

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 27 November 2024

PRESENT: Mr M Dendor (Vice-Chairman), Mr D L Brazier (Chairman), Mr P V Barrington-King, Mr P Bartlett, Mr T Bond, Mr A Brady, Ms M Dawkins, Mr A J Hook, Rich Lehmann, Mr J P McInroy, Mr H Rayner and Mr P Stepto

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P J Oakford and Mr D Jeffrey

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Chief Executive), Ms J Hansen (Finance Business Partner (Strategic & Corporate Services); Mrs R Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mr B Watts (General Counsel), Mr J Betts (Acting Corporate Director Finance); Mr D Shipton (Head of Finance -Policy, Planning & Strategy); and Mr G Singh (Barrister)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

231. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

Apologies were received from Mrs Hudson, Mr Cooper and Mr Kite.

232. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda

(Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

233. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2024

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2024 were a correct record and that a paper copy be signed by the Chairman.

234. Draft Revenue and Capital Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan

(Item 5)

1. Mr Oakford introduced the report.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
 - Where agency staff were being used, the aim was to employ KCC staff and reduce reliance on agency staff in some areas of work.
 - There was duplication of some roles within the organisation and work was being undertaken to consolidate the management of these roles. The efficiency of the span and layers of reporting structures was also being considered.

- District councils as council tax collection authorities had been incentivised to optimise the collection of council tax. It was proposed that this financial support to collection authorities be removed in the budget. Concerns were raised that this could affect the effective collection of council tax and an increase in 'bad debts'. However, it was recognised that the effective collection of council tax was also in the interest of the collection authorities.
- In the event there were surplus funds, reserves would need to be replenished before any new spending would be considered.

3. RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee:

a) NOTE the administration's draft revenue budgets including responses to consultation

b) SUGGEST any changes which should be made to the administration's draft budget proposals related to the Cabinet Committee's portfolio area before the draft is considered by Cabinet on 30th January 2025 and presented to Full County Council on 13 February 2025.

5) Mr Brady asked for it to be recorded in the minutes that they declined to note the report.

235. 24/00088 - Disposal - Freehold disposal of land at the Long Field, Quaker Lane, Cranbrook, Kent
(Item 6)

1. Mrs Spore introduced the item.

2. Further to questions from Members, it was noted:

- Officers in Education had been consulted regarding whether the adjacent primary school might to be expanded in the future and had confirmed the land was not needed for education purposes.

3. RESOLVED that the Cabinet Committee endorse the proposed decision that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services agree:

a. the disposal of the property, Land at the Long Field, Quaker Lane, Cranbrook, Kent; and

b. to grant an extension of time (if required) to the promotion agreement relating to land adjoining Cranbrook Primary School, Carriers Road, Cranbrook, dated 29th January 2020, or to enter into a new promotion agreement with the same or a new developer

c. delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise the terms of the extension of time to the promotion agreement and disposal and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above.

236. 24/00090 - Formal Lease for Electricity Sub Station at the proposed replacement school site at Crete Hall Road, Northfleet, for Rosherville Church of England Primary School
(Item 7)

1. Mrs Spore introduced the item.

2. RESOLVED that the Cabinet Committee endorse the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance's proposed decision to:

a. authorise the granting of a lease in excess of 20 years to UKPN in order that a new electricity substation can be built within the grounds of the school, to serve the newly built development for operational educational requirements; and

b. delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services to take necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement this.

237. 24/00091 - Formal Lease for an Electricity Sub Station at Teynham Parochial Church of England Primary School, near Sittingbourne
(Item 8)

1. Mrs Spore introduced the item.

2. RESOLVED that the Cabinet Committee endorse the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance's proposed decision to:

a. authorise the granting of a lease in excess of 20 years to UKPN in order that a new electricity substation can be built within the grounds of the school, to serve new education buildings to be built in 2025; and

b. delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services to take necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement this.

238. 24/00100 - Property Accommodation Strategy - Strategic Headquarters (SHQ)
(Item 9)

1. Motion to exclude the press and public for exempt business:

RESOLVED that, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

2. RESOLVED that the Cabinet Committee endorses the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Service's proposed decision to:

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services to:

a. AGREE to continue the disposal of Sessions House in its entirety (Blocks A-E);

b. ALLOCATE £20m as identified in the Council's 2023-33 Capital Programme Budget, approved by County Council on 9 February 2023 to deliver the proposed works, inclusive of costs incurred to date (£1.65m) as part of the SHQ Programme for Invicta House to accommodate the new Strategic Headquarters (SHQ) arrangement, followed by the award of a construction works contract as necessary to deliver the scheme and any required decant within the agreed budget limits;

c) NOTE that the provision of a dedicated Council Chamber in Invicta House is additional to the scope of the previous decision and will require additional capital funding to be allocated through the Budget setting process;

d) AGREE to progress with the inclusion of a new Council Chamber located in Invicta House within the approved SHQ plan, subject to completion of detailed design development at RIBA Stage 4 and appropriate capital funding allocation through the Budget setting process.

e) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Infrastructure, subject to the above progression requirements being met and in consultation with the Leader, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, s151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer, to approve required works and to negotiate, finalise and award relevant contracts in relation to the dedicated Council Chamber; and

f) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, s151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer, to authorise the execution of necessary contractual and land agreements and enter into other contracts or legal agreements as required to implement the decision.

3. In accordance with paragraph 16.31 of the constitution, Mr Hook wished for it to be recorded in the minutes that they voted against endorsing the proposed decision "24/00100 - Property Accommodation Strategy - Strategic Headquarters (SHQ)".

239. Work Programme

(Item 10)

RESOLVED to note the work programme.