

# FINANCE, BUDGET & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PANEL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

Council	<b>06 December 2018</b>
Report Author	<b>Cllr Lynda Piper, Chairman of the Finance, Budget &amp; Performance Scrutiny Panel</b>
Status	<b>For Information</b>
Classification:	<b>Unrestricted</b>
Key Decision	<b>No</b>
Ward:	<b>Thanet Wide</b>

## Executive Summary:

The purpose of the report is to highlight some of the key activities that have planned for by the Finance Scrutiny Panel during the course of this 2018/19 municipal year 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

<b>Financial and Value for Money</b>	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 Finance Scrutiny Panel.
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal implications directly arising from this report. A presentation of the Panel Chairman's report to Full Council enables the Chairman to fulfil their duty as is required by the Council's Constitution.
<b>Corporate</b>	<p>There are no corporate risks associated with this report. The report enables discussion by Members at Full Council on the activities of the Finance Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>The debate on the Panel 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>

<b>Equality Act 2010 &amp; Public Sector Equality Duty</b>	<p>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.</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> <p>Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.</p> <p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,</p> <p>Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it</p> <p>Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</p> <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>
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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 At each ordinary Full Council meeting, the Chairman of the each Overview and Scrutiny Panel presents a report on the work undertaken by the Panel since the last Council meeting.

1.2 Such a report would be subject to comment or debate by Members. This was in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.1 of Part 4 of the Council Constitution.

1.3 The report would therefore provide the basis for debate by Members on ongoing scrutiny activities and hopefully lead to sharing of views and ideas to enhance the Council's scrutiny function.

1.4 This report follows on from the one presented at Full Council on 11 October.

## **2.0 Current Scrutiny Activities**

2.1 The Panel met twice since the Full Council meeting in October.

2.2 One of the key items on the agenda for the 23 October Panel meeting was the presentation on the performance of the Ramsgate Port & Harbour by the Leader of Council.

2.3 There was quite a detailed discussion on the port finances as Members sought to find out how the port and harbour were performing and whether there were any other considerations to explore other potential opportunities for developing the asset.

2.4 A number of questions were forwarded to the Leader as part of the preparation for the meeting and these were responded to as part of the presentation by the Leader of Council. Members had the opportunity to ask additional supplementary questions as part of the discussion and were individually responded to by the Leader.

2.5 The Panel was offered a further informal working session to explain the processes behind how the Port and Harbour finances are reported by Council as it was hoped that this approach would provide more clarity on the subject.

2.6 In concluding the debate, the Leader indicated that the Council would like to see the budget deficit relating to the Port and Harbour go down and was working on ways to improve the situation. It was further agreed that the Port and Harbour would be added to the topics for a future Members Briefing session. The Leader further indicated that the council would continue to look for ways of communicating the information regarding the Port and Harbour in an improved way and on a continuous basis.

2.7 The Panel also considered proposals for the 2019/20 Council Fees & Charges at the meeting on 20 November and forwarded the following recommendations to Cabinet:

1. To consider removing the fee for cremation services of children under the age of seven years;
2. To review the costs for cremation services for all age groups, having considered similar charges in other districts;
3. To review the licensing fee charges in order to determine whether it was appropriate that there was no increases in licensing fees across the board;
4. To consider whether it was appropriate to set up an all party cabinet advisory group to look at future fees and charges.

2.8 The current work programme for the Panel for 2018/19 is attached as Annex 1 to the Council report. This schedule is subject to amendments during the course of the year as Members added more items for reviewing.

## **3.0 Cabinet Presentations at Panel Meetings**

3.1 As reported above the Panel received a presentation on the 'financial and operational performance of the Ramsgate Port and Harbour.' As a result of the discussions that followed on the presentation, it was agreed that the topic be presented again at a future Members Briefing session.

#### 4.0 Panel Recommendations to Cabinet - Implementation Monitoring

- 4.1 There Panel made some recommendations regarding the proposed fees and charges for 2019/20. At the time of writing this report, the Cabinet was still to meet for an extraordinary meeting to consider those recommendations which are reported elsewhere in this report.

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#### Annex List

Annex 1	Finance, Budget & Performance Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2018/19
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#### Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
None	N/A

#### Corporate Consultation

<b>Finance</b>	Gary Whittaker, Interim Head of Financial & Procurement Services
<b>Legal</b>	Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer