

# **TDC and Parish/Town Councils Collaboration WP Questionnaire - Parish and Town Council Responses**

**TDC & Parish/Town Councils  
Collaboration Working Party**

03 November 2022

**Report Author**

Charles Hungwe Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Ashbee, Leader of Council

**Status**

For Decision

**Classification:**

Unrestricted

**Key Decision**

No

**Ward:**

Thanet Wide

## **Executive Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to provide a framework for a discussion session between the Collaboration Review Working Party and the Leader of Council. The working party is seeking the views of the town and parish council representatives regarding how best to improve collaborative working between the District Council and Parish and Town Councils.

## **Recommendation(s):**

Members are asked to note the comments, particularly the proposals suggested in the options section of the report as well as the responses to the questionnaire in Annex 1 to the report.

## **Corporate Implications**

### **Financial and Value for Money**

There were no financial implications arising directly from this report.

### **Legal**

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.

### **Risk Management**

There are risks arising directly from this report.

### **Corporate**

The review of coastal waste collection would come up with recommendations for

consideration by the executive. However such recommendations would need to be put in the context of the current limited resources available to the council.

## **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, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

This report relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -  
(Delete as appropriate)

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- To 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.

## **Corporate Priorities**

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- Growth
- Environment
- Communities

## **1.0 Introduction and Background**

1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel set up the TDC and Parish/Town Councils Collaboration Review Working Party at its meeting on 26 May 2022 to investigate and report on the potential for closer working between Thanet District Council and the Parish and Town Councils in order for improved services to Thanet residents. It is hoped that from this review, the working party could come up with recommendations for consideration by the Panel and subsequently the Executive.

- 1.2 This piece of work has come out of the comments and feedback received by TDC through the just ended work by the Coastal Waste Review Working Party. Parish and Town Council representatives who took part in this review expressed the view that the district could experience improved service delivery especially with regards to managing litter through improved collaborative working between these two structures of local government.
- 1.3 The purpose of this meeting is for the working party to seek evidence from town and parish councils represented by their respective Chairs and Clerks. Any information gathered from this session would be used to inform the content of the report to be produced by the working party when they report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

## **2.0 Collecting Evidence for the review**

- 2.1 A questionnaire was sent out to town and parish council Clerks and Chairs requesting their views on the subject under investigation. thirteen responses have been received to date. The key questions in the survey document are as detailed below:
1. How do you view the current working relationship between Thanet District Council and parish/town councils?
  2. How does this current working relationship affect the way services are delivered in the district?
  3. Do you have any suggestions for how collaborative working between Thanet District Council and parish/town councils could be improved; and if yes what are they?
  4. From your experience working with parishes, do you think they have the capacity to take on additional roles on a long-term, sustained basis?
- 2.2 In conducting the session, the working party may choose to share the questions amongst the sub group members and agree on an approach for asking these questions; whether each Member is going to ask a question on a rotational basis or one member leads the asking of their allocated questions and hands over to the next member,once they are done.

## **3.0 Worth noting: Current Arrangements between TDC and Parishes**

- 3.1 Currently TDC interacts with Parish and Town Councils through virtual meetings; the Parish Conference Calls. These are informal sessions where the CEx meets with Parish and Town Clerks and Chairs to get updates on and discuss topical issues affecting the district. Initially this was a forum where the CEx and senior TDC officers would provide updates about Covid 19.
- 3.2 There is also a parish Forum that is hosted by TDC where the Leader of Council chairs two sessions in a year where Town and Parish Clerks and Chairs attend to

discuss matters of interest to the district. Discussion topics are sought from the parish and town councils. These sessions are supported by the CEx and senior officers. Parish Forums have not been held for quite some time as they seem to have been replaced by Parish Conference Calls. The Conference Calls were held fortnightly at the height of the pandemic, but they have since been moved to monthly sessions.

## **4.0 Options**

- 4.1 Members may wish to ask follow up questions relating to the questionnaire key questions highlighted in para 2.1 (1-4) in order to get more in-depth responses.
- 4.2 Members could simply ask those same questions as worded in para 2.1 (1-4).

## **5.0 Next Steps**

- 5.1 The following is a proposed generic timetable which Members can review and amend at the first meeting.

November 2022 - interview session with parish and town councils;  
November 2022 - interview session with TDC senior officers;  
November 2022 - Review of information collected and drafting of initial report;  
December 2022 - Review of report by the working group, relevant senior officers and CMT;  
January 2023 - Presentation of Final report to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Contact Officer: *(Charles Hungwe, Senior Democratic Services Officer)*  
Reporting to: *(Nick Hughes, Committee Services Manager)*

### **Annex List**

Annex 1 - Questionnaire circulated to parish and town councils and responses received

### **Background Papers**

None

### **Corporate Consultation**

**Finance:** *(Insert name and job title)*

**Legal:** *(Insert name and job title)*