

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2020 at 5.30 pm in Online Viewing Only.

Present: Councillor Robert W Bayford (Chairman); Councillors Campbell, Boyd, Coleman-Cooke, Huxley, Keen, Moore, Paul Moore, L Piper, Rattigan, Roper, Rusiecki and Scott

In Attendance: Councillors Albon, Ashbee, Bailey, J Bayford, D Saunders, M Saunders and Yates

263. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies made at the meeting.

264. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

265. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Paul Moore seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the Panel meeting held on 27 October 2020.

266. FEES AND CHARGES 2021-22

Tim Willis, Deputy Chief Executive & S151 Officer introduced the report and said that Cabinet had agreed the proposals which they recommended to Full Council.

Members asked questions and made comments as follows:

- There should have been a significant increase in fines for unauthorised depositing of waste to deter would be offenders;
- Why was there an expectation that there would be less collection of enforcement revenue in 2021/22 in comparison to 2020/21?
- Why was there a parking charge for the car park (in Westbrooke Avenue) in Westgate-on-Sea?
- There should be greater enforcement to deter fly tipping particularly in problem areas in the district that included Cliftonville;
- In previous years the Council had agreed not to charge cremation fees on bereaving families if it involved child deaths. Why was the charge being imposed?
- Why was there free parking for Mill Lane and St Peters car parks during winter as this facility should only be offered in summer to boost tourist visitor and related business activity in the high street and sea front?
- What confidence did officers have that the current fees and charges figures would be achieved this financial year?
- The projections for planning fees and building control fees would be difficult to achieve in the new financial year.

Mr Willis, Councillor Yates, Cabinet Member for Finance, Administration and Community Wealth Building and Councillor Albon, Cabinet Member for Operational Services responded to Member queries as follows:

- Council had received a number of complaints from ward councillors and residents about motorists using the Barnes Avenue car park for non parking matters that included overnight stays;

- Bereaved families would not be asked to pay the cremation fee as this would be paid for through a government grant. The council would do all the processing and filling in of forms involved in accessing this grant and if the policy changed in the future, there would be no charges to be imposed on bereaved families;
- The issue regarding free parking in Mill Lane and St Peters car parks might be a historical matter which officers would look into and address;
- Officers were not as confident as would normally be the case about achieving the projected fees and charges totals for 2020/21 due to the impact of Covid-19. The pandemic was making it difficult to come up with an accurate estimate;
- The council was anticipating a £100k shortfall in Planning Applications income this year. There would be a negative impact to Building Control income as well. These observations had been reported to Cabinet and Council.

Thereafter the Panel noted the report. This meant that the recommendations made by Cabinet on 19 November would be forwarded to Full Council for final decision on 10 December 2020.

267. BREXIT - TDC PLANS REGARDING THE EU TRANSITION COMING TO AN END

The Panel received a presentation led by Councillor Everitt, Leader of Council and Gavin Waite, Director of Communities. The key points made during discussion of this issue were as follows, that:

- There was a plan to hold up to 4,000 lorries at Manston Airport in the event of significant congestion on the M20 at the end of the transition at 11.00pm on 31 December 2020, in the worst case scenario;
- TDC had never been in favour of this plan to use Manston Airport, because of the potential impact on the district;
- However it should be noted that the plan is part of a national scheme to address traffic concerns when the UK is out of EU;
- The Council was still trying to understand the impact of the scheme and to mitigate any negative impacts, this may have for Thanet. This would include the council making representations to the national authorities;
- TDC had been engaged in a number of meetings with MPs and government ministers going back to three years;
- The Council had not been given detailed information required to understand fully the potential impact on Thanet so that the council could come up with mitigatory measures to address the impact and a plan to communicate with the local residents
- The council had not been provided with detailed information to enable a full comment on the traffic flow modelling (including managing traffic flow in and out of the airfield), environmental impact including noise vehicle emissions and light intrusions;
- The Council had received information on the draft Operational Management Plan (OMP) which included key areas like on-site medical provision, driver and staff welfare, Covid-19 outbreak plans, measures for preventing antisocial behaviour and site security. Discussions were still ongoing focusing on risk issues;
- The proposed plan placed a disproportionate burden on the district in comparison to other Kent local authorities. This could have significant long term impact on Thanet;
- The council had not received any information that reflected that the plan would not have detrimental effect on public health and safety at a critical time in combating the current public health emergency;
- The impact of local drivers being held up in traffic for long periods of time on surrounding services, communities and environment must be assessed and mitigated including addressing the issue of the welfare of drivers and staff on site;
- In the event of a Covid outbreak, a site specific plan must be formulated and be ready for implementation. This must include the provision of medical facilities on

site to manage positive cases and self isolation requirements of a large cohort of drivers on site;

- The district had already seen an increase in Covid cases (the 3rd highest in England) in recent weeks. Any uncontrolled outbreak at Manston Airport site could have a significant impact on already stretched local services;
- The council continued to engage with the command and control structures and raised issues through the Strategic Command Group (SCG) and the Tactical Command Group (TCG);
- The council participated in all the training exercises that included Operations Lundy and Perch;
- The council had reviewed and updated all business continuity plans and emergency response protocols to ensure that TDC was fully prepared for any potential disruption. The council had also conducted community impact assessments and was actively engaged with the Department of Transport (DfT) and their consultants on the plans for Manston Airport site;
- A formal response had been forwarded to the Special Development Order (SDO) consultation on the site;
- A formal response had been forwarded to the KRF Tactical Options for Community Impacts and KRF Operational Fennel Plans;
- A formal response had been forwarded to DfT and other partners regarding the Operation Management Plan;
- The Thanet Safety Review Group (chaired by TDC) would be reviewing and commenting on the operation of the site to ensure safety, health and wellbeing of the site users whilst trying to minimise the impact on local residents and services.

The Panel made comments and asked questions as follows:

- Were there financial implications for TDC regarding the use of Manston Airport?
- Was Manston site ready to be used as a lorry park?
- In event of a no deal would the juxtaposed arrangement at the borders with France be still in place?
- Will there be indicators in place to inform the council if the traffic flow situation on 31 December was moving towards the worst case scenario?
- How appropriate were the access facilities for emergency services at Manston including parking lanes in between vehicles?
- How appropriate were other infrastructure set up like water supply to be used by fire services in the event of a fire at Manston site?

Gavin Waite and Madeline Homer, CEx responded as follows:

- The council had received government funding. Towards the end of 2019, TDC received £500k reimbursement related to contingency planning;
- Manston was not yet ready to be used as a lorry park. The council would need about two weeks to work through the issue to provide concrete information;
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- The council would be making a statement about the plans in due course;
- There was an expectation that government was in negotiations at a senior level regarding the "juxtaposed border arrangements";
- TDC was still be provided with traffic flow models to determine whether there were any indicators in the models;
- The council was using the Gold Command channel to raise concerns.

Members were advised that, in the meantime, the Council would continue to engage the government departments and other key stakeholders to prepare for the end of the transition and to find best ways of mitigating any worst case scenario as a result of the UK leaving the EU on 31 December.

Councillor Bayford proposed, Councillor Campbell seconded and the Panel agreed the following:

1. To note with concern the potential impact regarding the EU transition period coming to an end and;
2. Members support the Council leadership in their effort to mitigate the problems arising from this impact.

268. REVIEW OSP WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

Members noted the report.

269. FORWARD PLAN

Members noted the report.

Meeting concluded: 6.40 pm