

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2013 at 7.00 pm in Broadstairs Town Council, Pierremont Hall, Pierremont Park, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 1JX.

Present: Councillor Driver (Chairman); Councillors Harrison, Campbell, Gibson, Gideon, E Green, I Gregory, Hibbert, Hornus, Marson, Matterface, Moore, D Saunders, M Tomlinson, Watkins and Worrow

In Attendance: Fenner, D Green, Johnston, King, Poole and M Saunders

320. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor W. Scobie, substituted by Councillor Matterface.

321. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

322. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

323. EQUALITY POLICY PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Sarah Carroll, Strategic Organisational Development Manager introduced the item. She explained that the report to Council was part of a consultation process on the draft Equality Policy. Members observed that there were some legislative changes on the way regarding additional characteristics that the proposed policy would need to take into consideration and these included the issues relating to discrimination of individuals by Caste. Sarah Carroll said that the policy was designed to comply and as such would be amended to reflect future legislative changes.

Members suggested that there should be clarity in the policy document on creating an understanding between people with different characteristics. Other Members observed that Council staff were working excessive overtime. This may affect the health and wellbeing of staff. They suggested that Council should identify the number of services that can be delivered with the current staff complement.

Speaking under Council Procedure Rule 24.1, Councillor Fenner said that the public consultation had been an extensive exercise and had included about 400 groups. These were made of residents groups, support groups and religious groups. She said that this policy document was 'work in progress' and it will be updated in response to changing demands. Councillor Fenner said that it was important to treat people with respect and dignity.

Members agreed that subject to the observations and suggestions from the Panel, the draft Equality Policy be recommended to Cabinet for finalisation by Council.

324. REJECTION OF PETITION REPORT

Members said that the issue had been finalised by the Planning Committee.

The report was noted.

325. ALLOCATION POLICY

Madeline Homer, Director of Community Services introduced the item. She said that three significant changes had been made to the draft Allocations Policy in response to the public consultation results. These are:

1. With regards to Introducing a residential criterion; ensure that households owed a Homeless duty are accommodated promptly with minimal time spent in emergency accommodation;
2. With regards to Priority for Armed Forces personnel, apply a residential criterion for members of the Armed Forces in order to prevent influx of Armed Forces Personnel who have no connection to the Thanet District accessing the limited social housing;
3. Provide further clarification on income, savings and assets.

Members suggested that there was a need to differentiate between houses and bungalows in the policy document. The policy should provide the statistics regarding these two categories of accommodation.

326. AGREEMENT OF COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN FOR 2013-14

Martyn Cassell, Community Safety and Leisure Manager introduced the item. He said that the Community Safety Partnership looked at the crime data from the previous year to draw up the priorities for the following year, 2013/14. These priorities were then translated into an action plan for the Partnership. The Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership Working Party had recommended this draft Plan to the Panel. Speaking under Council Procedure Rule 24.1, Councillor Johnston thanked staff who had worked on producing the Plan and Members who had provided some feedback and comments on the draft proposals.

Some Members were concerned about cycling on pavements which was considered to be prevalent in some wards and required addressing. They suggested that this issue be included in the Plan. Members expressed the view that it was important for the Partnership to nip in the bud some of these low level antisocial behaviour crimes and that could be done by prioritising them in the Community Safety Plan.

Madeline Homer said that it was a big challenge to get the right balance of priorities across the agencies and needs of the district in the context of a county-wide Community Safety Plan. However officers would engage partner agencies in further discussions on the matter.

Subject to the comments from the Panel Members agreed to recommend the Draft Community Safety Plan for 2013/14 to Cabinet.

327. RESPONSES OF CABINET &/OR COUNCIL TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

The report was noted.

328. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH TDC ARTEFACTS

Janice Wason, Strategic Community Manager introduced the item. She said that the issue in question had been considered at a Governance & Audit Committee meeting where Members agreed to recommend that the matter be further considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel. Janice Wason said that the concerns raised were mainly to do with the historic and not current management of Council owned artefacts.

Speaking under Council Procedure Rule 24.1, Councillor Johnston said that she was in support of efforts to improve the management of Council owned artefacts. Kate Wilson, Community Development Officer had managed to design and put in place some management systems for looking after the artefacts. It was important for Council to know whether there were any artefacts that had gone missing and these should be reported to the Police.

Members said that it was important to consider during this scrutiny process, the wider implications including insurance costs for Council accepting donations like artefacts. They suggested that a criteria system for accepting donations be put in place by Council. If the Panel were to set up a task & finish group, Councillor M. Tomlinson offered to be a Member on that group.

Janice Wason said that during the last two years, appropriate procedures had been put in place, including digitising the management of these artefacts, securing the building where these items were stored and valuations had been carried out by a specialist. An internal audit had been carried out as well.

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor M. Tomlinson seconded and Members agreed the following:

1. To set up a task and finish group;
2. Officers to draft the terms of reference for the group;
3. Mr Antony Ovenden be seconded onto the group as a specialist;

329. OSP WORK PROGRAMME REPORT 2012/13

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Matterface seconded and Members agreed:

1. To note the report;
2. That in view of recent comments by KCC that they intend to review their decision; the Panel would maintain the Richborough Household Waste Task & Finish Group with a watching brief until KCC formally rescinds the decision to close the Richborough Recycling Centre;
3. To recommend to Cabinet that the Domestic Violence Forum be added to the Thanet District Council list of executive appointed Outside Bodies and that a TDC Member be made a nominee to that Outside Body.

330. OSP CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

Members agreed that the report to the Overview & Scrutiny Panel forms the basis of the Panel Annual Report to be presented to Annual Council by the Chairman.

331. PETITION REFERRED TO OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL BY COUNCIL - PLEASURAMA SITE, RAMSGATE

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Gideon seconded and Members agreed the following:

1. To set up a Pleasurama Site Development Task & Finish Group as a priority scrutiny project for 2013/14;
2. Officers to draft the terms of reference.

332. FORWARD PLAN AND EXEMPT CABINET REPORT LIST:-25 APRIL 2013 TO 14 NOVEMBER 2013

Madeline Homer explained that the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme was a facility for providing first time buyers with part off the deposit for acquiring a mortgage. Kent County Council would underwrite the Scheme.

Panel Members requested that the item on the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme be brought to an appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting before the issue was finalised. Speaking under Council Procedure Rule 24.1, Councillor D. Green, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning agreed to the request.

Members also requested that the Panel be advised as to when the Draft Master Plan for the Ramsgate Port and Harbour would be available for consideration by the Panel or its sub committee. Speaking under Council Procedure Rule 24.1, Councillor Poole, Cabinet Member for Operational Services agreed to consider the request.

The Chairman thanked Members of the Panel and officers for the scrutiny work done during the year.

Meeting concluded: 8.35 pm