

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent County Council held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 23 May 2013.

PRESENT:

Mr E E C Hotson (Chairman)
Mr P J Homewood (Vice-Chairman)

Mrs A D Allen, Mr M J Angell, Mr D Baker, Mr M Baldock, Mr M A C Balfour, Mr R H Bird, Mr H Birkby, Mr N J Bond, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr D L Brazier, Mrs P Brivio, Mr R E Brookbank, Mr L Burgess, Mr C W Caller, Miss S J Carey, Mr P B Carter, Mr N J D Chard, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr B E Clark, Mrs P T Cole, Mr G Cooke, Mr G Cowan, Mrs M E Crabtree, Ms C J Cribbon, Mr A D Crowther, Mrs V Dagger, Mr D S Daley, Mr M C Dance, Mr J Davies, Mrs T Dean, Dr M R Eddy, Mr J Elenor, Mrs M Elenor, Mr T Gates, Mr G K Gibbens, Mr R W Gough, Mr P M Harman, Ms A Harrison, Mr M J Harrison, Mr M Heale, Mr C P D Hoare, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr S Holden, Mrs S Howes, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr J A Kite, MBE, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr G Lymer, Mr B E MacDowall, Mr T A Maddison, Mr S C Manion, Mr F McKenna, Mr B Neaves, Mr M J Northey, Mr P J Oakford, Mr J M Ozog, Mr R J Parry, Mr C R Pearman, Mr L B Ridings, MBE, Mrs E D Rowbotham, Mr J E Scholes, Mr W Scobie, Mr T L Shonk, Mr C Simkins, Mr J D Simmonds, Mr C P Smith, Mr D Smyth, Mrs P A V Stockell, Mr B J Sweetland, Mr A Terry, Mr N S Thandi, Mr R Truelove, Mr M J Vye, Mr J N Wedgbury, Mrs J Whittle, Mr M E Whybrow, Mr M A Wickham and Mrs Z Wiltshire

IN ATTENDANCE: Geoff Wild (Director of Governance and Law) and Peter Sass (Head of Democratic Services)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chairman

(Mr R E King the present Chairman presided for this item)

(1) Mr Carter moved and Mr Gough seconded that:

Mr E E C Hotson be appointed Chairman of the County Council.

Carried without a vote

(2) Thereupon Mr Hotson took the chair, made his declaration of acceptance of office and returned thanks for his election.

(3) Mr Hotson paid tribute to Mr King and thanked him for the manner in which he had carried out his duties as Chairman of the Council from May 2012 to the present day.

(4) Mr King suitably replied.

2. Election of Vice Chairman

(1) Mr Sweetland moved, Mr Smith seconded:-

That Mr P J Homewood be appointed Vice Chairman of the Council.

Carried without a vote

(2) Mr Homewood thereupon made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and returned thanks for his appointment.

3. Apologies for Absence

The Director of Governance and Law reported apologies for absence from the following Members:

Mr Mike Hill
Mr Alan Marsh

4. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests

(1) Mr Cowan made a declaration in that both he and his wife are foster carers for Kent County Council.

(2) Mrs Whittle made a declaration as a non-executive director of Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust and that her husband is an employee of Kent County Council.

5. The Returning Officer to submit the returns of persons elected to be County Councillors until 2017

(1) The County Returning Officer for the County of Kent submitted the Return, dated 10th May 2013, of persons elected to be County Councillors for the Electoral Divisions of the said County as reproduced in the papers for this meeting.

(2) RESOLVED that the Return was noted.

6. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2013 and, if in order, to be approved as a correct record

(1) The Chairman announced that it had been brought to his attention that in Minute Item 10b, paragraphs 3 to 6 referred to the sad loss of **Peter Wood**, former Leader of Ashford Borough Council but in the final paragraph it referred to Mr Ward, not Wood. He offered his sincere apologies for this error and assured Members that this has been corrected both in the online version and also on the copy he had for signing.

(2) RESOLVED: that subject to the above amendment the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2013 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

7. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed all newly elected and returning Members of the County Council and spoke about the challenges that lay ahead for the next four years. The Chairman also stated that he had chosen Kent Air Ambulance and Kent Young Carers as his charities for his year as Chairman.

8. Election of Leader

Mr Simmonds moved, Mrs Stockell seconded that Mr P B Carter be elected Leader of the Council until the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2017.

Carried without a vote

9. Appointment of the Leader of the Opposition

Mr Baldock moved, Mrs Wiltshire seconded that Mr R Latchford, OBE be elected Leader of the Opposition.

Carried without a vote

10. Questions

Under Procedure Rule 1.17 (4), 10 questions were asked and replies given. 4 questions remained unanswered at the end of the thirty minutes and written answers were given.

11. Report by Leader of the Council (Oral)

(1) The Leader began his report by thanking his colleagues for supporting him in his appointment as Leader of the Council. He also joined with the Chairman in welcoming all the new and returning members to the Council. He also offered his congratulations to Mr Latchford, Mr Cowan and Mrs Dean on their election as Leaders representing their groups.

(3) Turning to the future, the Leader stated that he was sure that everybody was aware that things were going to continue getting tougher and the ask upon the organisation would be stepped up. The Leader stated that in the last three years the Council had achieved revenue savings of some £275 million but there was likely to be more pain to come. He stated that the Council would continue to relentlessly pursue the five Ps; partnership, prevention, personalisation, productivity and procurement, which had been the major key plank of salvation in finding the budget resolutions over the last few years and would continue to be so.

(4) The Leader stated that it might be necessary to review both the Council's governance arrangements and Constitution going forward and that he looked forward to discussing his proposals with all Members of the Council. The only change that had been made immediately, he stated, was to turn Locality Boards from a formal arrangement to an informal arrangement and that in this new relationship it would be

very much left to District and Borough Leaders to choose when and how they wish to work with elected Members.

(7) The Leader stated that he envisaged a bold agenda for the future, which he planned to set out at the next County Council meeting in July. He ended by stating that the Council would endeavour to do what the Bishop of Dover had suggested earlier in the morning, namely improve lives for all Kent residents, particularly the elderly, sick and vulnerable.

(8) Mr Latchford congratulated the Chairman on his appointment and he also congratulated the Leader. He stated that the current financial situation and the need for economies and savings and to streamline the services provided by Kent County Council were clearly acknowledged by everyone.

(9) He stated that it was an historic day for Kent County Council because for the first time UKIP was present in the Chamber. He offered his congratulations to all his members who had been elected to serve in the Chamber. He stated quite clearly that he and his Members would work together with all groups in order to achieve only the best for the people of Kent.

(10) Mr Cowan offered his congratulations to the Chairman on his appointment.

(11) He stated Mr Carter had mentioned the future, the next four years, and continued cuts from central government. Mr Carter had complained about the former Labour government not giving the Council enough money and now he was challenging his own government over the lack of funds he was receiving and the massive cuts he had had to make year on year.

(12) Mr Cowan stated that government should not stop Mr Carter from facing up to many public concerns about his administration on Primary School places, children's services, adult social care, children's centres, highways and much more.

(13) Mrs Dean stated that she would like to welcome all Members to the Chamber. She spoke of welcoming old friends and some new and she particularly welcomed Mr Whybrow and Mr Thandi.

(14) Mrs Dean stated that the challenges facing the County Council over the next four years were the most testing she had ever seen in her career.

(15) Mrs Dean stated she had a concern that if Locality Boards were now meeting informally what then was the status of the discussions that had already begun at the Locality Boards where they had previously existed.

(16) Mrs Dean finished by saying that she and her group would continue to be a constructive opposition as they had been in the past.

(17) In response to the opposition leaders, the Leader stated that Locality Boards had stopped for the time being and he said that when the Council met in July he would bring a paper that hopefully would answer the questions Mrs Dean had posed. He stated that he would work with opposition leaders on this paper and would welcome any suggestions that were forthcoming on this issue.

(18) He stated that the education results last year had been the best the county had ever delivered and the Maidstone results had contributed to that in a very similar way to the other eleven districts.

(19) He stated that his administration would work with the opposition parties on the Troubled Families agenda, which was enormously important. The relationship with districts of all political persuasions was excellent on this and he would work to ensure this continued in delivery of this agenda.

12. Proportionality and Appointments to Committees and other bodies

(1) Mr Cooke moved, Mrs Stockell seconded the following recommendations that the County Council:

- (a) agree the total number of Committee places; the allocation of those places between the political groups; and the allocation of places on certain bodies;
- (b) approve the appointment of two Parent Governor Representatives to serve on the Scrutiny Committee, when it considers education matters, for a period of office to run from May 2013 to the end of April 2017;
- (c) note the list of appointments to outside bodies to be made by the Leader of the Council, once elected; and
- (d) ask the Selection and Member Services Committee to consider and determine the allocation of the Members' Conference Budget.

(2) RESOLVED: that the recommendations be agreed.

13. Convention of Member:Officer Relations

(1) Mr Carter moved, Mr Simmonds seconded that the County Council consider and endorse the proposed Convention on Member:Officer relations as set out in the report for inclusion in the Constitution.

(2) RESOLVED: that recommendation be agreed.

14. Report of the Member Remuneration Panel

(1) Mr John Ogden, Chairman of the Member Remuneration Panel, was in attendance to introduce the Panel's report and respond to any questions of clarification from Members.

(2) The Chairman proposed, the Vice Chairman seconded the recommendations of the Member Remuneration Panel with regard to proposed changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme for the one year period from May 2013, as detailed in the Appendix to the report.

(3) RESOLVED: that the Members' Allowance Scheme for the one year period from May 2013, as recommended by the Member Remuneration Panel, be approved.

15. Proposed Changes to Financial Regulations

(1) Mr Simmonds moved, Miss Carey seconded that the County Council consider and approve the updated Financial Regulations and Delegated Authority Matrix of Approval Limits.

(2) RESOLVED: that the recommendations be agreed.

16. Annual Review of the Code of Corporate Governance

(1) Mr Cooke moved, Mrs Stockell seconded that the County Council:

(a) Note the annual review of the Code of Corporate Governance in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Code of Corporate Governance.

(b) Approve the proposed amendment to paragraph 6 of the Code of Corporate Governance to read “the Council’s governance arrangements are reviewed annually. If there are any amendments recommended as a result of this review, these will reported to the Governance and Audit Committee and the County Council for approval” and

(c) Approve the proposed amendments to the Code of Corporate Governance set out in paragraphs 2(3) and 2(4).

(2) RESOLVED: that the recommendations be agreed.

17. Minutes for Approval

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 11 April 2013 be approved.

18. Minutes for Information

Pursuant to Procedure Rule 1.10(8) and 1.23(4), the minutes of the Planning Applications Committee meeting held on 10 April 2013 and the minutes of the Superannuation Fund Committee meeting held on 22 March 2013 were noted.