

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2024 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

**Present:** Councillor Phil Fellows (Chair); Councillors D Green, Austin, Bright, Bright, Britcher, Currie, Davis, Kup, Paul Moore, Packman, Pope and Wing

**In Attendance:** Garner, Keen, Manners and Nichols

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were given by Councillor Farooki.

### 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

### 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Kup proposed, Councillor Currie seconded and Members agreed the minutes to be a correct record of the meeting held on 16 January 2024.

### 4. CHANGES TO THE STATUTORY INSTRUMENT GOVERNING THE LEVEL OF FINES FOR FLY TIPPING, BREACH OF DUTY OF CARE

Eden Geddes, Enforcement & Multi Agency Task Force Manager, introduced the report making the following key points:

- From 2022-2023, local authorities in England had dealt with approximately 1.8 million fly tipping incidents. Approximately 3,000 of these were in Thanet.
- In July 2023, the government published an antisocial action behaviour plan. This plan was committed to changing the laws and systems to take a zero tolerance approach to a wide range of anti-social behaviours.
- Within the action plan, there was the option to increase fines issues for fixed penalty notices in relation to fly tipping.
- The council recommended increasing the penalty limit for fly tipping offenses from £400 to £1,000. Furthermore increasing the breaches of care notices in relation to waste from £400 to £600.

Councillors commented and asked the following questions:

- There was support for this proposal from Councillors.
- Fly tipping was a blight on Thanet's community.
- Income from fly tipping fines was considered relatively small. The increase in penalties was centred around trying to discourage fly tipping rather than trying to collect monetary funds.
- Would there be more posters in the public sphere regarding the increase in penalties?
- Was there a reason why the council did not choose to increase the fine for littering and graffiti?
- CCTV was considered very important within this realm, the council should make the most of this.
- There was an education programme that needed to follow on from this for the public, and notably for airbnb's.

- Mobile CCTV would be a positive if possible.
- Was there a strategy for the council to gain more successful prosecutions?
- What was the proportion of professional fly tippers?
- When did Maidstone council raise the penalty for fly tipping and did the council see a decrease in fly tipping due to the charges being increased?
- Was there a process whereby individuals can be brought into line, without being given a criminal offense for fly tipping?
- Had the housing associations been engaged with by the council?
- Were the new cameras covert cameras?

Eden Geddes responded with the following points:

- A comprehensive communications plan would be looked into regarding new posters.
- This area of enforcement principally only covered fly tipping offenses, not littering offenses.
- Investigating fly tipping was operated through prescribed legal frameworks. The council had been making better use of CCTV resources. The work streams were continually being developed.
- Larger scale fly tipping scenes were principally done by professionals.
- Maidstone increased their penalties in September 2023. Currently there was no data to confirm whether the increase acted as a deterrent.
- There were statutory waste notices which would be enforced upon by section 46 notices.
- Housing associations were engaged with and the council worked in conjunction with these associations where appropriate.
- The council had moved away from covert cameras. However, there were times whereby the council worked with organizations with covert cameras.

Councillors noted the report.

## 5. **PURCHASE OF 2 X MECHANICAL SWEEPER VEHICLES**

Matthew Elmer, Head of Cleansing Services, gave a presentation making the following key points:

- The programme included the provision for the purchase of two 7 ½ tonne mechanical road sweepers.
- Previously the council had 18 tonne sweepers and four 2 tonne sweepers, but these had all reached the end of their life, the service had been relying on a single hired 7 ½ tonne vehicle.
- The new vehicles would be used for cleansing roads, and would be beneficial in the winter.
- The proposal was in line with the draft corporate plan 'to keep our district safe and clean.'
- The proposed vehicles were both diesel powered.
- The proposal gives three options, not to purchase the vehicles, to purchase alternatives or to purchase the recommended option.

Councillors commented and asked the following questions:

- What was the lifespan of these vehicles?
- Members considered the report positive news for the council.
- Was there a way of communicating to residents when their street would be cleaned?
- What was the cost of having a road sweeper in comparison to the mechanical sweeper?

- Questioning regarding parking suspension was raised, particularly in streets there parking caused difficulty sweeping.
- Different sized mechanical sweeper vehicles would be realistic to sweep all the different sorts of streets where vehicle traffic was present.
- It was important to work with residents, and maintain dialogue with residents.

Matthew Elmer responded with the following points:

- The vehicles had a useful life of approximately 7 years.
- Schedules were in place, it would be looked into if information regarding schedules could be published.
- There was a review on the maximum amount of impact that the vehicles would have.
- Town priorities were noted as priority to the operations.
- Larger vehicles had a higher capacity.

Councillors noted the report.

## **6. RAMSGATE REGENERATION PROGRAMME**

Louise Askew, Head of Regeneration and Growth, gave a presentation making the following key points:

- A procurement exercise to appoint a team to carry out surveys and prepare a schedule for the Ramsgate regeneration programme had been underway.
- The council was aiming to know whether they had been successful with the bid for a port operator before committing to the infrastructure expenditure.
- The leader of the council had attended a meeting with the Thanet fisherman's association on the 31st January 2024 with the plan to set up a further meeting.

Councillors Nichols spoke under 20.1.

Councillors commented and asked the following questions:

- Questioning was raised regarding the emissions figures of the vessels.
- If berths needed substantial work on it, where had previous budgets been spent?
- Berth 2 had been functional for 8 years, what was the balance for revenue costs?
- Emissions brought to the town were discussed. It was questioned when there would be an environmental impact assessment on Ramsgate town.
- There was a funding gap within the report.

Louise Askew responded with the following points:

- The revenue costs couldn't be specifically approximated for one berth, it was as a whole as the port and harbour.
- The funding gap in the report would be known in June 2024. At the time of the meeting this could not be confirmed.
- There was some discussion with DfT regarding the requirements of Border Force. Standards had come out, and impacted on some of the designs.
- The process with seaborne freight was a different process. The council are not been looking for a ferry operator, they are looking for a port operator.
- The council would need to understand what the requirements are for an environmental impact report and will look into it further.

- There was an external legal team working with the council, there was a robust template which was being used to populate requirements and questions.
- The criteria would be open to public knowledge and would be published.

Councillors noted the report.

**7. REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2023/24**

Councillor Fellows, the Chair, introduced the report noting that:

- Fly tipping was on the report.
- Grant funding would be brought forward.
- After the grant funding report, events would be looked at by the panel.
- Councillor Duckworth would attend and discuss how the council conducted leases.

It was agreed that fly tipping would be paused for review.

**8. FORWARD PLAN AND EXEMPT CABINET REPORT LIST**

Councillors noted the report.

Meeting concluded : 9.23 pm