

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

Council	10 October 2019
Report Author	Cllr Campbell, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Status	For Information
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Ward:	Thanet Wide

Executive Summary:

The purpose of the report is to highlight some of the key activities that have been planned for by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel during the course of this 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

Financial and Value for Money	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 Overview & Scrutiny Panel.
Legal	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.
Corporate	<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>

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty	<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: (f the Duti) 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 & maternity. Only aim (i) oy applies to Marriage & 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>
--	--

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 At each ordinary Full Council meeting, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel presents a progress update report on the activities of the Panel since the last Council meeting.

- 1.2 Such a report would be subject to comment or debate by Members. This is in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.1 of Part 4 of the Council Constitution.
- 1.3 This report updates Council on the work of the Panel since the last Council meeting and allows for discussion of the work undertaken, therefore strengthening the Council's scrutiny function.
- 1.4 This report follows on from the one presented at Full Council on 05 September.

2.0 Current Scrutiny Activities, including Cabinet Member Presentations

- 2.1 The Panel through the Chairman called in a cabinet decision on the "Proposal for the disposal of the Dreamland freehold" and had an extraordinary meeting on 15 August to consider the call-in.
- 2.2 The Cabinet decision was that "Subject to agreement of external funders regarding the removal of ongoing grant obligations upon the council, and subject to legal advice, to dispose of Dreamland to Sands Heritage Ltd including the boundary as indicated in Annex 1, all rides listed in Annex 2 and the intellectual property rights of Dreamland."
- 2.3 The reason for the call-in "the need to identify the range of options considered". Specifically the Panel sought clarification on why Cabinet took the decision to dispose of the asset now, rather than retaining it.
- 2.4 Cabinet represented by the Leader of Council engaged the Panel to explain the view of the executive in arriving at this disposal decision. After some detailed discussion, the Panel forwarded the following recommendations to Cabinet:
 1. That Cabinet seeks three independent valuations for the Dreamland site before an agreement is reached with a buyer; and
 2. During the negotiations with the proposed developer, Cabinet requests an 18 year housing development restriction in the agreement instead of the proposed 10 years.
- 2.5 In response to Overview & Scrutiny Panel recommendations, Cabinet also met for an extraordinary session on 01 September and considered those recommendations and reviewed their decision with the final decision as detailed below, that:
 1. To authorise another market valuation of the Dreamland site in order to ensure that sufficient breadth of comparable evidence is considered for the sale. Both valuations to be used to demonstrate that best value is obtained; and
 2. To retain the proposed 10 year housing development restriction on the Dreamland site as agreed by Cabinet on 01 August 2019. Delegated officers to continue the negotiations to explore the suggested extension fully as part of the sale process.
- 2.6 Members also conducted a pre-decision review of the proposed 'Corporate Statement for 2019-2023' before Cabinet took a final look on 19 September in time to seek Full Council approval on 10 October. The Panel made a number of recommendations as follows:

1. that Cabinet sets up a Member working group to review proposed detailed plans for implementing the vision in the Corporate Statement for 2019-2023;
 2. to add the wording “for the wider benefit of the town and district,” to the statement on the Port of Ramsgate and the Royal Harbour (under Growth);
 3. to add the wording “work to be carbon neutral by 2030” to the statement under the Environment;
 4. that the wording that “further improve the efficiency of emptying schedules including the maximising of smart bins” be added to the statement on Environment in relation to waste collection;
 5. to add the wording “improve collaboration with KCC to explore opportunities for introducing a park and ride scheme in Thanet” to statements under the Environment;
 6. to add the wording “including additional social housing” to the statement on work to prevent homelessness (under the section on Communities);
 7. to add the wording ‘the council's intention to take back management’ “subject to following procedures the council takes back direct control of its housing stock (under the section on Communities);
 8. agreed to add the wording “work with the Boundaries Commission to ensure that the number of councillors is appropriate to the council's size and needs”;
 9. to add the wording “high quality housing and energy efficiency to meet the needs” to the statement on housing.
- 2.7 In response, Cabinet agreed all the recommendations as proposed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Cabinet further agreed to make reference to the Preston Model in the new Corporate Statement proposals for consideration by Full Council on 10 October 2019.
- 2.8 Additional topics for Cabinet Member presentations at Scrutiny meetings are highlighted below. These include the following:
1. Review proposals for the fees and Charges (22 October 2019);
 2. Service review of the Corporate Governance and Coastal Development service area (19 November 2019 TBC);
 3. Service review of Operational Services (20 February 2019 TBC).
- 2.9 The Panel received a further update from the Chairman of the Travellers Review Group. They indicated that they had received invaluable information from officers on the nature of the problem affecting thanet and hoped to use this information to come up with realistic recommendations. They highlighted the following:
- The review group identified a number of proposed sites for consideration as proposed temporary campsites for travellers;

- the sub group would be meeting with the travellers community representatives at their next meeting, to get their view on this subject, before drafting a report for submission to the Panel.

2.10 The Scrutiny Review Group would be meeting again on 02 October and they were expected to make a final report back to the Panel in November.

2.11 The rest of the work programme for 2019/20 is detailed in Annex 1 to the Council report. This schedule is subject to amendments during the course of the year as Members may add more items for reviewing.

3.0 Panel Recommendations to Cabinet - Implementation Monitoring

Fees and Charges review

3.1 The seven member fees and charges cabinet advisory group would meet for their first meeting in October, ahead of the Panel and Cabinet meetings to consider the fees and charges for 2020/21 Their work would kick start the review of fees and charges for 2020/21.

Proposal for the disposal of the Dreamland freehold

3.2 Cabinet agreed to negotiate with Sands Heritage Ltd for a housing restriction period of more than 10 years to be part of the agreement of sale.

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

Annex List

Annex 1	Overview & Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2019/20
---------	--

Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
None	N/A

Corporate Consultation

Finance	Chris Blundell, Head of Financial Services
Legal	Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer