wide and action plan updates shown at Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.

133. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024 TO 2029 - FUNDING SETTLEMENT AND FINAL SAVING PROPOSALS

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The outcomes of consideration of budget proposals by the Policy Advisory Committees be noted;
2. The Budget Growth and Savings Proposals set out in Appendix A of the report, be agreed;
3. £139,000 of the unringfenced government grant described in paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 of the report be used for one-off support to financial inclusion and food larder services, be agreed, and that the call on on-off funding for financial inclusion by £59,000 is reduced in recommendation 15, be noted;
4. The maximum use is of made of other residual one-off funding from other relevant council budgets to further sustain financial inclusion and food larder services, be agreed, and the position to be kept under review so that the Council can respond to changes in circumstances and future funding opportunities;
5. The balance of the unringfenced government grant described in paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 of the report be transferred to the Housing Investment Fund, to

be used to subsidise the Council's Affordable Housing programme, be agreed;

6. The updated Strategic Revenue Projection set out in Appendix B of the report, be agreed;
7. A £8.46 annual increase in Band D Council Tax for 2024/25 be recommended to Council;
8. The Revised Estimates for 2023/24 and the Budget Estimates for 2024/25 set out in Appendix C of the report be recommended to Council;
9. The Capital Programme set out in Appendix D of the report be recommended to Council;
10. The Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy and Capital Strategy set out in Appendix E of the report be recommended to Council;
11. The projected level of General Fund balances in Appendix F of the report exceeds the agreed minimum level of £4 million, be noted;
12. The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy set out in Appendix G, be agreed;
13. The appropriate matters for decision to set a balanced budget for 2024/25 and the necessary level of Council Tax in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Localism Act 2011 including the decisions made above, be recommended to Council;
14. The measures in the Regeneration and Levelling-up Act to reduce the period before charging a Council Tax premium on empty property from two years to one and to charge a Council Tax premium on second homes, be recommended to Council to be implemented from 1 April 2025;
15. It utilises the £92,000 budget surplus referenced in paragraph 2.34 for financial inclusion (Welfare Officer and dashboard for tracking low income families - £59,000) and at least one issue per annum of Borough Insight (£33,000);
16. An amendment to the repayment date for the loan to Kent Savers referenced on Page 97 from 2027 to 2032, be noted.
17. The officers be thanked for their work on the Budget over the last year.

134. 1,000 HOMES PROGRAMME – INDIVIDUAL SCHEME UPDATES (FIVE SITES)

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The increased works costs for Bathstore, Land at Granville Road and Britannia House, be approved, taking note of scheme performance summaries in Appendix 1 to the report. To approve the switch in tenure from Affordable Rent to Social rent for all 4 sites and in addition the 7 Market rented units to social rented units at the RBL site.

2. The Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement, be given delegated authority, to appoint the preferred contractor to carry out the necessary building works as per the tenders for Britannia House, Corbens place, Land and Granville Road, and the Bathstore noting that the Corbens place works tender was returned under the works budget previously approved.

135. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.26 p.m.