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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2017 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor David Saunders (Chairman); Councillors G Coleman-Cooke, Ashbee, Campbell, Connor, Curran, Dexter, Dixon, Falcon, Hayton, Parsons and Evans.

In Attendance: Councillors K Coleman-Cooke, L Fairbrass, M Saunders, Stummer-Schmertzing and Townend.

96. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Dennis, Martin, Jaye-Jones and Rusiecki. Councillor Evans was present as a substitute for Councillor Rusiecki.

97. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

98. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Connor seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting that was held on 26 January 2017.

99. STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017-2021

Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Governance, and Matthew Hill, Head of Asset Management, introduced the plan and made the following points:

- The Plan was a high level strategic document which set out the following four individual, albeit connected, objectives.
 - Compliance.
 - A Strategic approach to assets.
 - Reviewing and rationalising the estate.
 - Reducing expenditure and increasing income.
- The Plan was for the next five years; however it was expected to be reviewed during this period.

The following points were noted in response to comments and questions from Members:

- When assessing whether to dispose of an asset there were a number of factors considered, which included: current condition, current site value, potential future site value, cost of maintenance/restoration, current usage and future usage. A balanced view was then taken.
- As many Local Authorities (LAs) have a large number of assets, the Government was encouraging LA's to look at their asset base and dispose of assets that do not offer value for money.
- The Plan offered a high level starting point; however the key detail about implementation would be in the delivery plan.

- Recent assets sold at auction had achieved around the values expected by the Council. When auctioned, assets are often given a lower guide price to encourage interest and bidding.
- The Council's medium term financial plan expected the Council to receive £2.3 million for disposed assets in 2017/18. There was often a double benefit to the sale of assets, there was income generated from the sale and a reduction in maintenance costs.
- The Council had a robust community asset transfer template by which any requests to transfer assets to community organisations would be judged against the Council's needs. The Equality Act 2010 had replaced the Disability Discrimination Act, compliance was included in the asset management objectives part of the Plan.
- A focus for improvement was regarding communication with those connected to assets that were considered for disposal.

Members recommended the Draft Strategic Asset Management Plan to Cabinet, subject to the correction of the header on alternate pages.

100. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2017-2020

Councillor L Fairbrass, Cabinet Member for Community Services, and Penny Button, Head of Safer Neighbourhoods, introduced the Plan and made the following points:

- The Plan set out proposals for the partnership for the next three years and included an action which would be updated annually.
- The proposed focus areas were:
 - Reducing offending and reoffending.
 - Safeguarding vulnerability.
 - Community reassurance.
- 75.9% of the 340 responses to the engagement survey on community perceptions and partnership focus areas for 2017-20, agreed or strongly agreed with the three proposed focus areas.
- The survey was conducted in January 2017 and found that:
 - 46.4% of residents responded that they felt safety had deteriorated over that last 12 months. It was identified that this perception was influenced by 'groups hanging around' and 'how the area looks – eg. Run down'.
 - In order of priority, respondents were most concerned about: dog fouling, litter, nuisance parking, people dealing drugs, intimidating groups and flytipping.
- There had been a rise in reported neighbourhood crime; the Police advised that this increase was partly due to changes in the recording of crime. It was also noted that homelessness had increased within the district.

The following points were noted in response to comments and questions from Members:

- The Community Safety Partnership Working Party (CSPWP) could review nuisance parking as part of its work programme.
- The CSPWP received a very useful presentation regarding anti-social behaviour; this included a tool kit for Councillors and the public for dealing with antisocial behaviour. It was suggested that the presentation should also be given the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.
- Ms Button offered to confirm to Councillor Campbell outside of the meeting how £367,000 of unallocated Disabled Facilities Grants for 2016/17 would be

used. This unallocated funding was reported to the Thanet Health and Wellbeing Board on 8 September 2016.

- Although final figures were not yet available as the projects were still ongoing, the Aspire and Winter Shelter projects were a success and had seen a number of homeless people moved into accommodation.
- Improved public awareness of the excellent work of the Community Safety Partnership could help to improve the public's perception of crime levels, however public attendance at community safety events continued to be low. The partnership was looking at ways to promote its work and encourage public engagement.
- Many of the dates on the 2017/18 action plan that related to the Probation Service appear to be late in the year.
- A strategy to reduce graffiti would be formulated once the Plan had been agreed.
- The aim of the action point regarding the mental health of longer serving offenders post release, was to submit a bid for additional funding.

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Ashbee seconded and Members agreed to recommend the draft Thanet Community Safety Plan for 2017-20 to Cabinet, for recommendation of approval by the Thanet Community Safety Partnership; subject to the following suggestions:

- That the Plan includes actions to reduce incidence of speeding vehicles and inconsiderate parking
- That the dates for action by the Probation Service in the action plan be brought forward in the year.
- That the anti-graffiti strategy be considered by OSP Members once drafted.

101. REVIEW OF OSP WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

The Chairman brought Members attention to paragraph 5 of the report which requested comments from Members for the annual Overview and Scrutiny Panel (OSP) report. He requested responses by Friday 17 February, and intended for the draft report to be considered at the next OSP meeting before going to Council on 22 March 17.

Nick Hughes, Committee Services Manager, advised that there were currently no scrutiny reviews underway, as shown in annex 2 of the report and encouraged Members to suggest topics for future reviews

It was agreed that the OSP would receive the Anti-Social Behaviour Tool Kit presentation that was offered to the CSPWP recently.

Members noted the report.

102. FORWARD PLAN AND EXEMPT CABINET REPORT LIST FOR PERIOD 11 JANUARY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2017

Nick Hughes, Committee Services Manager, introduced the item. The following points were noted in response to comments and questions from Members:

- Westcliff Hall had remained on the Plan for some time due to the complex nature of the site.
- Mr Hughes would respond outside of the meeting to Councillors Campbell's enquiry regarding the content of the Parking Strategic Delivery Plan 2017-20.

Meeting concluded: 8.10 pm