

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2016 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor David Saunders (Chairman); Councillors G Coleman-Cooke, Bayford, Campbell, Curran, Dennis, Dexter, Dixon, Falcon, Hayton, Jaye-Jones, Parsons, Piper, R Potts and Taylor

In Attendance: Councillors: L Fairbrass, Stummer-Schmertzling, K Coleman-Cooke, Taylor-Smith and M Saunders

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following Members:

Councillor Grove, substituted by Councillor Hayton;
Councillor Rusiecki, substituted by Councillor L. Piper;
Councillor Connor, substituted by R. Potts;
Councillor Martin, substituted by Taylor;
Councillor Bambridge, substituted by Councillor Bayford.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

69. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Falcon seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting that was held on 16 August 2016.

70. FULFILLING THANET'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Councillor D. Saunders, Chairman of the Panel called upon Ms Ruth Bailey, representing 'Supporters of Manston Airport' to address the Panel. Ms Bailey, spoke under Part 5 of the Council Constitution on Public Speaking Procedure Rules on agenda Item 4, Fulfilling Thanet's growth and development opportunities.

The Chairman thanked Ms Bailey for her contributions and then requested the portfolio holder to lead discussion.

Councillor Stummer-Schmertzling, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise Services introduced the proposed strategy for economic growth in the district. The proposals were aimed at job creation and wealth creation for the district in order to increase prosperity for Thanet residents. The strategy was developed with support from consultants and a presentation on the framework of this strategy was made before the Overview & Scrutiny Panel by the consultants.

The strategy was going to build on the successes made by council over the last two years, which had seen about 400 new entrepreneurs come to set up businesses in the district and 5,000 residents in employment. Some Members were concerned that the proposed strategy dismissed the importance of Manston Airport to the future economic growth of the district and suggested that the wording relating to Manston Airport should reflect a balanced and impartial view.

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Dixon seconded and Members agreed that the strategy should provide additional detail on employment statistics by highlighting the number of individuals employed on 'zero hour' contracts and those individuals employed in more than one job.

Members indicated that the strategy ought to be explicitly linked to the Local Plan. In response to employment statistics issues raised above, Councillor Stummer-Schmertzling agreed to provide the Panel with a response. Member suggested that Thanet District Council should liaise with town/parish councils to coordinate local economic development initiatives. One Member suggested that the proposals should be drafted and presented to form a marketing proposal in order to be attractive to potential investors. Some Members were concerned that the strategy only mentioned Ramsgate and Margate and no other towns.

In response to observations and suggestions from Members, Rob Kenyon, Director of Community Services said that the economic development strategy was a 'live document' that could be updated at any point in time and would evolve over time and took note of the comments from the Panel. Rob Kenyon agreed to review the wording regarding references made to Manston Airport. Chairman said that once officers had made changes to the some of the wording as suggested by the Panel, the Chairman would then consider those updates outside the meeting.

The Panel agreed that subject to the changes as suggested by Members and as highlighted above, the proposed Economic Growth Strategy be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

71. NEW - COMBINED SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Councillor L. Fairbrass, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Services led the presentation or the proposals for a new Combined Safeguarding Policy. Council had a duty to protect children and vulnerable adults by raising awareness and reporting any concerns to appropriate authorities, through the Triage.

It was important for council to understand the various roles that councillors and officers ought to play regarding this issue. It was therefore necessary for council to establish robust procedures for recognising victims of abuse when delivering services to residents, hence the need to adopt the policy. Such procedures could also provide a list of indicators of abuse.

Members welcomed the development of the proposed policy. One Member suggested that Council develops and adopts as part of the policy procedure documentation a report form template that enabled a member of the public to report their concerns anonymously. Another Member suggested that female genital mutilation should also be added to the list of domestic abuse. Councillor Fairbrass agreed to take the suggestions on board when finalising the policy proposals.

Penny Button, Head of Safer Neighbourhoods confirmed that councillors and officers will receive appropriate training after the policy had been adopted by Council.

Councillor Parsons proposed, Councillor Bayford seconded and Members agreed that subject to the proposed suggestions being included in the policy, the Combined Safeguarding Policy be recommended to Cabinet for adoption.

72. REVIEW OF OSP WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2016/17

One Member registered their disappointment at the meeting regarding the long standing request made by nine cross party Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to consider a report on the Dreamland, which had still not been fully addressed. The

Chairman had chased up the issue and Democratic Services had forwarded the request to the Executive.

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Bayford seconded and Members unanimously agreed that the Panel should be given, as a matter of urgency, an opportunity to review the report on Dreamland.

73. FORWARD PLAN AND EXEMPT CABINET REPORT LIST FOR PERIOD 12 OCTOBER 2016 - 31 MARCH 2017

Members noted the report.

Meeting concluded: 8.00 pm