

TDC & PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS COLLABORATION WORKING PARTY

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2022 at 5.30 pm in the Online Meeting Only.

Present: Councillor Alan Currie (Chair); Councillors Austin and Fellows

In Attendance: Councillors Ashbee, J Bayford, R Bayford, Matthews and D Saunders

4. TDC AND PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS COLLABORATION WP QUESTIONNAIRE - TDC CABINET MEMBER RESPONSES

The Chair introduced the subject for discussion and asked members of the working party to ask questions or make comments in relation to the responses they received from cabinet members through the survey questionnaire.

Working Party Members made comments and asked questions as follows:

- In your view as cabinet members, how do parish and town councils expect to fund any additional services if they were handed over additional functions by the district council?
- Could parishes co-manage some of these functions with the district council; for example by managing the toilets facilities around the district?
- The district would only come in if there was an emergency (i.e. if the bill was too high for a parish to pay);
- A parish/town council could offer to take on a service. However the issue is about having a transparent relationship between the parishes and TDC in sharing these services;
- The principal council should know what it wants from this proposed relationship with parishes;
- One way of collaborative working was for TDC to host the Member training programme that would include parish and town councillors, particularly for the induction of newly elected Members in May 2023;
- There is a need to hold regular meetings between TDC and parish and town councils. These meetings would be attended by parish and town clerks and chairs representing parishes;
- If there was going to be a handover of functions and assets that need to be done in a structured way for such arrangements;
- It might be that the precepts presentation could be restructured;
- There is also a need to understand the risks involved for any services that would be handed down to parishes;
- Should the Parish Forum be restored? It might be that this recommendation could be formally presented to cabinet;
- The re-established Parish Forum could have new terms of reference;
- These meetings could be held bi monthly;
- There is a need to come up with an updated list of town and parish clerks;
- Information on the newly created Parish Forum could then be circulated to all parishes.

Cabinet Member responded to sub group comments and questions as follows:

- Parish and town councils could raise a precept to fund additional functions if functions were handed down to them;
- Parishes could take over parking. Birchington ground was now managed by the parish council. This had provided an opportunity for local participation;

- This enhances connectivity between the parishes and district council;
- Parishes could be handed over some of the non statutory functions and share such responsibilities as the management of toilets;
- Parishes and the district council could co manage some functions with the TDC coming in on emergency matters lie in instances where there was huge bill to be paid;
- As the pressures on the district council budget increases the council will need to come to decide to let go of some non statutory functions;
- Parish and Town Councils could run commercially as they do not have as many responsibilities as the district council;
- They could provide a better service for some of the non statutory functions;
- The district council could link the management of toilets to beach huts;
- KCC could lead and manage the discussions for handing over some of the car parks to parish and town councils;
- There was a need to agree the mechanics for collaborative working and it was important to create a workable arrangement that also included identifying where the supervisory role lay;
- Joint ventures on managing some of the functions would be a good idea but there was a need to agree on the decision making would lie. It might be that TDC could have a cabinet member for engagement to supervise this collaborative arrangement;
- There could be an officer to manage the collaborative arrangement. Such a role would reduce the time taken to resolve issues being raised by parishes;
- The length of time it took to resolve issues raised by parishes with TDC could be resolved through a designated officer who could take on this role on a part time basis;
- Coming up with a more formal forum which was structured; where TDC and parishes engaged regularly would improve collaborative working;
- Once there was an agreement on how TDC and parishes would work collaboratively, there could be a joint communications message to residents on the new way of working;
- The working party could recommend to OSP that Cabinet considered re-establishing the Parish Forum with new terms of reference. Attendees would be the parish chairs and clerks, TDC leader and cabinet Members and Senior TDC Officers;
- The new Parish Forum should have a controlled agenda and strong Chair and could meet bi-monthly.

The Chair thanked cabinet members for attending this session.

Meeting concluded: 6.40 pm