

## REVIEWING THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020/21

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| Overview & Scrutiny Panel | <b>21 July 2020</b>                       |
| Report Author             | <b>Senior Democratic Services Officer</b> |
| Status                    | <b>For Decision</b>                       |
| Classification:           | <b>Unrestricted</b>                       |
| Key Decision              | <b>No</b>                                 |
| Ward:                     | <b>Thanet Wide</b>                        |

### **Executive Summary:**

This report sets out a framework for activities of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel for 2020/21 and asks the Panel to review the work programme.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Members are requested to comment and note the report.

### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

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| <b>Financial and Value for Money</b>                       | There are no financial implications arising directly from this report but elements of the suggested work programme may have financial and resource implications which would need to be managed within existing resources, or alternatively compensating savings found.   |
| <b>Legal</b>   | The role of scrutiny is set out in section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000. The council must also have regard to the statutory guidance on Overview and Scrutiny from the ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government when exercising its functions.   |
| <b>Corporate</b>   | <p>The work programme should help to deliver effective policy decision making by scrutinising executive decisions before, and at times after, implementation.</p> <p>The sub-committees assist the work of scrutiny as they would carry-out an in-depth study of any issue referred to the groups under their terms of reference. An active Scrutiny programme is part of good governance.</p>   |
| <b>Equality 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 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. |

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|   | 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.  |   |
| 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.   |  |   |
| It was 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. |  |   |

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| <b>CORPORATE PRIORITIES (tick those relevant) ✓</b> |   |
| Growth  |   |
| Environment   |   |
| Communities   | ✓ |

## 1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This report allows the Panel to review and amend the work programme for the 2020/21 municipal year agreed at the meeting on 26 May 2020. Due to the ongoing national health emergency caused by COVID-19, Council meetings were now being conducted through the virtual facility.
- 1.2 As the Annual Council meeting has been deferred, it technically means that means that the 2019/20 work programme will continue until such time as the council committees are reconstituted at the annual meeting. However for ease of reference Democratic Services will refer to work scheduled to be carried out in 2020/21 as the 2020/21 work programme.
- 1.3 The current statutory guidance for the scrutiny function says, effective overview and scrutiny should:
- Provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge;
  - Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
  - Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
  - Drive improvement in public services
- 1.4 With this in mind, Members may wish to ensure that the Panel work programme for the year provides opportunities for critical but constructive challenge to the Executive,

articulate any concerns about matters that are the business of the council and strive for improved service delivery by the Council and other public agencies working in Thanet.

## **2.0 Current Scrutiny Activities, including Cabinet Member Presentations**

OSP Workshop

2.1 The Chairman hosted the Overview & Scrutiny Panel Workshop on 24 June, where both Panel and non Panel members suggested a number of potential scrutiny projects that the Panel could undertake. Further discussion still needs to be had to fine tune the topics by identifying the specific problem that Members would like to investigate and the outcomes they would like to achieve as a result of these investigations.

2.2 The topics that Members brought up for possible consideration by the Panel are detailed below:

- Private rented sector - How can council deal with issues like substandard repairs?
- Empty Properties;
- Planning enforcement;
- Street Scene: Abandoned vehicles -taking long to clear abandoned vehicles;
- Selective Licensing - Is selective licensing the best way forward and can it be replicated to other areas of the district?
- Camper Vehicles being parked on the street for too long;
- Promenades - safety concerns cyclists speeding and sharing the footpath;
- Replacement bins for litter/dog waste;
- Coastal waste clearance;
- Councillors - what should be the response times to questions from Members? ( councillor portal database for case management on issues reported to officers that other Members can refer to in order to avoid duplication?)
- Are beach inspectors the best way to control or manage beach behaviour?
- Waste management in cliftonville - public bins are usually overflowing;
- Weed killer usage;
- Your Leisure;
- Water user regulations - who can use our slipways? What regulations need to be improved to stop dumping of rubbish on the coastlines?
- Recovery Plan - maintain a watching brief;
- Rough Sleepers - what are we doing about this as a long term plan of addressing the issue (post COVID-19)?
- Modern Slavery - hand car washes. Is there any intervention the council can do to address this issue?
- Health Outcomes;
- Statues and Blue Plaques. What would be the best approach for managing this discussion on suitability of statues and plaques in the district?
- Shellfish collection enforcement.

2.3 Officers were currently working with Members to flesh out the details of what the above suggested review topics and what specific questions Members wanted answered. The next stage would be to score and present to the next meeting of the Panel the scrutiny review topics in priority order of implementation.

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

2.4 Members may wish to rearrange the work programme in view of the delay caused by cancellation of meetings. The Panel was due to have received cabinet member

presentations at the 17 March and 21 April meetings, respectively. New dates for these presentations would need to be agreed, if Members still wished to receive the presentations on the topics highlighted below:

1. Coastal Development Review (focus on a the Beach Management Plan) 21 July 2020;
  2. The Leader of Council to share the current Cabinet's vision moving forward (TBC).
- 2.5 The rest of the work programme for 2020/21 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.
- 2.6 Members may also wish to reflect and comment on the content in Annex 2 which provides an opportunity to review and keep track of the spread of the scrutiny review work, particularly between pre and post decision scrutiny activities.
- 3.0 Panel Recommendations to Cabinet - Implementation Monitoring**  
The Panel keeps a watching brief on all the issues in this section, until the executive decisions are fully implemented.

**Proposal for the disposal of the Dreamland freehold**

- 3.1 The Panel called-in a Cabinet decision regarding the Dreamland freehold and recommended the following back to Cabinet:
1. That Cabinet seeks three independent valuations for the Dreamland site before an agreement is reached with a buyer, and;
  2. Cabinet requests an 18 year housing development restriction in the agreement instead of the proposed 10 years.
- 3.2 In response Cabinet agreed the following:
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.
  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.
- 3.3 The Panel is maintaining a watching brief on this matter as the negotiations progress.

**Adoption of a new Housing Assistance Policy**

- 3.4 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".

- 3.5 Cabinet forwarded the request to KCC via a letter sent to KCC by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods on 12 August 2019. The Panel is awaiting a response from KCC.

#### **Travellers Review Recommendation**

- 3.6 After a scrutiny review conducted by a working group, the Panel recommended to Cabinet that “further work be undertaken including extensive public consultation to assess the feasibility and cost implications of establishing temporary tolerated sites in the district.”
- 3.7 Having considered the Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommendations on 16 December 2019, Cabinet agreed to the following:

“That further work was 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 and Ramsgate Port, with a view to using them on a rotational basis”. Members are maintaining a watching brief on the issue.

#### **Council Budget Setting 2020/21**

- 3.8 Members reviewed the 2020/21 Council budget proposals forwarded to the Panel by Cabinet and engaged the Cabinet Member for financial Services in discussion at the January meeting.

- 3.9 After some debate, Members made the following recommendation to Cabinet to consider before submitting the budget proposals to Full Council for final decision:

“that Cabinet considers identifying a resource to support coastal projects.”

- 3.10 Thereafter Cabinet recommended to Council and on 6 February 2020, Members agreed the following:

- That subject to funding availability, a resource be identified to support coastal projects.

- 3.11 The Panel will continue to monitor this issue to check if any progress has been made to secure the funding for coastal projects.

#### **4.0 An Approach for Identifying Future Scrutiny Topics**

- 4.1 At the February Panel meeting, Members agreed to hold a workshop to detail out an approach for identifying topics that Members could examine as part of scrutiny review projects.

- 4.2 The workshop could also look at scrutiny items from neighbouring seaside authorities to see how TDC could conduct better scrutiny. It had been initially scheduled for April this year. However a new date needs to be agreed. Any new approach agreed by Members that would emerge from this workshop would be used to plan the work programme for 2020/21.

#### **5.0 Options**

- 5.1 Members are asked to comment and note the report.

5.2 Members can review the current work programme and make changes depending on the collective agreement by the Panel.

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### **Annex List**

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| Annex 1 | Overview & Scrutiny Panel Work Programme for 2020/21    |
| Annex 2 | Record of OSP Pre and Post Decision Reviews for 2019/20 |

### **Background Papers**

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

### **Corporate Consultation**

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