

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 August 2016 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor D. Saunders (Chairman); Councillors G Coleman-Cooke, Campbell, Connor, Dexter, Dixon, J Fairbrass, Falcon, K Gregory, Grove, Martin, R Potts, M Saunders and Taylor-Smith

In Attendance: Councillors: Crow-Brown, L Fairbrass, Savage and Stummer-Schmertzing

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following Members:

Councillor Curran, substituted by Councillor M. Saunders;
Councillor Jaye-Jones, substituted by Councillor J. Fairbrass;
Councillor Bambridge, substituted by Councillor K. Gregory;
Councillor Parsons, substituted by Councillor Taylor-Smith;
Councillor Dennis, substituted by Councillor Roy Potts.

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

62. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Grove seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting that was held on 24 May 2016.

63. CONSULTATION ON NEW EVENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Councillor L. Fairbrass, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Services introduced the report. She said that Council was committed to supporting events in the district. However it was worth noting that hosting of events did have implications for resources committed to this. The Council incurred costs in supporting events, hence the need to put in place an appropriate policy for supporting events in Thanet.

The policy would ensure that the Council recouped its costs through a schedule of fees and charges. The policy also defined clear roles and responsibilities that were shared between the Council and events organisers.

Penny Button, Head of Safer Neighbourhoods highlighted the following key features of the proposed policy:

1. New events categories which would include Enthusiast, Charity Regional Charity National, Commercial Community and Active Recreation;
2. Events sizes which include small and major;
3. New Event Journey;
4. New agreements and evaluations;
5. Reserving sites for up to three years;
6. Application fee;
7. A deposit;
8. Memorandum of agreement;
9. Permission to occupy Council land for events organisers;

10. Designation of Council land into prime and non-prime for events and conditions for accessing these sites.

Members said that the report made good reading and that the policy being proposed incorporated components that provide a useful basis for supporting events in the district. There was a request from Members for the policy to acknowledge the presence of local charities in the categories set out in the new policy proposal. They also requested that Parish/Town Councils should be included the consultation process.

Some Members were concerned that the policy appeared to propose that Council recoup all its costs which would be a significant burden on some of the local charities. Other Members were concerned about the levels of fees and charges to be charged, as they were too high. They queried whether the fees and charges will be reviewed at the same time as other fees and charges for Council services. They suggested that it would have been helpful if the report gave some brief comments about the consultation feedback. Penny Button agreed to find out from Waste & Recycling Department how charges for waste collection bins were worked out.

Members said that the policy should be quite clear and inform event organisers the full costs of hosting events upfront before they hold these events. In response, Rob Kenyon, Director of Community Services thanked the Panel for their contributions and agreed to incorporate some of the comments from the meeting into future versions of the policy proposal. He said that the policy is meant to enable council to recover the additional costs for providing additional services and was not meant to make a profit. The charges will be provided upfront, with a full quote provided to events organisers in advance of hosting the event.

One Member queried the wording regarding events cancellations and re-imbursements. Officers agreed to make the wording clearer in an updated version of the policy document. Some Members were concerned that the proposals for fees and charges might lead to some events being unaffordable to host as the costs for hosting events would more than double for major events. Members noted that there had been an increase in events this year to which Rob Kenyon confirmed that this year had witnessed a 30% increase in the number of events in the district.

One Member suggested that there should be a liaison between the Council and Town Councils, so that when funding for events was allocated to organisers, the payments should then be made expeditiously to Thanet District Council. Another Member suggested that future reviews of events policy should use the number of events held in any one year as one of the criteria for determining the impact of the policy. Officers agreed to consider these suggestions.

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Taylor-Smith seconded and Members agreed to propose the Events Policy to Cabinet, subject to the comments and suggestions made by the Panel.

64. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATION - CLLR STUMMER-SCHMERTZING, REGENERATION AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Councillor Stammer-Schmertzling, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise Services introduced Christine Doel, Director of SQW who then led the presentation on 'Towards an economic development strategy for Thanet.' Christine Doel said that her team was working with council officers on a proposed Economic Development Strategy for the district. Discussions had been conducted with the local business community. There was a need for the council to look outside the district and identify any initiatives that Thanet could be a part of.

Ms Doel said that there had been some notable successes in terms of inward investment into the area and that Thanet offered a high quality environment and could be an attractive investment destination. However there were a number of challenges that the district faced in bringing economic development to the area. This called for clarity of vision.

Abigail Raymond, Head of Built Environment said that the work being carried out by the SQW, consultants would be incorporated into the new Economic Development Strategy for the district which in turn would form part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan.

Councillor Stummer-Schmertzling gave responses to questions that had been forwarded to him ahead of the Panel meeting. These included the following comments:

1. Inward investment and job creation were key corporate objectives for the council;
2. The adoption of the Local Plan and a new economic strategy for the district were also key;
3. The Stone Hill Park development is an opportunity for development in the district and depends on the final plan that Stone Hill come up with;
4. 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;
5. The council was working with other partners like KCC to ensure investment was made in key infrastructure like the Thanet Parkway. TDC were working with East Kent Spatial Development Company and East Kent Opportunities to deliver new employment floor space at Manston Park;
6. Future plans for the Ramsgate Port & Harbour would be discussed through a separate member briefing session;
7. Manston would be covered by the Local Plan; Councillor L. Fairbrass added that a Development Consent Order (DCO) was ongoing and a viability test was underway to determine the viability or non-viability of Manston Airport; so that the allocation of the Manston site within the plan could be informed by this evidence;
8. There was closer working between the Council and businesses in Thanet; The Economic Development Team was reviewing short term support such as key account management for key businesses and closer working with local Chamber of Commerce;
9. Council persuaded Vattenfall to move its offices to Ramsgate; Weatherspoons were also refurbishing their The Royal Pavillion in Ramsgate;
10. The agreement for the Royal Sands project was not with Cardy Construction but with Cardy Ramsgate.

One Member suggested that the Council ought 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.

Other Members said that the district needed to attract high skilled jobs that would provide an attractive career progression to the local youth so they could work in Thanet. They

also said that the district should attract high flyers (including those that worked in London) to live in the district as they would spend their income in the local economy.

Members noted the presentation and thanked Councillor Stummer-Schmertzing.

65. REVIEW OF OSP WORK PROGRAMME REPORT 2016/17

Councillor D. Saunders, Chairman of the Panel introduced the report and requested Members to consider the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Taylor-Smith proposed, Councillor K. Gregory seconded and Members agreed to reduce the membership size of the working parties to seven (from the original eight) as suggested in paragraph 2.3 of the report.

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

1. To note the report;
2. To amend the Community Safety Partnership Working Party terms of reference as shown in Annex 1 to the Panel report;
3. To amend the Corporate Performance Review Working Party terms of reference as shown in Annex 2 to the Panel report.

66. FORWARD PLAN AND EXEMPT CABINET REPORT LIST FOR PERIOD 13 JULY 2016 - 28 FEBRUARY 2017

In response to a Member query, Nick Hughes, Committee Services Manager advised the meeting that the previous item on 'Dickens House Museum' had been subsumed into the new Forward Plan item on 'Creating a resilient future for Thanet's Museums.'

Members noted the report.

Meeting concluded: 8.40 pm