

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

Council	01 December 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 directly 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 legal implications directly arising 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.

2.0 Community Safety Partnership Working Party

- 2.1 Of the key topics that the working party identified at their first meeting of the year, Members received a presentation on 'Sexual offence support in Thanet.' The

presentation was led by Acting DCI Max Davidson and supported by Chief Inspector Sharon Adley from Kent Police. The meeting was held on 03 October 2016.

- 2.2 Members were advised that after a national report was produced by the Home Office in 2013; a new national approach was introduced that provides support for victims of sexual assault crimes. It is referred to as the Sexual Assault Referral Clinics (SARC).
- 2.3 This approach has standardised at high specifications, the collection and processing of evidence relating to sexual offences in England and Wales through SARC. Kent has one such clinic in Maidstone and it is called Beach House. Other victim support services in the county like the East Kent Rape Line, an independent service provide support to victims of sexual violence in the county. The organisation is based in Canterbury.
- 2.4 Victims living in Thanet can be referred to the EK Rape Line in Canterbury or they have the option to report to the Police or Accident & Emergency services (A&E) at QEQM Hospital. Victims can also report to their GPs who are familiar with the SARC, and can refer them to the appropriate services for further support.
- 2.5 I believe the working party found this presentation to be very useful. A follow-up joint presentation on the same topic has been arranged for 12 December and will be led by representatives from Victim Support and EK Rape Line. It is hoped that at the end of this presentation, the working party will decide on whether to make any recommendations to the Overview & Scrutiny Panel or not to take any further action.
- 2.6 Thereafter the working party will move on to another topic from the ones highlighted below:
 1. Rough Sleeping – issues around homelessness and antisocial behaviour;
 2. Neighbourhood engagement meetings;
 3. Changes to antisocial behaviour legislation – public space protection orders;
 4. Littering and dog fouling – enforcement and proportionality of enforcement.

3.0 Corporate Performance Review Working Party

- 3.1 The working party last met on 23 August and they are due to meet next on 22 November to consider reports on the following:
 - Q2 Corporate Performance monitoring report 2016/17;
 - Q2 East Kent Services Performance Monitoring Report 2016/17;
 - Q2 East Kent Housing Performance Monitoring Report 2016/17;
 - Tool Kit for determining Council projects as major or non-major.

4.0 Electoral Registration Process Review Working Party

- 4.1 The working party met on 17 October. 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 The Electoral Services Manager's report indicated that he response rate to canvassing was 70.3% as at 20 September 2016 and this was an increase on the previous year for the same period. Data available as at 17 October was 78.43%.
- 4.3 The Electoral Services Team had faced some challenges particularly considering that they had to make data entry changes to 9200 properties to date Members that the Council was in the process of making improved changes to the Council's website, which will also see improvements to the web pages for information regarding voter

registration. The referendum provided useful information that was now being used to improve the registration.

- 4.4 Council was now receiving citizenship ceremonies from Kent County Council, which could be used to update the register. The team receives service feedback from residents through Feedback and Twitter, which is used to improve the service. The team intends to use email correspondence to send out reminders to residents, where such information exists. It was hoped that all this would help improve the registration rate of electors in the district.
- 4.5 Members also suggested that TDC could try and employ different canvassing approaches for different wards, as some residents in some areas were less likely to register to vote; particularly in deprived areas. They also suggested that Council could combine the offer of services to residents to maximum uptake of voter registration. This would include setting up desks at the Gateway so that when residents walk in for help with say council tax, benefits claims, and debt support, the Elections Team could canvass at that point.
- 4.6 I do hope that the working party will make formal recommendations to the Panel on the above suggestions in order for the Panel to consider and perhaps forward them to the Executive for their consideration.

5.0 Call-In of Cabinet Decisions

- 5.1 There were no call-ins made by the Panel since the last Council meeting.

6.0 Cabinet Presentations at OSP Meetings

- 6.1 There were no Cabinet Member presentations since the last Full Council meeting. Instead appropriate Portfolio Holders were invited to the Panel meeting on 25 October to engage the Panel in discussion on the two main agenda items on 'Fulfilling Thanet's growth and development opportunities' and 'New - Combined Safeguarding Policy.'
- 6.2 At the meeting the Panel made a number of significant comments and suggestions for consideration by the portfolio holders. Councillor Stummer-Schmertzing and Councillor Lin Fairbrass agreed to consider the suggestions.
- 6.3 I have also invited the deputy Leader to the extraordinary Panel meeting on 21 November, where a policy framework item on 'Thanet Local Plan Preferred Options Revisions' will be considered.

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	Matt Sanham, Corporate Finance Manager
Legal	Ciara Feeney, Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer