

Record of Cabinet decisions (virtual meeting)

Tuesday, 12 May 2020
3.00pm to 3.42pm

Date of publication: 13 May 2020

Subject to call-in these decisions will be effective from 21 May 2020
The record of decisions is subject to approval at the next meeting of the Cabinet

Present:	Councillor Alan Jarrett	Leader of the Council
	Councillor Howard Doe	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services
	Councillor David Brake	Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services
	Councillor Rodney Chambers, OBE	Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships
	Councillor Jane Chitty	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation
	Councillor Phil Filmer	Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services
	Councillor Adrian Gulvin	Portfolio Holder for Resources
	Councillor Mrs Josie Iles	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services – Lead Member (statutory responsibility)
	Councillor Rupert Turpin	Portfolio Holder for Business Management
	In Attendance:	Neil Davies, Chief Executive
	Wayne Hemingway, Principal Democratic Services Officer	
	Perry Holmes, Chief Legal Officer/Monitoring Officer	
	Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer	
	Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer	

Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Martin Potter (Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools).

Record of decisions

The record of the meeting held on 7 April 2020 was agreed by the Cabinet and signed by the Leader as correct.

Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 4 (Housing Enforcement and Licensing Policy) as he was a private landlord. He therefore left the meeting for the discussion and decision on this item.

Councillor Gulvin declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 4 (Housing Enforcement and Licensing Policy) as he was a private landlord. He therefore left the meeting for the discussion and decision on this item.

Councillor Rupert Turpin declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 4 (Housing Enforcement and Licensing Policy) as he was a private landlord. He therefore left the meeting for the discussion and decision on this item.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

Housing Enforcement and Licensing Policy

Background:

This report provided details of the proposed Housing Enforcement and Licensing Policy which had been revised following a review of technical and legislative amendments, enacting the relevant provisions of the Housing Act 2004 and Housing and Planning Act 2016. The Policy set out enforcement criteria regarding private rented sector housing and the range of legislative tools the Council could use to improve conditions.

The new Housing Enforcement and Licensing Policy aimed to ensure:

- Good quality, healthy housing for households renting in the Private Sector and to prioritise action to those homes which presented the greatest risks to Health and Safety;
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) were safe and well managed and all relevant Management Regulations were adhered to;
- All licensable HMOs were licensed and complied with current licence conditions and all relevant Management Regulations.

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The draft Policy had been consulted on and details of the outcomes were set out at section 7 of the report. The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services proposed a change to the wording of the Policy, at section 7.1, which was amended to read; “People immigrating to the UK, who require a visa, must provide evidence to the Home Office that the housing they propose to move in to would be free from any category 1 & 2 hazards”.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken and was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

Decision number: ***Decision:***

55/2020 **The Cabinet agreed to adopt the Housing Enforcement and Licensing Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the rewording at section 7.1 of the Policy, as detailed above.**

Reasons:

The Housing Enforcement and Licensing Policy 2020 responds to the key changes to the legislation, whilst providing the legal basis for general enforcement activity.

Ofsted Update Report - Children's Services in Medway

Background:

This report provided the Cabinet with a progress update on improvement activity since Medway’s Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services, which took place in July 2019 and the outcome was an overall judgement of inadequate.

The report detailed a number of improvement activity examples, including:

- The establishment of an Improvement Board, set up in October 2019 to oversee progress of the Improvement Plan;
- Substantial additional resource has been put in to the service to add to the workforce and to enable realignment of the service model;
- An updated Quality Assurance Framework;
- Training and development for elected Members;
- Ongoing work with Partners in Practice and the Leadership Improvement Partner to identify and instil best practice arrangements;
- The recruitment of a permanent Assistant Director, Children’s Services, who began in post on 11 May 2020.

The report also detailed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and work being done to mitigate its impact on improvement and to keep children and staff as safe as possible.

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Decision number: **Decision:**

The Cabinet noted the content of the report and the improvement steps taken so far.

Reasons:

To formally notify the Cabinet of the progress made in relation to improving Children's Social Care services.

To ensure Cabinet are aware of the feedback from and the ongoing involvement of the Children's Services Commissioner and the Statutory Direction from the Secretary of State.

Recruitment Freeze

Background:

This report presented information on vacancies that officers had requested approval to commence recruitment for, following the process agreed by the Cabinet on 7 January 2003 (decision number 9/2003).

Details of the posts were set out within Appendix 1 to the report.

The report also detailed a proposal for a revised process for authorisation of recruitment to vacant posts whereby the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder in each case would be responsible for the consideration and determination of any requests to unfreeze vacant posts, which are not exempted from the Recruitment Freeze following consultation with the relevant service area and HR, instead of a requirement to be reported to Cabinet meetings.

The report explained that this new process was considered appropriate to minimise unnecessary delay in filling vacancies where it was considered that recruitment should proceed in the interests of maintaining service standards, to achieve the Council's priorities or in order to meet statutory obligations.

Decision number: **Decision:**

56/2020 **The Cabinet agreed to unfreeze the following posts, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report:**

Business Support Department

- a) Political Assistant to the Labour and Co-operative Group**

Regeneration, Culture and Environment

- b) Outreach Team Leader**
- c) Assistant Sports Development Officer.**

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57/2020 **The Cabinet agreed to maintain a recruitment freeze for all vacant posts, and agreed that the Leader and the relevant Portfolio Holder in each case be responsible for the consideration and determination of any requests to unfreeze vacant posts which are not exempted from the Recruitment Freeze following consultation with the relevant service area and HR with immediate effect.**

Reasons:

The posts presented to Cabinet would support the efficient running of the Council.

Revisions to the recruitment freeze process will result in a more streamlined approach whilst preserving the rigour of close scrutiny of the need for recruitment in the context of prevailing budget pressures and Council priorities.

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Leader of the Council

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Date

Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer

Telephone: 01634 332104

Email: democratic.services@medway.gov.uk

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