

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2017 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor D Saunders (Chairman); Councillors G Coleman-Cooke, Ashbee, Campbell, Connor, Curran, Dexter, Dixon, Grove, Jaye-Jones, Martin, Parsons and Rusiecki

In Attendance: Councillors Brimm, K Coleman-Cooke, M Saunders, Shonk, Taylor and Taylor-Smith

116. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Falcon and Councillor Dennis.

117. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

118. 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 24 April 2017.

119. ESTABLISHING THE OSP WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2017/18

Members were in agreement that the Panel should reconstitute the 2016/17 sub-groups for them to work to the same terms of reference and with the same membership size.

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Jaye-Jones seconded and Members:

1. Unanimously agreed political proportionality when setting up the sub groups.
2. Agreed the membership size of seven per sub group;
3. Reconstituted the Community Safety Partnership Working Party, Corporate Performance Review Working Party and Dreamland Working Group;
3. Agreed the terms of reference as reflected in Annex 2 to the Panel report;
4. Agreed that before any consideration of substantive business any re-established Groups would be required to review their respective terms of reference at their first meeting and report any suggested changes to the next available Overview and Scrutiny Panel for approval;
5. Agreed that before any consideration of substantive business all Groups would be required to complete the project template at their first meeting and report the details back to the next available Overview and Scrutiny Panel for approval;

Councillor Dexter proposed, Councillor Campbell seconded and the Panel further agreed the following recommendation:

1. To keep a watching brief on the work in progress regarding the development of a new health delivery strategy for East Kent by the East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust (EKHUFT).

120. PETITION ON 2017 PARKING CHARGES

A Member asked whether the Chairman would be allowing public speaking during discussion of this item as there was some public interest. In response the Chairman advised Members that although initially there had been some interest from the public to speak on the parking item, they later declined to take up the opportunity. This meant that only the organiser of the petition would be speaking to any of the items.

The discussion of the item then began with Mr Roy Irving being invited by the Panel Chairman to address the meeting at which point Mr Irving presented the petition on 2017 parking charges.

Thereafter the Panel discussed the petition as requested by Full Council and Members made the following comments:

- Revenue generated from parking charges should be directed to the same service in order to improve that service;
- Any surplus should be carried forward to the following year rather than be allocated to the general fund;
- Increased parking charges would discourage visitors from outside the district to visit the area's attractions and local residents would also be discouraged for the same reason;
- Cabinet should have a rethink about the new parking charges that are now in place for 2017/18;

Councillor Brimm, Cabinet Member for Operational Services suggested that in debating the petition, the Panel should consider the proposals that were included in the briefing note that was tabled at the meeting.

The Chairman then gave Members a moment to study the proposals outlined within the briefing note, which are attached at Annex 1 to the minutes. Further debate was had and Members made the following comments:

- Some Members were pleased that Cabinet had shown some degree of flexibility as reflected by the new proposals in the briefing note;
- The increase in the parking charges for 2017/18 were necessitated by the decrease in funding from central government;
- Reverting to the 2016/17 parking charges could in turn attract more visitors and hence more revenue;
- More parking spaces particularly in busier parking areas, could be installed with parking metres;
- The new parking charges would not necessarily increase revenue from that source;
- There is a need to consider both on-street and off-street parking at the same time in order to come up with a fair and realistic price structure, as each impacted on the other;

In response to Gavin Waite, Director of Operational Services gave the following response:

- The 2017/18 fees and charges were considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel before Cabinet recommended these to Full Council for adoption;
- Through the briefing note tabled at the Panel meeting (*Annex 1 to the minutes*) the Executive had offered option 1 and option 2 from which the Panel could recommend a new charge structure for the five parks referred in the note;

- Option 1 would lead a loss of income of £10,000 and option 2 would cost council £20,000;
- Officers could not give guarantees that savings could be found within Operational Services to absorb the loss if Council reverted the parking charges to the 2016/17 levels.

Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Governance advised the Panel that if Members recommended that Council reverted to the 2016/17 parking charges, they also would need to consider recommending alternative revenue sources to compensate for the loss of income resulting from such a recommendation.

Councillor Jaye-Jones proposed that the Panel recommended Option 2 in the briefing note to Cabinet however the Chairman advised that Members were already debating initial motion and so could not debate another, without resolving the first.

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Ashbee seconded and the Panel recommended that Cabinet revert to the 2016/17 parking charges for the five seasonal car parks and to find the resulting shortfall from adjustments in other service areas.

121. FUTURE OPTIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV) SERVICE

Gavin Waite introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- Operational Services had conducted a review of the CCTV system and concluded that the current system was obsolete and needed replacing;
- Officers were recommending option 4 which entailed partnering with Canterbury City Council and BT;
- There were no procurement implications for identifying BT as a partner in the proposed service with particular reference to using their fibre optic any other potential service provider would have to use that same BT facility.

Members sought clarification on a number of issues as follows:

- Would the new system being proposed in option 4 be able to stream recordings from Canterbury City Council to Thanet District Council and the local Police;
- Would BT install more hotspots in places where there were 'dead spots' in places where new cameras may need to be set up?
- Did the areas where the new cameras would be installed currently have fibre optic capability?
- Who owned the building currently housing the Council's CCTV system?
- How would Thanet Safe Radio continue to operate if option 4 was adopted by TDC?
- Would there be continuity during the transition when Cabinet adopted option 4?
- How long would it take set up option 4 and get it running?
- Upgrading the CCTV system should be an absolute priority as crime was going up across the country;
- How difficult would it be to extend the system once it became operational?

In response Gavin Waite made offered the following explanations:

- Canterbury City Council currently operated 500 cameras with 4 operators monitoring the cameras at any one time, 24/7, and in comparison TDC had 80 cameras operated by 1 officer at any one time;
- The new system would be capable of streaming images to the Police in real time and also record;
- There was no intention to increase the Wi-Fi network;
- Mobile units for providing Wi-Fi might have to be procured for some locations;

- The building currently housing the council's CCTV system was owned by the council;
- If option 4 was adopted by Cabinet, the building would go on the asset disposal list;
- Thanet Safe Radio had been advised of this development and would have to move if the changes go through;
- TDC would consult the Radio station;
- The transition to the new system would be seamless;
- Setting up the new system would be quick because significant ground work has already been undertaken;
- Town/parish councils would be able to piggyback on to the new system as the contract agreement would have such a provision;

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Ashbee seconded and Members agreed to recommend that Cabinet adopts Option 4 which is summarised below as:

"To go into a partnership with BT for them to be responsible for all camera upgrades including equipment and network, maintenance and transmission costs. Canterbury City Council to monitor our cameras in their control centre at Canterbury."

122. FORWARD PLAN AND EXEMPT CABINET REPORT LIST FOR 10 MAY 2017 - 30 NOVEMBER 2017

Members requested that a report on "Risk Based Verification policy for the administration of Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support claims" be presented at a future Panel meeting for post scrutiny to assess the impact of the new policy.

Meeting concluded: 8.00 pm