

Minutes of the meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 10 July 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor C A Vinson

Councillors: S B Blair
D R Friend
S Hill (as substitute for Councillor C F Woodgate)
R M Knight
S M S Mamjan (as substitute for Councillor D J Parks)
M J Nee
H M Williams
L M Wright

Also Present: Councillor K Mills (Leader of the Council)
Councillor S H Beer (Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Climate Change and Environment)

Officers: Strategic Director (Corporate and Regulatory)
Strategic Director (Finance and Housing)
Strategic Director (Place and Environment)
Head of Finance and Investment
Head of Place and Growth
Head of Property Assets
Procurement Manager
Principal Planned Works Officer
Democratic and Corporate Services Manager

14 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D J Parks, M Rose and C F Woodgate.

15 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillors S M S Mamjan and S Hill had been appointed as substitute members for Councillors D J Parks and C F Woodgate respectively.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

17 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18 DECISIONS OF THE CABINET RELATING TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no decisions of the Cabinet relating to recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider.

19 ISSUES REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY PUBLIC PETITION, COUNCIL, CABINET, OR ANOTHER COMMITTEE

Petition – Wave Sculpture

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the petition organised by Helga Wood in respect of the Wave Sculpture on Deal Pier. The petition stated that:

“We, the undersigned residents of Deal, would like the Wave Sculpture replaced at the end of the pier as it used to be before being removed for repair.”

Members were advised that the sculpture was symbolic of Deal’s maritime history and part of the town’s history. It was thought that the costs to repair and restore it to its place on the pier were not significant. The sculpture had been a part of the pier since the 1970s.

Officers advised that the sculpture was currently being held at the Elms Vale store and had been removed as part of the restoration works to the pier that had taken it back to closer to its 1950s/1960s appearance. The decision to do this had been supported by the Council’s heritage officer. These restoration works had seen the commissioning of a new clock for the pier which was larger than the original clock and consequently the wave sculpture could not be restored until modifications were made to fit it around the new clock. Members were advised that the value of the sculpture to the community was recognised by the Council, and a quotation was being obtained to restore and adjust the wave sculpture to fit around the new clock.

The consensus view of the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was that the wave sculpture should be restored to the pier and they welcomed the news that it was the intention to this once repair and adjustment works had been completed.

It was moved by Councillor C A Vinson, duly seconded by Councillor D R Friend, and

RESOLVED: That the petition be noted and the Strategic Director (Place and Environment) be asked to ensure that steps were taken to restore the Wave Sculpture to Deal Pier.

20 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

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

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

21 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

The Democratic and Corporate Services Manager advised Members that officers at Kent County Council (KCC) had been contacted concerning the proposed closure of

the Richborough Household Waste site and invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee but had declined to do so.

It was agreed that the KCC Cabinet Member should be invited to a meeting of the committee once the timeframe for proposals in respect of the future of household waste sites was published.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted, subject to an invitation being sent to the KCC Cabinet Member responsible for Household Waste Sites being invited to attend a meeting of the committee once the timetable for the consultation on the future of the Deal and Richborough household waste sites was known.

22 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Democratic and Corporate 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.

23 UPDATE TO CORPORATE COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Strategic Director (Corporate and Regulatory) presented the report on the Update to the Corporate Complaints Policy.

Members were advised that the changes to the policy were as follows:

- The first amendment relates to the 'designated person' third stage of housing complaints. This was not unexpected as the Government had announced its intention to change the legislation at the time the Complaints Policy was last update.
- The second amendment related to guidance issued by the Housing Ombudsman which the Council had not previously included within its Complaints Policy but commonly happened as a matter of practice. This was to require that all Stage 1 complaints received a written response (either by letter or email).
- The third amendment was to set a limit as to the duration of an extension on a Stage 1 complaint's timescale for a response. All Stage 1 complaints had a 10-working day timescale to respond to the complainant with the potential to extend this if required. However, the length of the extension was not set in the current policy.

Members noted the report.

24 ADOPTION OF PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2023-2026

The Procurement Manager presented the report on the Adoption of Procurement Strategy 2023 – 2026. The proposed Procurement Strategy was intended to set the overall context for procurement across the Council over the next three years incorporating the latest government procurement legislation and initiatives alongside the Council's priorities, aims and objectives.

In response to questions from Members, it was stated that social value was considered in the procurement process and that steps had been taken to ensure that while due diligence was necessary, the procurement process was proportionate and offered opportunities to local suppliers.

Members welcomed the proposed Procurement Strategy and discussed the monitoring that would be used in respect of it.

It was agreed to note the report.

25 DOVER BEACON/BENCH STREET PROJECTS

The Head of Growth and Place presented the report on the Dover Beacon/Bench Street Projects.

Members were advised that the project was progressing well and that the lead design consultant had been appointed at the start of June. The contract for the demolition of the buildings on the site had been awarded at the end of May 2023 and the contractors had taken possession of the site on 19th June 2023. Additionally, Members would be kept involved in the process through the Dover Town & Beacon Project Advisory Group.

The Council was seeking expressions of interest from potential tenants and had already received some bids. The deadline for expressions of interest was 17 July 2023.

Members raised the following points:

- The potential impact of the archaeology on the development.
- Whether funding deadlines could be met and what the consequences would be if they could not be met.
- To express disappointment that the Council would not be a pathfinder authority.
- The importance of ensuring that the project was commercially viable when complete. It was stated that this was the intent.

Members noted the report.

26 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD - FOURTH QUARTER 2022/23

The Strategic Director (Corporate and Regulatory) presented the Strategic Performance Dashboard for Quarter 1, 2023/24.

Members discussed the following points:

- To welcome the recovery in the level of usage of the leisure centre following the pandemic. It was noted that this would have an impact potentially on the Tides project.
- To note that the level of recycling had declined since Quarter 1 2020/21 from 49.9% to 41.1%. In response it was stated that this situation was repeated in many local authorities with recycling levels in the low 40%*s*. There was still a lot of residual waste that could be recycled.

- To express concern over street cleansing with Q4 2022/23 showing the 13.88% of streets contained litter against a target of less than 5%. In response it was stated that officers had met with Veolia over this matter and set out what improvements were required. This would continue to be monitored through regular meetings.
- To welcome improvements in the level of housing rent arrears.

Members noted the report.

27 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor C A Vinson, duly seconded by Councillor H M Williams and

RESOLVED: That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business on the grounds that the items to be considered involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

28 RESPONSIVE REPAIRS, VOIDS AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES CONTRACT 2011-2025

The Head of Property Assets presented the report on Responsive Repairs, Voids and Associated Services Contract 2011-2025.

Members noted the report.

The meeting ended at 7.38 pm.