

DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 28 October 2021 at 7.10 pm

PRESENT: Councillor J A Kite, MBE (Chairman)
Councillor C J Shippam (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor S H Brown
Councillor A R Lloyd
Councillor Mrs P A Thurlow
Councillor R J Wells

ALSO PRESENT: Sarah Martin, Chief Officer & Director of Corporate Services
Peter Dosad, Director of Housing & Public Protection
Sonia Collins, Head of Planning Services
Alan Twyman, Democratic Services Manager

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman expressed his deepest sadness on the recent passing of Councillor Ann Allen who had been a Member of the Borough Council, Kent County Council and Wilmington Parish Council for many years as well as a long standing Member of the Cabinet. He paid tribute to Councillor Allen and her support for many local people and organisations and for her contribution to the life of Dartford and Kent. He sent his deepest sympathies and condolences to her family and friends. The Cabinet observed a moment of reflection.

The Cabinet also sent their condolences.

There were no apologies for absence.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

55. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Cabinet considered the minutes of its meeting held on 23 September 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 23 September 2021 be confirmed as an accurate record.

56. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

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57. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE CABINET ADVISORY PANEL B HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2021

The Cabinet received the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet Advisory Panel B held on 25 October 2021 and had regard to the Panel's views throughout the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet Advisory Panel B held on 25 October 2021 be noted.

58. REFERENCES FROM COMMITTEES

There were no references from other committees.

59. DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY AND TENANCY POLICY

The Director of Housing & Public Protection introduced a report which presented a new draft Tenancy Policy and new Tenancy Strategy for approval. The report explained that the Localism Act 2011 placed a statutory duty on local authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy setting out the matters to which registered providers of social housing in their area should have regard when formulating their Tenancy Policies. The Council's Tenancy Strategy had been adopted in 2012 followed by the Tenancy Policy in 2013 and had been reviewed periodically. The Tenancy Policy also set out the Council's approach to the types of tenancies it will grant and other tenancy management policies.

On the 24 June 2021, the Cabinet approved the ending of the use of flexible (fixed term) tenancies for new and existing Council tenants as the anticipated benefits of that type of tenancy had not materialised. As a result all current flexible tenancies were to be replaced by a lifetime tenancy which was the Council's new preferred form of tenancy and all new tenancies would be offered on this basis. The revised Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy had been developed to reflect this change in the policy framework and had been consulted with key stakeholders, including the Tenant and Leaseholders Forum.

The Chairman noted that the Cabinet Advisory Panel had made a number of comments, including concerns about tenants whose income might increase beyond the qualifying threshold, but whom would still have a secure tenancy whilst others in housing need remained on the waiting list. He understood these concerns and cited a number of high profile cases in other areas where entitlement to social housing had been abused. However he explained that the Council was an organisation that respected residents' entitlement to dignity in their homes and to the certainty that lifetime tenancies provided. He also recognised that it would be impractical to conduct regular reviews of tenant's incomes and that the Council did not have the necessary powers to do so effectively.

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The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance wondered whether there might be a case for having tiered rental charges which could rise to near market rental charges for tenants on higher incomes and also asked if resources that had previously been devoted to assessing tenants' incomes would be redeployed. He also regretted that there was no ability for Councils to ascertain declarations of earnings, unlike the situation with mortgage applications.

The Director of Housing & Public Protection said that it was not legal to tier rental charges for social housing in this way and that very little resource had been devoted to assessing income as the Council had no powers to do so and had to rely on the honesty of the tenant in disclosing income. When the decision to use flexible tenancies had been taken it was envisaged that legislation would be made to give authorities powers to assess incomes but this had never happened.

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft Tenancy Strategy, attached at Appendix A to the report, be approved; and
2. That the draft Tenancy Policy, attached at Appendix B to the report, be approved.

60. ACCEPTANCE OF TENDER - MANAGEMENT OF HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT GARAGE PORTFOLIO

The Director of Housing & Public Protection presented a report which explained that, following an audit recommendation in respect of the Council's garage management service in August 2020, a review had been held on the utilisation of assets and how to improve the current garage occupancy rate. The Council owned 1225 garages located at over 70 sites, ranging from a single garage to more than 50 garages in a block. Originally garages were provided as part of the development of the Council's housing estates for use by its tenants but the changing pattern of tenure meant that the majority of the garages were now let to private tenants and that the letting of garage units was independent of the allocation of Council housing. Garage units were no longer sold due to ongoing management difficulties associated with mixed tenure garage sites. It was also unlikely that any of the remaining garage sites could be developed for housing due to various site constraints. The Cabinet had therefore agreed in October 2020 that the management of the Council's garage portfolio should be tendered. The service had been tendered in such a way that other housing landlords could use the Council's framework tender process, which would then generate an income stream to the Council. The report outlined the procurement and evaluation process undertaken and although only one detailed tender had been received, the tenderer had scored highly in the quality evaluation of the tender and the tendered cost was considered to be reasonable and within budget parameters. The Dartford Tenants and Leaseholders Forum had been consulted and would also be

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included in contract monitoring arrangements. It was proposed to award the contract for a period of 4 years and the aim was to deliver a seamless service to current garage users.

The Chairman noted that the Cabinet Advisory Panel had questioned why the management of the contract was being outsourced. He said that this was a specialised area and noted that the Council's focus had been to provide high quality housing for residents.

The Director of Housing & Public Protection explained that the garages were currently managed by officers drawn from different teams whose primary objectives were to provide quality housing. The garage stock had complex, mixed tenancy arrangements, with many units being in poor condition and with challenges around lighting and security. Establishing an in-house team to manage the stock was considered to be more costly than the cost of the management fee and it was felt that a specialist contractor could deliver a better outcome quickly. A framework had also been put in place which could be used by other authorities or providers which could generate a small income for the Council. Whilst the Council would retain ownership of the stock and be responsible for costs associated with ownership, such as insurance, he confirmed that the management fee was performance driven. He also confirmed that whilst it was unlikely that any of the remaining garage sites would be suitable for residential development due to site constraints, the Council retained the ability to do so if an opportunity arose.

RESOLVED:

That, for the reasons detailed in the body of the report, the Council enters into a contract with Company A (as referred to in exempt Appendix A to the report) on terms to be agreed by the Head of Legal Services, for the management of the Housing Revenue Account Garage Portfolio, for 4 years, from 1 December 2021.

61. DARTFORD TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECT - PROJECT UPDATE

The Head of Planning Services presented an update on the progress on the Dartford Town Centre project which began in 2018. The project, was initially to have been delivered in 4 phases, jointly funded by a grant from the Homes and Communities Agency and Local Growth Funding, but a further Phase (1(a) High Street) was added to the project scope in December 2018 and it was proposed to add a further phase, 3(a) Spital Street, subject to funding. Phase 1 of the project, Market Street, had been completed in December 2020 and was already delivering regeneration benefits.

The original project was to have been delivered by Summer 2021 but was interrupted by the global Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent materials supply issues related to the construction of Phases 1a and 2. These, and the proposed addition of Phase 3a Spital Street, meant that completion was now projected for early 2024.

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The prolongation of the completion date had arisen because the separate phases of the project were reliant on the preceding phase being complete before being able to commence construction – meaning that each phase-related delay had a direct effect upon the whole-project completion. Across the sector, pricing by prospective contractors has been severely affected by industry-wide uncertainty, materials shortages and unprecedented increases in shipping costs – meaning that it was necessary to apply caveats and larger than normal levels of contingency

The report detailed the current position with each phase of the project, including delays to the progress of phase 1(a) High Street and to beginning phase 2 Instone Road and Highfield Road Junction improvements, for the reasons explained in the report, including rising costs and disputes with the contractor which the Council was seeking to resolve. To ensure that the original scope of the project, and the desired expansion of the project to incorporate the transport, street works and public realm improvements in Spital Street, could be delivered it was proposed to draw down additional funding of £4.15M from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, which was subject to a separate report on the agenda.

The Chairman informed the Cabinet of the very positive feedback that he was getting from local people on the phases of work that had been completed. He noted the extraordinary factors that had resulted in some delays to the works and rises in costs arising from global price increases for materials and shipping. He noted that there were also some contractual issues to be resolved. He felt that the improvements to the town centre were a force for good and for change. He noted the concerns raised by the Cabinet Advisory Panel about underwriting further increases in costs but reminded Members that, unfortunately, sometimes costs did increase and that not all of the proposed increase in funding was as a result of increased costs but was partly the result of increasing contingency and adding further improvement works to the scope of the project. He explained the robust monitoring arrangements that were in place for the project. In terms of the extension to the scope of the project he felt that these improvements were worthwhile in their own right and would complete the end- to-end transformation of the town centre and would tie into the regeneration of the Westgate site.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Arts and Culture welcomed the improvements to the town centre and commented on the improved visual amenity around the route from Central Park across Market Street. The Chairman commented on the improved sight lines at the pedestrian crossing point, the reduced lanes of traffic flow and that people were becoming accustomed to the crossing arrangements. The Chairman felt that the design should introduce visual “signage” to indicate to young children in particular that they were leaving the security of the park and crossing a public highway.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance also welcomed the public realm improvements and the proposed extension of the scope of the project. However he felt that the current risks to timely completion of the project were high and wondered whether it might be better to delay the additional works until there were more certain conditions. The Head of Planning Services

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explained that the project was being closely managed and that part of the additional funding was based on contingency planning in order to mitigate the risks.

The Chairman felt that delaying the further phases of the project would put a break on other regeneration projects in the town centre and that a delay might be unacceptable to the other funders of the project, who might withdraw funding or that the highways authority might choose to complete the project themselves to a more basic specification. The town centre works met the criteria for CIL funding and the Council had a pool of CIL funding available for strategic projects. However he recognised the concern about risk management and invited the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance to join the project monitoring group to provide him with reassurance that the project was being managed effectively.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Safety asked when the highway lighting improvements would be implemented as this was a matter of concern for residents. The Head of Planning Services confirmed that there were lighting improvements for each phase of the project and that these would go live as each phase progressed. She said that she would provide him with indicative dates for the lighting programme. The Chairman re-iterated the importance of having good lighting available on key routes to ensure that people felt safe when using them.

RESOLVED:

1. That project progress on the various phases, as detailed in the body of the report, be noted;
2. That the funding arrangements for Phase 1a as set out in paragraph 6.10 of the report, be noted;
3. That for the reason detailed in paragraph 4.3 of the report, the need to apply caveats and larger than normal levels of contingency, be noted;
4. That CIL funding in the estimated sum of £2.15M be requested, to ensure that the original scope and extent of the project (Phases 1, 2, 3 and 4) can be delivered, with the funding as set out in in Appendix D to the report; and
5. That CIL funding in the estimated sum of £2.0M be requested, to incorporate the regeneration comprising transport, street works and public realm improvements to Spital Street as part of the project scope, in line with the funding estimates, set out in Appendix D to the report.

62. DARTFORD TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECT - ALLOCATION OF COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) FUNDING

The Head of Planning Services introduced a report which set out the context and assessment of a bid for the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding for the Dartford Town Centre Regeneration Project. The report earlier in the agenda provided an update on the current progress of the project and outlined the additional works that had been included in the project

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scope. Since the introduction of CIL in 2014/15 the Council had received CIL receipts of £16.48M, of which £13.56M had been retained to fund strategic infrastructure projects. So far the Council had not allocated any of this retained funding towards a project. CIL regulations set out what the levy could be used to fund, which covered a broad range of infrastructure and facilities, which included those in the Dartford Town Centre Regeneration project. The Council had always recognised that the level of CIL funding from development was unlikely to fully fund all of the infrastructure improvements that might be expected as a result of development and that it would be necessary to prioritise the expedient use of CIL funding. A set of criteria for eligibility and prioritising CIL funding had therefore been produced and the Dartford Town Centre Regeneration Project had been assessed against these criteria. The project met the eligibility criteria for CIL funding, being a recognised form of infrastructure with a significant level of funding already having been secured. The bid for £4.152M CIL funding represented 22% of the current cost of the project and was being sought to cover additional costs, arising from increased costs of materials and delays, mainly associated with the pandemic, and also to cover the widening of the scope of the project. The allocation of this funding was viable from the current CIL receipts retained for strategic infrastructure projects and there were currently no other calls on this funding.

The Chairman noted the comments made by the Cabinet Advisory Panel regarding the allocation of CIL for unparished parts of the borough and noted that, although this had been collected, a mechanism was needed to identify suitable projects for its use. The Head of Planning Services explained that it was intended to use the criteria and framework to assess future CIL funding bids and that this would be developed further for the allocation of the unparished CIL.

RESOLVED:

1. That the level of CIL receipts at Appendix A to the report, held by the Council, as of 31 March 2021 and the amount available for funding strategic infrastructure projects, be noted;
2. That the Framework at Appendix B to the report used to assess the bid for the allocation of CIL funding be agreed for future use for other strategic infrastructure projects that come forward for CIL funding; and
3. That the allocation of £4.152m of CIL funding for the Dartford Town Centre Regeneration Project, be agreed.

63. DARTFORD TOWN CENTRE PARKING STUDY - OUTCOME OF IDENTIFICATION STAGE AND SUB-ZONE PRIORITIES

The Head of Planning Services presented a report detailing the results of the identification stage for the Dartford Town Centre Parking Study. This followed the report to Cabinet on 24 September 2021 which had outlined the scope and methodology for the parking study. Since that meeting there had been meetings with local ward Members in wards within the study area or adjacent

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areas to seek their views on the study boundary and sub-zones and to draw upon their knowledge of complaints or feedback from local residents on parking issues. There had also been meetings with other key stakeholder Council departments. These meetings had helped to establish the priority for progressing the study in each of the sub-zones and had also resulted in some changes to sub-zone boundaries.

The conclusions derived from these meetings were that the majority of requests for parking controls by residents and complaints of long term non-residential parking were more concentrated within the sub-zones located east and west of the Station and High Street. The majority of complaints received about parking issues had been from Anne of Cleves Road, located to the west of the Town Centre. The parking team had already started to investigate the parking issues there prior to the initiation of the more comprehensive Parking Study. It was therefore recommended that the first zone to be consulted on should be that covering the area west of the Town Centre, including Anne of Cleves Road, extending south to Baker Crescent, followed by the zone located east of the Town Centre, in Newtown, followed by the central Town Centre area. Other zone priorities would be kept under review and could change due to parking displacement or other pressures arising.

The first stage of the Study in each sub-zone would be an informal consultation with residents and businesses via a posted letter and online questionnaire, which would seek feedback on a number of generic questions on parking issues. It was proposed that each consultation would last for 21 days and that the first consultation, in sub-zone 1, would take place in November/December 2021. The same methodology would apply to the other sub-zones. A further report would be submitted to Members once the results from within the Parking Study area boundary had been analysed for consideration and decision on the next stage and draft design, in accordance with the guidance set out in the report.

The Chairman noted that consultation meetings for local Councillors should be purely for Members of the relevant ward to ensure confidence in the outcome of the meetings and that attendance should be by invitation.

The Head of Planning Services provided more information of the next stages of the consultation process and provided assurance that the Council had the resource to follow-up on the outcomes of the consultation and parking measures that might eventually be introduced. The consultation questionnaire also had a section to allow residents to highlight any other parking issues or suggested improvements as well as answering a set of specific questions. She also explained how the completion of each phase of the study could impact on subsequent phases and that this would include consideration of any displacement that might arise. Following the consultation there would be parking surveys of the area, which could include surveys of pavement parking. Any proposals for the introduction of parking measures would be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

The Chairman accepted that it was not possible to carry out all stages of the parking study at the same time but that prioritisation was likely to be contentious for some. It was important to recognise that the study of all of the

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sub-zones would be carried out quickly and completed as soon as possible. He asked for each household to be sent a leaflet along with the consultation letter clearly setting this out and outlining the rationale behind the parking study. To ensure Member ownership and direction of this project he proposed to establish a Member Working Party to oversee this work.

RESOLVED:

1. That the amended Dartford Town Centre Parking Study area boundary and the sub-zones, shown in Appendix A to the report, be agreed;
2. That the parking issues identified in Appendix B to the report, be noted;
3. That the priority of the sub-zones and informal consultation on Sub -zone 1, set out in paras.5.3 to 5.5 of the report, be agreed;
4. That the guidance to steer the consultation process, as set out in para.7 of the report, be agreed; and
5. That an all party Member Working Party be established to oversee progress on the Town Centre Parking Study.

64. CORPORATE PLAN 2021-2023

The Chief Officer & Director of Corporate Services presented an updated Corporate Plan for the period 2021-23 which set out the vision and priority themes for the Council and the Borough as a whole. The draft Plan retained the key themes included in the 207-2020 Corporate Plan with some minor adjustments. 'Housing' was now a standalone theme whilst 'Safer Communities' had now become 'Safer and Cohesive Communities'. Two sub-themes had also been created under the main theme of 'Economic Development and Regeneration. These were 'Making the Place', which looked at how physical development and regeneration could benefit the Borough, and 'Economic Prosperity' which looked at employment and economic development. Since the last Corporate Plan there had been major challenges arising from Brexit and from the Covid pandemic and the new plan covered a two year period, rather than three, so that the Council could assess the effects of Covid and Brexit before looking to a longer planning timeframe. The draft Plan also contained a series of actions to deliver the Council's objective and a set of Performance Indicators. The Policy Overview Committee had also considered the draft Corporate Plan at its meeting on 14 September 2021 and had made a number of comments which were presented to the Cabinet for consideration.

The Cabinet considered each of the changes recommended by the Policy Overview Committee for inclusion but considered that some of them were issues that were driven by legislation, were measures of performance or were outside of the Council's control and ability to deliver, and as such, should not be included in the Corporate Plan or could be covered by adding a foreward to the Corporate Plan. Some of the points were also felt to already be covered

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by the Plan such as protection of the Greenbelt and monitoring of CIL income and expenditure. The Cabinet did feel that there could be some merit in referencing the Council's ability to lobby on issues such as strategic transport infrastructure under the Health and Wellbeing theme.

In considering the Plan it was felt that the reference to 'working from home [has] become the new norm' under the heading, 'A Year of Change' on page 2 was factually incorrect and should be replaced by 'during the pandemic working from home became a new phenomena' and that it was far from certain that home working or hybrid working would become a permanent model for the Council.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance was concerned that home or hybrid working had a detrimental impact on collaborative work and joined-up working and that he perceived there to be some disconnect. The Chairman said that a decision on this would be taken by Members and founded on data around the impact new methods of working had on productivity and meeting Members' and residents working needs and perceptions.

RESOLVED:

1. That, the Director of Growth and Community be granted delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Chairman, to make the relevant amendments to the Corporate Plan as discussed by the Cabinet.
2. That the finalised draft of the Corporate Plan, be recommended to the General Assembly of the Council, for approval.

65. DEED OF INDEMNITY FOR MEMBERS AND OFFICERS REVIEW

The Chief Officer & Director of Corporate Services introduced a report which recommended the adoption of a new Deed of Indemnity for Members and Officers. Since the Council had originally adopted its Indemnity for Members and Officers in 2007 there had been an increasing propensity for parties to litigate in order to recover losses which could lead to some individuals becoming concerned about any personal liability that might attach to the performance of their duties. It was not considered to be in the Council's interest if potentially suitable candidates were deterred from seeking election to the Council or seeking appointment to responsible posts supported by the Council because of concerns over possible personal liabilities. It was therefore recommended that the Council provide as wide an indemnity in respect of such risks as it lawfully could, to both Members and Officers, and including Independent Members and Independent Persons, providing they were acting responsibly and in good faith.

RESOLVED:

That the Deed of Indemnity for Members and Officers, at Appendix A to the report, be endorsed and recommended to the General Assembly of the Council for adoption.

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66. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING: SITE 1 - REAR OF 49 LEYTON CROSS ROAD AND SITE 2 - LAND ADJACENT TO TILTMAN AVENUE

The Cabinet considered a report which sought approval for new road names for the land to the rear of 49 Leyton Cross Road and land at Tiltman Avenue. . The proposed names had been submitted for consultation to Council Members, the Emergency Services, Royal Mail and the developer. and complied with the Council's policy on Street Naming. Suitable suffixes would be chosen once the final road names had been approved.

The Chairman of the Cabinet Advisory Panel had asked that future reports should detail the rationale for the chosen street names. The Cabinet felt that this would be a helpful addition and a point of reference for the future.

In view of the recent death of Councillor Allen, who was a resident of Leyton Cross, it was suggested that an alternative street name for the land to the rear of 49 Leyton Cross, should be explored. The Cabinet offered a delegation to proceed with the existing name if required.

RESOLVED:

1. That a decision on a single new road name for the land to the rear of 49 Leyton Cross Road be deferred for the reasons described above; and
2. That two new road names for the land at Tiltman Avenue be approved as Everard and Whiting.

67. WRITE-OFF OF IRRECOVERABLE SUNDRY DEBT

The Cabinet considered a report which recommended writing-off, one irrecoverable sundry debt where it had not been possible to obtain payment and where the amount involved exceeded Officers' delegated powers. The background to the accrual of the debt was outlined in the report along with the reasons why there was no prospect of recovering the debt.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance expressed frustration about writing off this debt because the assets had been transferred to the same owner who had been able to manoeuvre their complex financial structure to avoid paying their debt to the Council and sums owed to others. He hoped that the new contract provided for the payment of rent up-front so that this situation could not be repeated. The Chief Officer & Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the write-off of the debt was part of a negotiated arrangement that could not be changed but that, so far, rental payments were being made.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet approves the write-off of £71,446.02 in respect of the irrecoverable sundry debt, as detailed in exempt Appendix A to the report.

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68. WRITE-OFF OF NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC BUSINESS RATES

The Cabinet considered a report which recommended writing-off National Non-Domestic Rate debts where it had not been possible to obtain payment because of insolvency, because the ratepayer could not be traced or where the debt was otherwise irrecoverable. The background to each case, and the reason why it was considered to be irrecoverable, was outlined in the report.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder congratulated the Business Rates Department on their prompt action in dealing with these cases.

RESOLVED:

That the sums shown at exempt Appendix A, in the confidential part of the report, amounting to £320,986.23, be written off as uncollectible.

69. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2021/22

The Cabinet received an update on current financial performance against the 2021/22 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account to date and confirmed that it was expected that services would be delivered within the overall budget. Attention was also drawn to two adjustments to reserves carried forward which had been identified during the audit of the 2020/21 accounts.

RESOLVED:

1. That the monitoring update for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account, at Appendix A to the report, be noted;
2. That, following completion of the audit of the Statement of Accounts, the revised earmarked reserves' position for 2020/21, as set out in para. 3.6-3.8 of the report, be noted; and
3. That key general fund income streams, at Appendix B to the report, be noted.

70. CAPITAL PROGRAMME - MONITORING 2021/22

The Cabinet received a report which detailed the progress to date on the schemes in the approved Capital Programme and the latest position on capital resources. The Chairman sought, and received, clarification on the underspends relating to new homes and playground provision.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Cabinet notes the progress made to date on the 2021/22 Capital Programme as detailed in the report and in Appendices A and B to the report; and

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2. That the current position on the Capital Programme Indicators, as shown in Appendix C to the report, be noted.

71. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT 2021/2022

The Cabinet received a report which detailed the investment performance of the Council's internally and externally managed funds to 30 September 2021 and updated the Treasury Indicators for the six months to 30 September 2021.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Cabinet notes the investment performance of the Council's funds; and
2. That the Cabinet notes the half-year position of the Council's Treasury Indicators.

72. SAFEGUARDING

The Cabinet considered a report which updated Members on how the Council was meeting its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding the welfare of children, and adults at risk of abuse or neglect. This included oversight by a multi-disciplinary group chaired by the Director of Housing & Public Protection, with representatives from the Council's operational teams and Kent County Council's Children's and Adult's Services. There was a detailed referral process and all staff were required to undertake online safeguarding training with more detailed training for staff who had direct contact with the public or a safeguarding role. This was underpinned by the Council's Safeguarding Policy which was regularly reviewed. In addition the Council's approach to safeguarding children was externally audited every two years, with the last audit resulting in a 'green' rating which meant that the Council was fully compliant in all of the areas examined.

The Director of Housing & Public Protection explained that it was also intended to provide in-person safeguarding training for Members. The Chairman suggested that attendance should be mandatory. He also welcomed the Council's actions on safeguarding which was a priority for the Council

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

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**73. ACCEPTANCE OF TENDER - MANAGEMENT OF HOUSING REVENUE
ACCOUNT GARAGE PORTFOLIO - EXEMPT APPENDIX A
(EXEMPT CATEGORY SO 46 (1) (B) ANNEX 1 PARAGRAPH 3)**

That, following discussion of the main report (minute 60 above), the contents of Exempt Appendix A be noted.

**74. WRITE-OFF OF IRRECOVERABLE SUNDRY DEBT - EXEMPT APPENDIX
A
(EXEMPT CATEGORY SO 46 (1) (B) ANNEX 1 PARAGRAPH 3)**

That, following discussion of the main report (minute 67 above), the contents of Exempt Appendix A be noted.

**75. WRITE-OFF OF NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC BUSINESS RATES -
EXEMPT APPENDIX A
(EXEMPT CATEGORY SO 46 (1) (B) ANNEX 1 PARAGRAPH 3)**

That, following discussion of the main report (minute 68 above), the contents of Exempt Appendix A be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.09 pm

Councillor J A Kite, MBE
CHAIRMAN

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