

Minutes of the meeting of the **SCRUTINY (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE) COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Tuesday, 15 January 2019 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor M I Cosin

Councillors: P J Hawkins  
T A Bond  
M R Eddy  
R J Frost  
B Gardner (as substitute for Councillor J M Heron)  
P D Jull  
S C Manion (as substitute for Councillor M Rose)  
M J Ovenden  
D A Sargent

Officers: Strategic Director (Corporate Resources)  
Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)  
Head of Commercial Services  
Housing Options Manager  
Democratic Services Manager

80 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J M Heron and M Rose.

81 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillors B Gardner and S C Manion had been appointed as substitute members for Councillors J M Heron and M Rose respectively.

82 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor P D Jull declared an Other Significant Interest in Minute No. 92 by reason of being a business owner in Deal.

Councillor T A Bond declared a Voluntary Announcement of Other Interest in Minute No. 92 by reason of his wife's employment at Tides.

83 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 3 July 2018, 11 September 2018 and 2 October 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

84 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.

85 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.

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

There were no items of business.

87 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 of business.

88 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

The Democratic Services Manager presented the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions to the Committee for its consideration.

Councillor B Gardner requested an update to the next meeting in respect of where the money generated from the granting of the easement at Matthews Close, Deal would be allocated.

RESOLVED: That the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions be noted.

89 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Manager presented the Scrutiny Work Programme to the Committee for its consideration.

Members reiterated the need to continue monitoring the roll out of Universal Credit and town centre regeneration.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

90 SCRUTINY APPOINTMENTS TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES AND POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

It was moved by Councillor B Gardner, and duly seconded, that Councillor M I Cosin be nominated as the scrutiny representative to replace Councillor K Mills on the Local Plan Project Advisory Group.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Cabinet that Councillor M I Cosin be nominated to replace Councillor K Mills as the scrutiny representative on the Local Plan Project Advisory Group.

91 HOMELESSNESS ACT UPDATE

The Housing Options Manager presented an update on the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (the 'Act').

The Act was a response to issues identified by a House of Commons report into how local authorities dealt with homelessness presentations. The key changes of the Act were

- an extension of the period ‘threatened with homelessness’ from 28 to 56 days;
- a new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness;
- a new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants; and
- a new ‘duty to refer’ where public services would need to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they thought might be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The guidance also changed the definition of vulnerable from the ‘Pereira Test’ to one in keeping with the Supreme Court’s view, which had defined the comparator of vulnerable in relation to homelessness as ‘an ordinary person made homeless, not an ordinary homeless person’. However, the local authority still retained discretion in assessing who was or was not considered to be vulnerable.

The Council had also taken steps to purchase additional properties to increase its range of temporary accommodation.

In response to questions from Members it was stated:

- That the change from 28 days to 56 days had very little impact on the Council as much of this was done anyway.
- That the Council followed the duties of the Act in dealing with homelessness and as a result was working longer with people to help them find potential solutions. Those individuals at risk of homelessness were encouraged to contact the Council as early as possible and not wait until they were evicted.
- That the duty to refer had been widely promoted by the Government to public sector bodies and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had made referrals to the Council. Dover District Council had also contacted the relevant public bodies to make them aware of the duty to refer.
- The Council worked with relevant bodies to assist those individuals leaving accommodation due to the risk of violence.
- It was acknowledged that complex housing cases concerning vulnerable individuals could be hard to place with landlords. A ‘task and finish’ group was doing what it could to protect vulnerable people from exploitation.
- That there was a challenge in managing ‘hidden homeless households’ (staying with family, etc.) compared to those visibly homeless households.
- That the Council had limited powers in respect of dealing with individuals with mental health concerns. Porchlight operated a scheme for mental health discharges to temporary accommodation and the Council was keen to work more with mental health teams.

RESOLVED: That the Homelessness Act Update be noted.

The Head of Parks and Open Spaces presented the report on the review of On and Off-Street Parking Charges.

In response to a questions from Members it was stated:

- That as the St James development had not yet introduced Sunday parking charges there were no plans for the Council to alter its proposals for Sunday parking.
- That the arrangements for 4 hour free parking at Tides would continue to be monitored to ensure that it was not being abused by people not using Tides (such as commuters). The current thinking was for a ticket that would be displayed to show length of stay.
- The Council was monitoring the impact of the previous free parking at St James and whether the change to paid parking had affected usage of the Council's car parks.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(Councillor P D Jull declared an Other Significant Interest in this item by reason of being a business owner in Deal and withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of the matter.)

93 RESTORATION OF MAISON DIEU (TOWN HALL), DOVER

The Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial) presented the report on the Restoration of Maison Dieu (Town Hall) Dover. The report sought agreement to delegate authority to officers from Cabinet to appoint the consultant appointments required to progress the project.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

94 COMMUNITY FACILITY: MAISON DIEU CAR PARK

The Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial) presented the report on the proposed Community Facility at Maison Dieu Car Park.

Members were advised that Dover Town Council had been working with the Dover Community Association on proposals to provide a community facility, including new public conveniences, within Maison Dieu car park. The report sought agreement to the Council making the necessary land available and providing a financial contribution of £90,000 in support of the project.

In response to questions from Members it was stated that the Council would retain the freehold on the land due to interests in the surrounding land.

The concerns raised by the Environment Agency in respect of the land had been addressed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

95 AWARD OF GRANT FUNDING – TRIANGLES COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report on the award of grant funding to Triangles Community Centre. The report sought agreement to provide a grant, subject to conditions, to the St Radigund's Community Centre Company of £150,000 to help fund repairs to the community centre building.

The grant would provide long term assistance to Triangles as the building had not been well maintained and was not in a good condition. As a result of the grant, repairs could be undertaken and the Council would look to provide support to Triangles in bidding for other funding (including a letter of support). The grant would be drawn down as needed following a survey of the buildings condition and on planning permission being granted. As an immediate measure the Council had agreed to advance £10,000 to repair the boilers and keep the community centre operating.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.52 pm.