

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2021 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Dickins (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. McArthur, Dyball and Thornton

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Maskell

Cllr. Purves was also present.

Cllr. Maskell was present via a virtual media platform, which does not constitute attendance as recognised by the Local Government Act 1972.

29. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16 September 2021, be agreed and signed as a correct record.

30. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

31. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)

There were none.

32. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee, CIL Spending Board or Cabinet Advisory Committees

There were none.

33. Sevenoaks District - Voluntary Sector Barometer Survey

The Portfolio Holder for People & Places presented the report which detailed the results and the steps being taken to action the issues raised from the Voluntary Sector Forum's barometer survey in May 2021. Covid-19 had a major impact on the voluntary and community sector both nationally and locally and the survey would track the impact on the voluntary and community sector in the District.

The Health and Communities Manager advised that the results of the survey were attached as Appendix A with the results groups by theme. A second barometer survey would shortly be undertaken to assess the action taken on issues identified so far.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

34. Tree Management Strategy

The Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener presented the report which sought approval of the 10-year Tree Strategy 2021- 2031. The aim of the strategy was to assist and inform residents, Council officers and Councillors of the Council's responsibilities and strategy regarding its own tree stock.

The Head of Direct Services set out that the Strategy linked strongly to the Council's Plan, and Net Zero 2030 commitment.

The Cleaner & Greener Committee had considered and recommended the report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the Tree Strategy for 2021-2031 be agreed.

35. Farmstead Drive, Spitals Cross, Edenbridge - Development Proposal

The Cabinet considered the report which sought approval for funding to undertake further feasibility and design work to facilitate the submission of a planning application and to deliver the scheme subject to receiving the necessary statutory consents. The development proposal was for a site located on Farmstead Road, within the Spitals Cross housing estate in Edenbridge. As this was a new capital project that was not accounted for in the Capital Programme 2020/21, and the estimated project budget, Council approval was required.

The estate was built in the 1960s, and as such the community buildings that currently occupied the proposed development site were at the end of their economic life and required substantial refurbishment. There was the opportunity to redevelop and re-provide the community hall and its facilities and to replace the shop with modern premises, to provide new housing, and public open space and parking. The sale of the residential accommodation would provide capital receipts to pay for these improvements.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that

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- a) the provision of £7,609, 620 in the 2021/22 Capital Programme to deliver the scheme within the financial implications, detailed as (i) to (vi) below, be agreed:
- i. The scheme be intended to be funded (ultimately) from capital receipts from the sale of residential units in the scheme;
 - ii. A summary of the estimated scheme funding, based on feasibility to date;
 - iii. 23 residential units would be disposed of in the open market and according to the Council's property consultant, which were expected to generate a sales receipt of £8.143m. The affordable housing units were expected to generate £1.172m and would be discounted to reflect development costs and were in line with current market practice for affordable housing;
 - iv. Until receipts from the sales of the residential units were received, short-term external borrowing be used to fund the scheme. Potential financing costs were detailed within paragraph 18 of the report;
 - v. The new retail unit would be retained by the Council, and let on market terms. The Community Hall be leased to reflect community benefit, but also to ensure future on-going liabilities be recuperated; and
 - vi. Consideration be given to the VAT implications of the project, dependant on the use of some of the elements of the project may require specific VAT treatment and further VAT advice be sought.
- b) subject to approval, of recommendation (a), authority be delegated to the Strategic Head of Property and Commercial and the Chief Officer Finance & Trading, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance & Investments to proceed with the Scheme subject to final scheme viability; and
- c) subject to approval of recommendation (a), authority be delegated to the Strategic Head of Property and Commercial following consultation with the Chief Officer Finance and Trading and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to submit a planning application and to enter into any necessary contracts to facilitate the development and construction of the proposed scheme in accordance with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules and for the disposal of the residential and commercial units.

36. Stangrove Estate Regeneration Project.

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The Cabinet considered the report which sought Council's approval for a new capital project to proceed and for provision to be made within the Capital Programme for 13 new homes, a retail unit together with parking and landscape improvements within the Stangrove Estate in Edenbridge.

The Stangrove estate had several parcels of land which were poorly used, and by development of the sites, the Council would contribute to its housing targets, and also significantly improve the Estate's public realm by providing additional car parking spaces and landscaping improvements to the open spaces. A new community shop would also be provided in response to the local communities wishes. Design and feasibility work, alongside other due diligence studies had been undertaken and a planning application for the development was submitted in August 2021. Subject to planning consent being obtained and funding being finalised it was envisaged that the new scheme would be delivered by Summer 2023.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that

- a) the capital funding of the scheme of £4,312,743 be agreed;
- b) that the scheme would only progress subject to the funding gap being eliminated and planning permission being obtained, be noted;
- c) subject to approval of the recommendation (a) the development scheme for 7 sites within Stangrove Park, Edenbridge to provide 7 off-street, communal car parks, a new community shop, improvements to landscaping and 13 residential units at an estimated total project cost of £4,312,743, as set out at paragraph 15, be agreed; and
- d) subject to approval of recommendation (a), the Strategic Head of Property and Commercial, following consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Chief Officer Finance & Trading, be delegated authority to enter into necessary contracts for the funding of the scheme and the disposal of the residential and commercial units.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 15 October 2021. The decisions contained in Minute 33 and 34 take effect immediately. The decisions contained in Minutes 35 and 36 are references to Council.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.39 PM

CHAIRMAN