

# Meeting of the Council

Wednesday 13 January 2010, 7pm  
at the Council Offices, Recreation Ground, London Road, Stone

## AGENDA

**101/01/10CL: TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**102/01/10CL: TO ACCEPT DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**103/01/10CL: TO HEAR THE OPENING PRAYER**

Please give us the courage to change what can be changed, the humility to accept the things we cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference

**104/01/10CL: TO ACCEPT QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

**105/01/10CL: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9 DECEMBER 2009.**

**106/01/10CL: TO DISCUSS MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

This item is for member's exchange of information only.

**107/01/10CL: TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES**

1) Minutes of Planning, Environment and Transport Committee held 28 October 2009

**108/01/10CL: TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS AND AGENCIES**

- 1) Kent County Councillor's Report
- 2) Dartford Borough Councillor's Report
- 3) Community Warden's Report
- 4) Neighbourhood Beat Officer's Report

**109/01/10CL: MEETING STRUCTURE REVIEW**

The attached report provides members with proposals for an amended meeting structure in order to make efficiency savings and income targets as set out in the budget for 2010-11.

It is recognised that the current economic climate could have a detrimental effect on council income requiring the council to supplement any shortfall from limited reserves. As such, the proposal aims to mitigate the effect by redirecting administrative time towards income-generating activities.

**Recommendation: To approve the proposed amendments to the meeting structure with immediate effect, in line with budget proposals for 2010-11.**

**110/01/10CL: COUNCIL BUDGET 2010-11**

The attached budget report provides a full copy of budget proposals for 2010-11 with details of each cost centre and explanations for increases or decreases as appropriate.

**Recommendation: To approve the council budget for 2010-11 as outlined in the report.**

**111/01/10CL: PRECEPT REQUEST FOR 2010-11**

The council is required to issue a precept request to the Borough Council by January 31<sup>st</sup> 2010. A detailed breakdown of precept calculations is attached for member's consideration.

**Recommendation: To approve the precept request as outlined at Appendix A.**

**112/01/01CL: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

In order to meet criteria necessary to exercise the Power of Well-Being, the council must have adopted a Community Engagement Strategy.

A draft strategy is outlined at appendix A for consideration.

**Recommendation: To discuss and adopt/amend the Community Engagement Strategy as outlined at Appendix A.**

**113/01/01CL: ANNUAL SURVEY**

The council has undertaken a parish-wide survey in the council newsletter for the last two years. The results have provided the council with an indication of the main local issues and residents perception of council performance.

The council is due to publish a five-year strategy for 2010-15 by spring and it is considered essential to undertake a fresh survey ahead of production to obtain up-to-date views regarding potential priorities.

A list of proposed questions is contained at appendix A, which attempt to target specific areas likely to be concluded as part of the five-year strategy. Members are asked to consider what feedback they require from residents in order to feel confident that strategy priorities are set appropriately.

An overview of the procedure method to undertake the survey is outlined at Appendix B

**Recommendation: To approve/amend survey questions outlined at appendix A and to approve the procedure method of the survey outlined at Appendix B.**

**114/01/01CL: WINTER NEWSLETTER**

The winter edition of the quarterly newsletter is due for distribution in February. Items currently scheduled for inclusion are: Pavilion project update; St John's Ward by-election result; publication of the Community Engagement Strategy; details of the parish survey; and the statement of accounts 2009/10.

Members are asked give consideration to other items for inclusion.

**Recommendation: To make suggestions for items of interest for inclusion in the winter newsletter.**

**115/01/01CL: FINANCE**

**1) BUDGET MONITORING**

A report, attached at appendix A, provides members with an overview of the council's current financial position following 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter reconciliations.

**Recommendation: To note the council's financial position.**

**2) TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS & RECEIPTS**

Full details of payments and receipts for December 2009 are attached at appendix A.

**Recommendation: To approve the payments and receipts for December 2009.**

**116/01/01CL: CORRESPONDENCE**

**1) Kent County Council (KCC) - Consultation Draft: Community Infrastructure Provision Service Strategies in Kent 2009**

The Development and Investment Team has written informing that the County Council has recently published the above document.

Appendix A provides an explanation of the purpose of the document with a full copy of the guidance contained at Appendix B.

Member's views are invited to assist in the production of the guidance. The deadline for representations is 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

**Recommendation: To discuss and conclude the council's response to the consultation draft.**

**2) Audit Commission – Appointment of External Auditor**

The Head of Audit, Stephen Taylor, has written to inform that they propose to appoint Mr Wayne Rickard as External Auditor to cover the financial years 2009/10 to 2013/14.

Mr Rickard is an FCCA accountant with ten years experience working for the Audit Commission. He has a broad experience of public sector auditing and has managed the external audit of district councils and NHS Trusts within the South West. He has also in Local Government and the private sector as an accountant.

The Audit Commission welcomes the council's comments on the appointment and, in particular whether there are any specific reasons why it would be inappropriate to appoint Mr Rickard as the council's external auditor.

The deadline for comments is Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

**Recommendation: To note the Audit Commission's proposals regarding appointment of external auditor and make comments as required.**

**3) SLCC – Submission of Section 7: The Power of Well-Being**

Section 7: The Power of Well-Being is a module linked to the Certificate in Local Council Administration, which must have been passed in order for the council to be eligible to exercise the Well-Being power. The Clerk was awarded the CILCA qualification in August 2008 but the qualification at the time did not include this particular module requiring the Clerk to make an additional submission.

The CILCA Administrator, Heather Owen, has written to confirm that the Clerk's submission of Section 7 for the Certificate in Local Council Administration has successfully passed.

Therefore, the Clerk now fulfils the eligibility criteria for a qualified Clerk (as prescribed in the Parish Council's 'Power to Promote Well-Being' Prescribed Conditions Order 2008). A copy of the Certificate is attached at appendix A.

**Recommendation: To note the Clerk's eligibility as qualified as prescribed by criteria to exercise the Power of Well-Being.**

**117/01/01CL: COUNCIL REPORTS**

- 1) Chairman's Report
- 2) Clerk's Report

**118/01/01CL: ITEMS OF INFORMATION**

- 1) The Bulletin Issue 46 – Standards Board for England (included in agenda pack)

**119/01/01CL: TO CONCLUDE ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**