

REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2017/18

Overview and Scrutiny Panel **17 April 2018**

Report Author **Senior Democratic Services Officer**

Portfolio Holder **Councillor Savage, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Coastal Development**

Status **For Decision**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Key Decision **No**

Ward: **Thanet Wide**

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to update Panel Members on the progress regarding the work of the Panel, most of which is undertaken through three working parties. This report reviews the work programme for 2017/18 and suggests a time limited work stream on reviewing proposals in the draft Local Plan.

Recommendation(s):

Members are requested to comment and thereafter note the report.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, if Cabinet agree any other recommendations other than those mentioned within the body of this report there could be financial implications for the council in that any further commitment for Thanet District Council to provide funding will require the identification of a suitable funding source.
Legal	There are no legal issues arising directly from this report.
Corporate	The work programme should help to deliver effective scrutiny. An active Scrutiny programme is part of good governance and will, ultimately, underpin the Council's use of resources assessment.
Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty	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 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.	✓
	There no equity and equalities issues arising directly from this report 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 should also be noted that a review to be conducted by one of the working parties focuses on protecting vulnerable individuals of the local community from violence.	

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 This report allows Members to review the Overview and Scrutiny Panel work programme agreed at the Panel meeting on 13 February 2018. The Panel's current work programme is made up of the Community Safety Partnership Working Party and Corporate Performance Review Working Party. This report provides an update of the work programme since the previous meeting.
- 1.2 Chairmen and members of the two working parties could provide additional comments during the debate of this item at the Panel meeting.
- 1.3 Table 1 in Annex 1, highlights some of the key agenda items for future Overview & Scrutiny Panel meetings for 2017/18. The items are sourced from the Forward Plan, Table 2 shares brief progress comments for each sub group are in subsequent.
- 1.4 Annex 2 provides information on the current scrutiny reviews. Currently there are no scrutiny reviews being conducted by the Panel. Annex 3 reflects the current priority table for proposed scrutiny review topics.

2.0 Community Safety Partnership Working Party

- 2.1 The sub group met on 20 February and 13 March and received presentations on enforcement challenges faced by the council regarding inconsiderate parking at schools by parents on school runs and community payback activities in Thanet.
- 2.2 They also received an update report from Kent Police on policing in Ramsgate and Margate with a particular focus on youth offending and tackling anti-social behaviour in the area.

Youth offending and anti-social behaviour

2.3 With regards to policing in Ramsgate and Margate the Police report made the following highlights:

- Youth Engagement Officers were conducting home visits. These were very effective ways of engaging the youths involved in unacceptable behaviour;
- As a result of increased policing activities there was gradual decline in reports in the areas under review;
- Ramsgate now has seven PCSOs, up from three a few months ago;
- As a result of the increased number of PCSOs Ramsgate had clearly benefited from a rise in visibility;
- In Margate a huge amount of work was done during the half term break as Police issued dispersal orders to young people;
- Some arrests were made and reports were made by Police to parents and schools.

2.3 Members observed that there had been an increase in reported crime incidents, with a rise of 27% between October 2016 and September 2017. Kent Police advised that this information should be taken in the context of changes to crime reporting and recording.

2.4 The data for all victim based crime had seen an increase across the Force as officers followed strict Home Office guidelines when investigating and recording crime and many single crimes recorded previously are now recorded as multiple crimes.

2.5 Members were further advised that improvements in crime recording and improved victim confidence in coming forward to report crime had contributed a significant part to these figures, both locally and nationally. Police indicated that these figures were expected to start to level out from May 2018 onwards as true comparisons became easier.

2.6 As a result of the above discussion the working party agreed that to review the crime statistics at a future meeting after May 2018, most likely at a meeting to be arranged in September 2018.

Inconsiderate parking during school runs

2.7 Inconsiderate parking at schools was not only a Thanet problem but rather a nationwide issue. Officers who try to dissuade bad parking at schools often receive abuse from the offending drivers. In 2017/18, 30 tickets had been issued so far for school zigzag offences.

2.8 The sub group was told that Council could consider issuing stiffer penalties through penalty Charge Notices for roads near schools and 'hotspot areas' which could include using the Public Spaces Protection Orders for nuisance behaviour to issue £100 parking tickets. The Enforcement Team planned to make 250 proactive visits around schools in 2018 to tackle this problem. Awareness campaigns had been rolled out across the county.

2.9 Members suggested that more that schools encouraged parents to walk their children to school instead of driving (in instances where practically possible) to reduce parking near schools during school runs.

2.10 Other than noting the report and suggested actions above regarding how council could tackle inconsiderate parking at schools, no further action was proposed by the working party.

Member update on Rape Crisis Centre Counselling Sessions in Ramsgate

2.11 During the first nine months of the project to Ramsgate residents, the organisation and attended to 48 referrals for counselling. Four hundred and twelve counselling sessions had been offered to date in addition to assessments.

- 2.12 The Centre was still operating from the Registry Office. The charge for using these premises was £50 per day. They had increased the sessions by an extra half day session each Wednesday. Ramsgate Town Council was considering offering a spare office for those sessions within their premises. Ramsgate Town Council had agreed to fund these services again in the 2018/19 financial year.

Community payback activities in Thanet

- 2.13 Members received a presentation on 13 March on the current community payback activities in the district. This programme was funded by the Ministry of Justice which had contracted Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company (KSSCRC) to implement it over a seven year contract. Multiple projects had been undertaken in the district.
- 2.14 These included work with Mancap, clearing alleyways, recycling at the Manston depot, RSPCA Centre, graffiti removal and work at the Pierremont Park railings and beach cleaning (e.g. cleaned the Minis Bay beach on Sunday 05 March).
- 2.15 The challenge for project was the collection of waste generated by the work activities as this created additional costs of the project. Therefore there was a need for closer liaison with TDC and KCC with regards to clearing of waste from clearing of alleyways.
- 2.16 All requests were assessed to determine their value to the community and the costs that would be incurred by KSSCRC before they were either accepted or declined. Nominations for projects to be considered for community payback projects could be submitted via an online application on the KSSCRC website. The programme had cleared 150 alleyways in the district. About 180 community payback work projects had been completed in Thanet.
- 2.17 After debate the working party decided to take no further action.

3.0 Corporate Performance Review Working Party

- 3.1 The working party met on 15 February and reviewed performance for the East Kent Housing, East Kent Services and Council.

East Kent Housing

- 3.2 With regards to Universal Credit and Income, it was reported that In Thanet there were 350 cases of individuals on Universal Credit. There were challenges in processing claims for individuals on Universal Credit as they had to go without payments for the first 45 days of being moved to the Universal Credit system.
- 3.3 Such delays could extend by another six weeks and this could in some instances affect some tenants' ability to pay rent. However EKH had not evicted any tenants affected by these administrative delays caused by switching to Universal Credit.
- 3.4 Members were advised that in order to cut down on delays EKH had assigned additional staff to support the processing of Universal Credit claims as it takes longer to process such applications than processing housing benefits claims. This situation was not restricted to Thanet only as it also being experienced elsewhere across the country.
- 3.5 The sub group would continue to monitor the situation regarding the rolling out of the Universal Credit Scheme.

East Kent Services

- 3.6 It was reported that overall ICT and HR performance for the period under review was good. Most income collections performance was also good.
- 3.7 Business Rates: Business Rates collection for December was slightly below the expected levels. However, this was expected to improve in the next quarter as there were significant payments from two large contributors that were due in December but were actually received in early January 2018.
- 3.8 Customer Services: The service level remained below target. This was because of ongoing resource pressures within Customer Services. Members were advised that measures had been put in place to mitigate this problem.
- 3.9 These included re-deployment of staff and running an apprenticeship programme which had a positive impact on the performance of the call centre with average call waiting time improving from 1minute 53 seconds last quarter to 1minute 34seconds for the period under review.
- 3.10 Senior Management at EKS had been in discussion with the Council's Corporate Management Team to consider the risks associated with performance targets.
- 3.11 Key Initiatives: digital benefits processing system was now operational and there was marked uptake of the new service by customers. The system was intuitive, makes it much easier to upload evidence and is linked to the Risk Based Verification process that means the amount and type of evidence documentation required to be presented by citizens is flexible depending on individual risk scores.

Thanet District Council

- 3.12 The overall corporate performance message was that Quarter 3 had seen more green indicators and some amber ones being reported.
- 3.13 Clean & Wellbeing Environment – the performance was within target, particularly with regards to detritus. Mechanical sweepers had played a big part in the achievement of good performance indicators. Although the Waste & Recycling performance had the red indicator, it was anticipated to move out of the red in the next quarter. It was reported that the quality of recycling material collected by TDC was of superior quality compared to neighbouring authorities.
- 3.14 There had been an increase in demand for bulky waste collection. Bulk waste collection had been reviewed to improve the process by reducing the waiting times before collection. Council had introduced a new graffiti cleaning service to assist most households who do not have the means to clean graffiti. This service would also add to council income. Operational Services were also focusing on verges and general cleanliness around the district.
- 3.15 Homelessness: The targets for tackling homelessness were not satisfactory and the council was working the issue. When Members queried what measures were being put in place to address the issue of homelessness, they were advised that the East Kent Housing and TDC were working on strategies for minimising voids and Additional funding had been allocated to the 2018/19 council budget to tackle homelessness.
- 3.16 It was also reported that alternative temporary accommodation would be procured in 2018/19 that offered better value for money. Council was planning on using longer term leased accommodation as temporary accommodation. Negotiations with private property owners were on-going to secure competitive pricing.

4.0 One-off report to review voter registration

- 4.1 At the Panel meeting on 25 January 2018, a Member requested that the electoral registration working group be re-constituted to consider the voter registration progress as part of the preparation for the 2019 Local Government Elections. This would enable the Panel to determine the effectiveness of the voter registration exercise. The Chairman agreed to discuss that request and feedback to the Panel.
- 4.2 The issue was addressed in Work Programme Review report to the Panel 13 February, in which officers advised that currently, there were insufficient resources with Electoral Services Team to support such a working group in addition to their day to day workload.
- 4.3 Officers further suggested that it would be possible to produce a one-off report for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel in the new municipal year detailing how the 2017 Annual Canvass was carried out and the results generated.
- 4.4 Officers also added that if Members had any specific requests for points that they would like to see included in this report then please let Democratic Services know, either at this meeting or by email and they will discuss each request with Electoral Services, with a view to including as many as possible in the report
- 4.5 Do Members wish to receive the one-off report on the current status regarding the annual voter registration exercise?

5.0 Call-In of Cabinet Decisions

- 5.1 There were no valid call-ins made since the last meeting of the Panel.

6.0 Cabinet Presentations at OSP Meetings

- 6.1 There were no Cabinet Member presentations since the last one on 20 October 2017. At the Panel meeting on 13 February, Members requested for cabinet member presentation on "the current work activities of Operational Services and challenges faced in street cleansing and waste & recycle collection."
- 6.2 Upon further consideration of the request the Panel Chairman with officer support re-focused the topic to read as follows:
- "Please outline the current arrangements for street cleansing, the reasoning behind them and how you expect them to impact on the cleanliness of streets across the district."
- 6.3 The presentation is scheduled to be discussed elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.

7.0 OSP Recommendations to Cabinet - Implementation Monitoring

- 7.1 There were no recommendations made by the Panel to Cabinet since the last meeting.

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Annex List

Annex 1	Sub group activities and key agenda items updates
Annex 2	Current scrutiny reviews
Annex 3	Priority Table for proposed scrutiny reviews

Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
None	N/A

Corporate Consultation

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