

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

Council	13 October 2016
Report Author	Cllr D. Saunders, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Crow-Brown, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance
Status	For Information
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Reasons for Key	N/A
Previously Considered by	N/A
Ward:	Thanet Wide

Executive Summary:

The purpose of the report is to highlight some of the key activities that have planned for by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel during the course of this municipal year 2016/17 and progress to date regarding implementation of the Panel's work programme.

Recommendation(s):

1. Members are invited to discuss and note the report.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money	There are no financial implications arising from this report. The report provides a briefing to Full Council about the current work activities of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel.
Legal	There are no significant legal implications arising directly from this report. A presentation of the OSP Chairman's report to Full Council enables the Chairman to fulfil their duty as is required by the Council's Constitution.
Corporate	<p>There are no corporate risks associated with this report. The report enables discussion by Members at Full Council on the activities of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>The debate on the OSP Chairman's report contributes to open communication across the council. A strong scrutiny function contributes to an open democratic process for decision making and delivery of value for money services as council decisions are interrogated by Members before they are implemented. In instances where such decisions are interrogated after implementation, there will be lessons to learn for future policy development.</p>
Equalities Act	Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector

2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty	Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.	
	Protected characteristics: age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.	
	Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.	
	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,	
	Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it	
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.		
No implications arise directly but the Council needs to retain a strong focus and understanding on issues of diversity amongst the local community and ensure service delivery matches these.		
It is important to be aware of the Council's responsibility under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and show evidence that due consideration had been given to the equalities impact that may be brought upon communities by the decisions made by Council.		

CORPORATE PRIORITIES (tick those relevant)✓	
A clean and welcoming Environment	
Promoting inward investment and job creation	
Supporting neighbourhoods	✓

CORPORATE VALUES (tick those relevant)✓	
Delivering value for money	✓
Supporting the Workforce	
Promoting open communications	✓

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 At each ordinary Full Council meeting, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel presents a report on the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel since the last Council meeting.
- 1.2 Such a report will be subject to comment or debate by Members. This is in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.1 of Part 4 of the Thanet District Council Constitution.
- 1.3 The report will therefore provide the basis for debate by Members on on-going scrutiny activities and hopefully lead to sharing of views and ideas to enhance the scrutiny function at Thanet District Council.
- 1.4 The Panel set up its work programme for 2016/7 at the May meeting and agreed to conduct most of its work through the reconstituted sub committees.

2.0 Community Safety Partnership Working Party

- 2.1 Members agreed a work programme for the year at their meeting on 30 June 2016. The working party will this year focus on the following scrutiny terms of reference:
1. Reducing Re-offending;
 2. Safeguarding our most vulnerable people;
 3. Community Confidence and Agency Collaboration.
- 2.2 They identified some key topics from which they will pick one to focus their scrutiny review efforts on at a time. These include:
1. Sexual offence support available locally – rape crisis centres in Thanet/reasons for the low proportion of rape allegations that result in conviction in the Thanet area;
 2. Rough Sleeping – issues around homelessness and antisocial behaviour;
 3. Neighbourhood engagement meetings;
 4. Changes to antisocial behaviour legislation – public space protection orders;
 5. Littering and dog fouling – enforcement and proportionality of enforcement.
- 2.3 In order to fully explore the issues related to the above key topics, the working party will invite external agency representatives to their meetings to provide support to Member debates. The group will be meeting again on 03 October 2016.

3.0 Corporate Performance Review Working Party

- 3.1 The working party met on 18 July and 23 August. I attended the August meeting where Members received quarterly performance reports from Thanet District Council, East Kent Services (including EKHR) and East Kent Housing. From the reports received, Members were concerned about the residents' annual survey results which indicated some dissatisfaction with the street cleaning services. Officers were working to address the issue by bringing in more mechanical sweepers.
- 3.2 East Kent Services reported council tax and business rates collection that was less than at this stage in the previous year. However officers assured Members that there was no need for concern as this performance will improve soon. Officers were concerned about the number of verbal and in one instance physical attacks on staff at the Gateway by some customers. In addition to reporting such incidents to the Police, management was developing a guide for staff on how best to manage such situations in future.
- 3.3 The new Chief Executive acknowledged that there were a number of challenges that East Kent Housing was facing this financial year. These included the following:
1. Voids Performance;
 2. The need to address asset management under the Capital Programme;
 3. Performance is under target for heating repairs for housing stock in Thanet.
- 3.4 EK Housing management was working on initiatives to resolve the above issues. These included the recruitment of senior staff (at director level with a focus on property) and middle managers. They were also negotiating with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) to see whether it is possible to hold an annual licence for Trove Court and Kennedy House, which would allow them to carry out the work without the fourteen day notification to the HSE each time asbestos material was discovered in the any of the properties.

3.5 A review of the asset management by a leading consultancy, HQN is currently underway and recommendations from that exercise would be reported to EK Housing management and the implementation of these recommendations would be monitored by the EK Housing Board. The next meeting of the working party is on 22 November.

4.0 Electoral Registration Process Review Working Party

4.1 The working party met on 07 July. Members agreed a work programme that included receiving an officer report on 'current process for increasing voter awareness, registration and participation in the electoral process.'

4.2 Members would like to explore and thereafter propose to the Electoral Services Team ways to improve voter registration in the district. The next meeting is on 17 October.

5.0 Call-In of Cabinet Decisions

5.1 There were call-ins made by the Panel since the last Council meeting.

6.0 Cabinet Presentations at OSP Meetings

6.1 Councillor Stammer–Schmertzing, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise Services attended the August Panel meeting and shared the Cabinet's view on a new economic development strategy for Thanet. He was assisted by a consultant from SQW and council officers who are currently working with the council to design that new strategy.

6.2 I found this presentation to be informative and useful and I believe other members of the Panel found it useful too. For example the Panel was advised by the portfolio holder that the council was working with other partners like KCC to ensure investment was made in key infrastructure like the Thanet Parkway.

6.3 TDC were working with East Kent Spatial Development Company and East Kent Opportunities to deliver new employment floor space at Manston Park and that the council did and would continue to support businesses that decided to invest in the district (including providing one to one support to relocate) to deliver new employment floor space in the district and to deliver 5,000 jobs.

6.4 The Panel encouraged Cabinet to come up with initiatives to recover the lost businesses to the district as a result of some blue chip companies and the passenger ferry that no longer trade from Thanet. They said that Council should actively make this issue a key part of the new vision for the district.

7.0 Overview and Scrutiny Panel Recommendations to Cabinet Implementation Monitoring

7.1 Currently there are no Panel recommendations under consideration or being implemented by Cabinet.

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Annex List

None	N/A
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Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
None	N/A

Corporate Consultation

Finance	Nikki Walker, Finance Manager (HRA, Capital, Ext Funding, Policy & Performance)
Legal	Ciara Feeney, Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer