

Minutes of the meeting of the **SCRUTINY (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE) COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Tuesday, 27 February 2018 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor M I Cosin (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors: P M Beresford  
T A Bond  
R J Frost  
P J Hawkins (as substitute for Councillor K Mills)  
S C Manion  
M Rose  
P M Wallace (as substitute for Councillor J M Heron)

Also Present: Councillor M D Conolly

Officers: Chief Executive  
Director of Environment and Corporate Assets  
Director of Finance, Housing and Community  
Director of Governance  
Head of Finance  
Director of Shared Services  
Director of Customer Services  
Democratic Services Manager

124 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B J Glayzer, J M Heron, K Mills and D A Sargent.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor K E Morris, also sent his apologies for the meeting.

125 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillors P J Hawkins and P M Wallace had been appointed as substitute members for Councillors K Mills and J M Heron respectively.

126 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

127 MINUTES

The consideration of the Minutes was deferred to a future meeting.

128 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Democratic Services Manager advised that no members of the public had registered to speak on items on the agenda to which the public speaking protocol applied.

129 DECISIONS OF THE CABINET RELATING TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SCRUTINY (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE) COMMITTEE

Members received the decisions of the Cabinet relating to recommendations made by the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet decisions relating to recommendations from the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee be noted.

130 ISSUES REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY COUNCIL, CABINET, SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION) COMMITTEE OR ANOTHER COMMITTEE

There were no items for consideration.

131 ITEMS CALLED-IN FOR SCRUTINY OR PLACED ON THE AGENDA BY A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, ANY INDIVIDUAL NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OR PUBLIC PETITION

There were no items for consideration.

132 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

The consideration of this item was deferred to the next meeting.

133 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The consideration of this item was deferred to the next meeting.

134 FEES AND CHARGES 2018/19

In response to a question it was stated that fees and charges that were in the control of the Council were considered on an individual basis.

135 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Director of Governance presented the Performance Report for Quarter 3, 2017/18.

The red performance indicators for Quarter 3, 2017/18 were as followed:

Dover District Council

- HOU010a (Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation including B&B)

- HOU010b (Number of households in bed and breakfast)
- LIC006 (The percentage of licenced premises inspections completed by target date)

#### East Kent Services

- EKS026d (Average call waiting time in minutes)

#### East Kent Housing

- EKHL1 (Average time taken to re-let council dwellings)
- EKHC2 (Rent arrears as % of annual debit)
- EKHC3 (Former tenant arrears as % of annual debit)

Members were advised that sickness levels remained low and that the planning and waste services continued to perform well against targets.

#### LIC006 (The percentage of licenced premises inspections completed by target date)

This indicator was red due to the resignation of a staff member. A new staff member had subsequently been recruited and it was expected that performance would improve accordingly.

#### EKHL1 (Average time taken to re-let council dwellings)

This indicator was red due to a combination of delays resulting from the Christmas period and the need to undertake more work than expected to bring three properties back into use for re-let.

#### EKHC2 (Rent arrears as % of annual debit) and EKHC3 (Former tenant arrears as % of annual debit)

Members were advised that Universal Credit was taking 10 weeks to make first payment which was affecting the ability of affected tenants to pay their rents. At present 7-8 tenants per day in the Dover district were being transferred to Universal Credit but this number was expected to increase over time. East Kent Housing met with tenants switching to Universal Credit and set out payment plans for them. There had been no evictions due to Universal Credit caused arrears this year.

### 136 COUNCIL BUDGET 2018/19 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2018/19–2021/22

The Director of Finance, Housing and Community introduced the Budget 2018/19 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19-2021/22.

Members were advised that the 2018/19 budget was forecast to be balanced with General Fund balances maintained at £2.5 million. While the overall net expenditure levels were slightly reduced there were no significant reductions in funding for services or major changes to staffing levels.

The main pressures faced by the General Fund in the 2018/19 budget were reduced funding streams and the impact of the increased need for provision of temporary accommodation for homeless prevention. This had been offset by

additional income from investments, following the approval of the new Treasury Management Strategy, and income from properties in line with the approved Property Investment Strategy. These additional income streams had prevented the need for any significant changes to services.

Members raised the following points:

- In response to a question about whether the café at Kearsney Abbey would be closed during the winter months it was stated that this was currently the case.
- In response to a question about what controls were in place in respect of the EK Services budget it was stated that EK Services had to operate within its allocated budget.
- In response to a question about whether there was a legal minimum level of reserves that the Council was required to hold it was stated that while there was no legal minimum the intention was to try and maintain a minimum of £2 million in reserves.
- In response to a question on staffing numbers it was stated that the council did not set any target related to staff turnover and that the Employment Management Group continued to robustly manage vacancies as they arose.

The meeting ended at 7.02 pm.