

# OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL 2017/18

Overview & Scrutiny Panel **13 February 2018**

Report Author **Cllr D. Saunders, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

Portfolio Holder **Cllr Crow-Brown, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance**

Status **For Recommendation**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Key Decision **No**

Ward: **Thanet Wide**

## **Executive Summary:**

The purpose of the report is to highlight some of the key activities and achievements of the Panel covering the 2017/18 municipal year.

## **Recommendation(s):**

Members are invited to discuss, comment and recommend the report to Council.

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Financial and Value for Money</b>	There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. The report provides a summary of the current work activities of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel which will form the basis of the annual report to Full Council.
<b>Legal</b>	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.
<b>Corporate</b>	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.  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.
<b>Equalities Act 2010 &amp; Public Sector Equality Duty</b>	Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector 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

	<p>not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</p> <p>Protected characteristics: age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy &amp; maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage &amp; civil partnership.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	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.	
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<b>CORPORATE PRIORITIES (tick those relevant)✓</b>	
A clean and welcoming Environment	
Promoting inward investment and job creation	
Supporting neighbourhoods	✓

<b>CORPORATE VALUES (tick those relevant)✓</b>	
Delivering value for money	✓
Supporting the Workforce	
Promoting open communications	✓

## **1.0 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 Thanet District Council's Overview & Scrutiny Panel is entitled to make an annual report to the Annual Meeting of Council. This report summarises the key achievements of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel during 2017/18.
- 1.2 The Panel unanimously agreed at the beginning of the 2017/18 to political proportionality when setting out the membership of the working parties/task & finish groups. Each of the sub-group membership was set at seven to have 3 UKIP, 2 Conservative, 1 Labour and 1 Independent Group. Members established three working parties which were the Corporate Performance Review Working Party Community Safety Partnership Working Party and Dreamland Working Group.
- 1.4 During this municipal year, the Panel Chairman presented four reports to Council on the scrutiny activities being undertaken. The main focus of the reports came from the work activities of the Corporate Performance Working Party and Community Safety Working Party.

## **2.0 Current Scrutiny Arrangement**

2.1 The current Panel approach is for a work programme made up of:

- i. Three Working Parties;
- ii. One Scrutiny Review;
- iii. Continued one off reports considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (including presentations from Cabinet Members);

2.2 The Panel adopted a system for prioritisation of scrutiny review projects that includes a scoring matrix and scoping template form to help with firming up the ideas for the review exercise. However this has not been used by Members to identify review topics.

## **3.0 Community Safety Partnership Working Party**

3.1 The working party performed the statutory scrutiny function of the Community Safety Partnership on behalf of the Panel and reports back any recommendations for consideration to the main Panel.

3.2 The main topics that Members reviewed during the year include the following:

- Youth crime and anti-social behaviour issues affecting specific areas in the district, presented by Kent Police;
- Parents parking enforcement outside schools; (to be presented by TDC Operational Services on 20 February);
- Community Payback activities in Thanet; (to be jointly presented by Community Safety and Kent, Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company on 13 March);
- Fly tipping in the district and how Council is tackling this issue; (to be presented by TDC Operational Services on 10 April).

3.3 With regards to anti-social behaviour incidents, Members were assured by Kent Police that a number of measures that included dispersal orders, home visits, acceptable behaviour orders, community protection warnings and high visibility patrolling by the Community Policing Team were being used to tackle the problem with encouraging results. The sub-committee continued to monitor the issue through progress update reports from the Kent Police.

3.4 The working party is considering carrying out scrutiny review on fly tipping in the district as this issue has proven to be quite a challenge for the council. The review would most likely be done in the last half of the year and any progress reports and outcome for the study will only be considered in the next municipal year.

## **4.0 Corporate Performance Review Working Party**

4.1 The working party received performance reports from Thanet District Council, EK Services and EK Housing at its meetings on 27 June, 04 September, 13 November and another meeting is planned for 15 February

4.2 Members put forward to officers a number of questions seeking detailed explanations on performance levels for various activities. In one instance, they particularly wanted and did receive officer assurances that fire safety standards were met for all tower blocks owned by the council or under EK Housing management in view of the Grenfell Tower fire disaster in June. The sub group expressed satisfaction with the responses provided during these meetings.

4.3 The working party did not identify a scrutiny topic under its remit that required detailed reviewing. It is hoped that once re-constituted in 2018/19, the sub group would set aside time for an in-depth reviewing of an issue that affects the council's service delivery performance.

## **5.0 Dreamland Working Group**

5.1 This working group was set up in 2016/17 met for its fourth and last meeting on 31 July 2017 and received a presentation on the Dreamland Project, the historical facts regarding the works undertaken from the initial construction, architectural designs used and current refurbishment works and costs involved.

5.2 Members were also briefed of the current progress regarding Phase 2 of the project which would see the Council identifying potential operator(s) for the restaurant, café and bars.

5.3 Members concluded that some important lessons had been learnt about project management and were satisfied despite the challenges, that Phase 1 had been successfully carried out and laid a good foundation for Phase 2. The lessons learnt would be used to successfully manage Dreamland Phase 2.

5.4 The sub group made the following summary observations which were presented and agreed by the Panel that:

- a. Lessons had been learnt in Phase 1 to inform the implementation of Dreamland Phase 2 project;
- b. Phase 1 had turned to be successful, with some initial challenges;
- c. Phase 2 Work is being completed under budget;
- d. Combined private and public sectors big investment in Phase 1 had made a difference to the successful completion of the project;
- e. New project management system had made a difference to the management of the project.

5.5 Members agreed that taking note of the above comments; the review had come to a conclusion.

## **6.0 OSP Local Plan Task & Finish Group**

6.1 This sub group was set up by the Panel last December and met three times to review proposals for the draft Local Plan as part of the preparations for considering these proposals at a formal Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

6.2 The working sessions conducted between October and November were arranged around the following topics:

- Housing;
- Employment and Economy;
- Infrastructure provision and Environmental Policy.

6.3 Although there were no specific recommendations that were forwarded to the Panel by the sub group, Members used these sessions to get a better understanding of the rationale and technical detail underpinning these proposals.

## **7.0 Public Speaking Extended Trial**

7.1 The Public Speaking Scheme was renewed and extended to continue for the 2017/18 municipal year. However the uptake by the public has again not been that good with

only two members of the public speaking at a Panel meeting during this year. Again this may be connected to the agenda items that the Panel has been looking at, which may not necessarily enlist the attention of local residents.

## **8.0 Watching Brief Issue: QEQM Hospital Services Review by East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust (EKHUFT)**

8.1 The Panel is still maintaining a watching brief on this issue as they await progress towards changes to the delivery of health services to South East Kent.

## **9.0 Call-In of Cabinet Decisions**

9.1 There was one call-in made by the Panel in this municipal year and it related to the key officer decision regarding the closure of the Ramsgate District Office. The Panel was concerned that the closure of this office would limit access to some of the council services to some residents, to which officers agreed to the following action points:

- EKS were working with TDC Communications Team on a planned engagement of residents regarding the closure of the Ramsgate office and would seek views from Ramsgate Town Council staff on ideas for communicating with residents;
- Liaison would take place with Ramsgate Town Council with a view to installing a dedicated telephone line for Ramsgate residents to channel their queries to Customer Services;
- EKS will engage Ramsgate Town Council to work out what arrangements could be made to enable the Town Council offices to take up some of the provision for items, such as waste collection bags and possibly even an internet portal attending to residents queries;
- EKS would attend neighbourhood engagement meeting to advise residents on the office closure;
- EKS would engage Ramsgate ward councillors to provide them with information that they could use moving forward, to address likely queries from residents once the Ramsgate office has been closed and in order to ensure that Councillors knew where to direct queries to, so they could inform residents;
- EKS would engage with Parking Enforcement regarding logistics for the sale of vouchers for the new residents parking voucher scheme;
- Officers liaise with Ramsgate Town Council to formally agree the best way to continue to offer services to residents in Ramsgate.

9.2 After a number of queries regarding this decision were addressed by officers the Panel decided to take no further action. This was a useful and appropriate intervention by the Panel.

## **10.0 Cabinet Presentations at OSP Meetings**

10.1 The Panel received a presentation from the Leader of Council on 'Since the proposals for an East Kent Merger have now ended what plans does TDC have to address future budgetary concerns?'

10.2 Members acknowledged the challenges faced by the council in delivering services in an environment that was witnessing restrictive budget position in the short to medium term and the need for the council to come up with savings in short to medium term to reduce overheads and adopt sustainable council budgets.

10.3 The Panel got assurances from the Executive that they were looking to replicate its current office sharing arrangement with Thanet CCG, with other external agencies. It was also currently working with other public bodies on ideas for sharing assets and

working collaboratively under the title 'Thanet Leadership Group' that sought to work strategically in delivering services in a cost effective way as 'Strategic Enablers.

- 10.4 The Panel felt that many members had additional skills that could assist the Council in becoming an enterprising organisation and that a skills audit should be carried out. Democratic Services confirmed that this issue would be picked up through the Learning Needs Analysis that was due to be conducted in the Spring.

#### **11.0 Updates to this report prior to its presentation to full Council**

- 11.1 It is important for the panel to note that there will be small updates to the content of this report before it is presented to Full Council at the meeting of 12 April. These changes will however only be minor contextual details, such as the number of reports the Chairman has presented to Full Council.

Contact Officer:	Charles Hungwe, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Ext 7186
Reporting to:	Nick Hughes, Committee Services Manager, Ext 7108

#### **Annex List**

None	N/A
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#### **Background Papers**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Details of where to access copy</b>
None	N/A

#### **Corporate Consultation**

<b>Finance</b>	Ramesh Prashar, Head of Financial Services
<b>Legal</b>	Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer