

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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| Held at:              | Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Folkestone  |
| Date                  | Tuesday, 29 January 2019  |
| Present               | Councillors Miss Susan Carey, Peter Gane (Chairman),<br>Clive Goddard, Ms Janet Holben (Vice-Chair),<br>Mrs Mary Lawes, Michael Lyons, Ian Meyers,<br>Russell Tillson and Mrs Rodica Wheeler  |
| Apologies for Absence | Councillor Mrs Claire Jeffrey   |
| Officers Present:     | Andy Blaszkowicz (Assistant Director), Kate Clark<br>(Committee Services Officer), James Hammond<br>(Strategic Policy Officer), Katharine Harvey (Chief<br>Economic Development Officer), Andrew Hatcher<br>(Revenues and Benefits Strategic Manager), Sue Lewis<br>(Committee Services Officer), Tim Madden (Corporate<br>Director - Customer, Support and Specialist Services),<br>Lisette Patching (Development Management Manager),<br>Susan Priest (Head of Paid Service), Sarah Robson<br>(Assistant Director), Andrew Rush (Corporate Contracts<br>Manager), Charlotte Spendley (Assistant Director), Adrian<br>Tofts (Planning Policy Manager) and Lee Walker (Group<br>Accountant) |
| Others Present:       | Councillors Alan Ewart-James, Dick Pascoe, Len Laws<br>and Mrs Carol Sacre  |

### 152. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 153. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2018 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

### 154. **Council Tax Empty Homes Premium**

From 1 April 2019, billing authorities will be given the ability to amend long term empty home Council Tax premiums. Report C/18/63 reviewed these

proposals and recommended that some changes are introduced from the new financial year 2019/20.

Mr Andrew Hatcher, Revenues and Benefits Manager, gave a brief explanation of the policy.

Members commented on Exemptions to this policy and Mr Hatcher advised that any possible exemption circumstance would be looked at as a discretionary local decision.

A spelling error was noted on Page 13 (2.4); should read 'Royal Assent'.

Proposed by Councillor Clive Goddard  
Seconded by Councillor Russell Tillson and

**RESOLVED:**

**1. To receive and note report C/18/63**

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

**155. Investment Strategy**

Report C/18/65 set out the council's proposed strategy for its service and commercial investments in 2019/20 to be approved by full Council.

Members comments included:

- Benchmarking. At present there are no comparison statistics with other Local Authorities.
- Credit rating checks. At present these are not applicable as current loans made are to Oportunitas and Private Sector Housing. If use of loans is widened then credit ratings could become applicable.
- Investments and Properties are acquired through prudential borrowing, eg Otterpool.
- An investment assets list to be provided to the Committee.
- Training. A Treasury Management training session was provided approximately one year ago to members. Further training will be given as part of the induction process post May 2019 elections.
- As part of property held for investment purposes, a loss is shown on land acquired since April 2014. This land is Biggins Wood which is planned for development.

Proposed by Councillor Russell Tillson  
Seconded by Councillor Rodica Wheeler and

**RESOLVED:**

**1. To receive and note report C/18/65.**

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

**156. Folkestone Sports Centre Trust Grant**

The grant funding agreement with Folkestone Sports Centre Trust (the Trust) ends in 2020. The Trust, in advance of the end of this agreement, has made a request for a new grant. Report C/18/61 summarised this request, reviewed performance of the current grant agreement and made recommendations on a future grant reward.

Members referred to the options for a new grant and questioned the reasons for not providing a sliding scale option. A sliding scale option was considered, however this was not considered appropriate with regard to sustainability and economy.

Members agreed that the grant ultimately provided services and wellbeing to the local community

Proposed by Councillor Ms Susan Carey  
Seconded by Councillor Peter Gane and

**RESOLVED**

**1. To receive and note report C18/61.**

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

**157. Royal Military Canal Rowing Boats**

Report C/18/60 summarised the requirement to replace the Council's rowing boats on the Royal Military Canal in Hythe.

Members agreed this historical service is a vital tourist attraction, however it is important that the District Council looks carefully at the purchase of good value boats that are durable and safe.

Depreciation of assets was a consideration, but Mr Andy Blaszkowicz, Assistant Director, assured members that pro-active management of all physical assets is in place.

Proposed by Councillor Clive Goddard  
Seconded by Councillor Michael Lyons and

**RESOLVED:**

**1. To receive and note report C/18/60.**

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 1)

**158. 'Spirit of the Leas' Folkestone Coastal Park Heritage Lottery Fund Stage Two Grant Application**

Following Cabinet approval in September 2016, a Stage One grant application was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a project

to improve access to Folkestone's Coastal Park. The Stage One application was successful and the HLF awarded FHDC a development grant of up to £40,300 to support a Stage Two submission. Report C/18/67 seeks Cabinet approval for the submission of a Stage Two application and to agree to underwrite the match funding contribution from FHDC that will come from s106 Folkestone Seafront funding.

Members were advised that FHDC needs to underwrite the s106 funds as these are not expected to come forward in time to deliver the project, but will be ultimately available to meet FHDC's match funding commitments.

Proposed by Councillor Russell Tillson  
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Mary Lawes and

**RESOLVED:**

**1. To receive and note report C/18/67.**

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

**159. Local Development Scheme 2019 update**

Report C/18/68 presents a draft updated Local Development Scheme to Cabinet. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timetable for preparing the council's development plan documents and outlines their purpose and general content. If approved by Cabinet, the LDS will be published on the council's website.

Proposed by Councillor Ms Susan Carey  
Seconded by Councillor Clive Goddard and

**RESOLVED:**

**1. To receive and note report C/18/68.**

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

**160. Funding for direct action to secure compliance with enforcement notices at Whitehall Farm, Romney Road, Lydd**

In March 2017 Corporate Management Team (CMT) agreed funding for direct action to secure compliance with enforcement notices at Whitehall Farm. Report C/18/62 provided an update on the attempts made to secure direct action within the budget agreed and seeks agreement for further funds to be released so that direct action can be secured to achieve compliance with the enforcement notices.

Members noted there was a significant increase of costs with £14,100 already allocated and a further £86,000 required.

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Although there had been enforcement breaches and notices issued to the landowner over a long period, the current breaches are more recent and have worsened in the last few years.

It was confirmed to members that the Council would look to place charge on the land and the successful outcome of this would depend on any further earlier charges on the land.

Proposed by Councillor Clive Goddard  
Seconded by Councillor Michael Lyons and

**RESOLVED:**

**1. To receive and note report C/18/62.**

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)