

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

Council	05 December 2019
Report Author	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Status	For Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Ward:	Thanet Wide

Executive Summary:

This report highlights 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.

Recommendations:

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	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 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 & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & 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="text-align: center;">✓</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 has 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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CORPORATE PRIORITIES (tick those relevant) ✓	
Growth	
Environment	
Communities	✓

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 10 October.

2.0 Current Scrutiny Activities, including Cabinet Member Presentations

- 2.1 The Panel received the final report of the Travellers Review Group at its meeting on 19 November. Members thanked both members of the group and officers for their hard work in compiling the report. Members agreed that this was a difficult matter to decide as it was a highly emotive issue for many members of the local community. The Travellers Review Group had recommended that the Panel proposed to Cabinet the following:

- a) That further work is undertaken to assess the feasibility and cost implications of three temporary tolerated sites in the district at Potten Street, St Nicholas at Wade, Tivoli Brooks, Margate and Ramsgate Port, with a view to using them on a rotational basis.

2.2 However after having debated this issue at length and having considered the details of the report including the matrix that was used by the review group to ascertain the suitability of each of the three sites identified, the Panel recommended the following to Cabinet:

- a) That further work be undertaken including extensive public consultation to assess the feasibility and cost implications of establishing temporary tolerated sites in the district.

Cabinet Presentations at OSP Meetings for 2019/20

2.3 Additional topics for Cabinet Member presentations at Scrutiny meetings are highlighted below. These include the following:

1. The future management of council housing stock. The presentation would concentrate on providing an update on the preferred option to bring council housing stock into council management (21 January 2020 TBC);
2. Service review of Operational Services (20 February 2020 TBC).

2.4 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. Annex 2 has been added to offer Members an opportunity to review and keep track of the spread of the scrutiny review work.

3.0 Panel Recommendations to Cabinet - Implementation Monitoring

Fees and Charges review

3.1 The seven member fees and charges cabinet advisory group met on 10 October, ahead of the Panel and Cabinet meetings to consider the fees and charges for 2020/21. Their work kick started the review of fees and charges for 2020/21.

3.2 The advisory group focused on car park fees and charges. The proposals for 2020/21 fees and charges were then presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Panel on 22 October. Members made the following recommendation, that:

- Cabinet considered not to increase the events application fee, thereby keeping it at £75.

3.3 Cabinet agreed the recommendation on 14 November.

Proposal for the disposal of the Dreamland freehold

3.4 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.

3.5 At the July meeting, the Panel considered a report on the "Adoption of a new Housing Assistance Policy" and recommended to Cabinet that Council writes to Kent County

Council requesting that “KCC ring fenced the £405k (Top sliced/payment to KCC projected for 2019/20) for use by Thanet residents”.

- 3.6 Cabinet forwarded the request to KCC via a letter sent to KCC by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods on 12 August. The Panel is awaiting a response from KCC.

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Annex List

Annex 1	Overview & Scrutiny Panel Work Programme for 2019/20
Annex 2	Record of OSP Pre and Post Decision Reviews for 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