

Minutes of the meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 11 September 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor C A Vinson

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

Officers: Chief Executive  
Strategic Director (Finance and Housing)  
Head of Finance and Investment  
Head of Place and Growth  
Head of Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside Management  
Head of Waste Services  
Head of Housing  
Community Services Manager  
Environmental Protection and Crime Manager  
Principal Heritage Officer  
Regeneration Delivery Manager  
Principal Community Safety, Emergency Planning and CCTV Officer  
Corporate Estate Engineer  
Community Safety and Development Team Leader  
Head of Corporate Services and Democracy

29 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S B Blair, R M Knight and C F Woodgate.

30 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillors S Hill, M Bates and S M S Mamjan had been appointed as substitute members for Councillors S B Blair, R M Knight and C F Woodgate respectively.

31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following interests were declared:

Councillor C A Vinson declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in the Garden Waste Containerisation Project as a subscriber to the scheme and advised that he would withdraw from the meeting for the consideration of this item of business.

Councillor H M Williams declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in the Garden Waste Containerisation Project as a subscriber to the scheme and advised that she would withdraw from the meeting for the consideration of this item of business.

Councillor L M Wright declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in the Garden Waste Containerisation Project as a subscriber to the scheme and advised that she would withdraw from the meeting for the consideration of this item of business.

Councillor M Bates declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in the Garden Waste Containerisation Project as a subscriber to the scheme and advised that he would withdraw from the meeting for the consideration of this item of business.

Councillor D R Friend declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in the Garden Waste Containerisation Project as a subscriber to the scheme and advised that he would withdraw from the meeting for the consideration of this item of business.

Councillor C A Vinson suggested that those members with an Other Significant Interest in the Green Waste Containerisation Project might wish to seek a dispensation from the Governance Committee so that they could scrutinise the matter at a future meeting.

## 32 VARIATION TO THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

It was agreed with the affirmation of the meeting that the agenda be varied to take Agenda Items 13 (Adoption of the Dour Street, Dover Conservation Area Character Appraisal), 14 (Public Spaces Protection Order Consultation) and 15 (Provision of Interim Housing for Ukrainian Refugees via the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund) immediately after Agenda Item 9 (Public Speaking).

It was agreed with the affirmation of the meeting that the agenda be further varied to take Agenda Item 11 (Fasttrack Update) immediately after Agenda Item 17 (Garden Waste Containerisation Project).

## 33 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2023 were approved as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

## 34 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.

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

The Head of Corporate Services and Democracy advised that there were no issues referred to the Committee by Council, Cabinet or another Committee.

## 36 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

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

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

### 37 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Corporate Services and Democracy presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme to the Committee for its consideration.

Members identified the following items for inclusion in the work programme:

- Port of Dover Masterplan and Traffic Issues (with invitation to be extended to Kent County Council)
- That the Regeneration Update changed from quarterly to twice yearly.

In respect of the scrutiny of phlebotomy services in Deal, Councillor L M Wright requested that any reference to blood services be removed to avoid confusion. It was agreed to ask the Kent and Medway NHS for a briefing note in respect of phlebotomy services in Deal in order to assist with the setting of key questions.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted, subject to the inclusion of the following changes:

- That Port of Dover Masterplan and Traffic Issues (with invitation to be extended to Kent County Council) be added to the work programme.
- That the Regeneration Update changed from quarterly to twice yearly.

### 38 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Head of Corporate Services and Democracy advised that no members of the public had registered to speak on items on the agenda to which the public speaking protocol applied.

### 39 ADOPTION OF THE DOUR STREET, DOVER CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

The Principal Heritage Officer presented the report on the Adoption of the Dour Street, Dover Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

Members were informed that the Cabinet had previously approved the Draft Dour Street, Dover Conservation Area Character Appraisal for public consultation in February 2023 and following the conclusion of the consultation there had been a number of minor modifications proposed in light of the representations received.

The appraisal included a management plan which set out recommendations and action points that would contribute to managing change within the conservation area so that valued features identified by the local community would be appropriately protected.

The management plan also provided an opportunity for stakeholders including the Dover Society, the District Council, the Town Council, Kent County Council, Kent Highways, individual householders and local businesses to be involved.

Members welcomed the report and its proposals.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations in the report be endorsed.

40 PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER CONSULTATION

The Principal Community Safety, CCTV and Emergency Planning Officer and the Environmental Protection and Crime Manager presented the report on the Public Spaces Protection Order Consultation.

Members were advised that several variations to the adopted Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) were proposed to eliminate issues with effective enforcement and insert an enclosed children's play area previously omitted as followed:

- Rewording of Part 5 – “Consumption of Alcohol in Public Places” to clarify where the restrictions apply.
- Removal of children's play area at Children's Playing Field, Cowdray Square, Deal, Kent from Schedule 2 and extensions of area where dogs on lead restrictions apply at Children's Playing Field, Cowdray Square, Deal, Kent in Schedule 1 to mirror approach of unfenced children's play areas such as Russell Gardens in Temple Ewell.
- Addition of a dog exclusion area within the enclosed children's play area to schedule 2 at Woodnesborough Village Hall Green, Elmwood Park, Woodnesborough, Kent

In response to a question over the use of the PSPO in respect of anti-social behaviour, Members were advised that it had been used by Kent Police on 21 occasions since July 2021.

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

RESOLVED: (a) That it be recommended to the Cabinet that Option 1 in the report be approved as follows:

- (i) That, having regard to the conditions within Sections 61 and 72 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Officers be authorised to conduct an effective consultation process to seek comments and views from a range of stakeholders and members of the public on the proposed variations to the existing Public Spaces Protection Order, as detailed in the report.
- (b) That the consultation results be brought back to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

41 PROVISION OF INTERIM HOUSING FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEES VIA THE GOVERNMENT'S LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND

The Head of Finance and Investment and the Strategic Housing Manager presented the report on the Provision of Interim Housing for Ukrainian Refugees via the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund.

Members were advised that the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) was designed to help local authorities to house people from Ukraine and Afghanistan who were unable to obtain settled accommodation on resettlement schemes. The intention of the fund was to reduce the impact of new arrivals on existing housing pressures. When the properties were no longer required for the schemes for Ukrainian refugees, they would be transferred into the general needs stock or remain as interim housing for groups outside the parameters.

Kent County Council was in receipt of funding under the LAHF, and under the funding conditions could provide funding to Registered Providers to enable them to acquire properties to be let to Ukrainian refugees and later for use as general needs housing. It had made £840,000 available to the Council to acquire, own and manage six two-bedroom houses.

Members discussed the implications of supporting the Ukrainian refugees and were advised that Kent County Council had previously provided some support to the Council for refugees which could be used to support the residents of the six properties.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations in the report be endorsed.

#### 42 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD QUARTER ONE 2023/24

The Head of Corporate Services and Democracy presented the Strategic Performance Dashboard for Quarter One, 2023/24.

Members were advised that the Performance Management Framework was being reviewed following the trial period and that a new strategic and operational performance dashboard would be developed based on the new Corporate Plan once it had been adopted.

The key points in the Strategic Performance Dashboard for Quarter 1, 2023-24:

- There had been an improvement in resolving anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases within 30-days. The resolution rate had increased from 62.12% in Quarter 4 2022/23 to 97.78% in Quarter 1 2023/24.
- The number of second-stage complaints referred to the council's complaints officer has increased by just under 50%, from 19 in Quarter 4, 2022/23 to 28 in Quarter 1, 2023/24. This was due to an increase in complaints made against the Planning and Development and Housing Needs/Options teams.
- The introduction of a new Performance Indicator to show the "Number of new dwellings across the district – all developers".
- The Council had added four homes to the residential housing stock this quarter, all of which are general needs accommodation acquisitions (two affordable rent and two social rent). Since 2020/21, the Council had added 150 homes to the council housing stock.
- There were continued pressures in respect of homelessness reflecting the national situation.
- The Council continued to take a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould. There had been 400 cases reported to the Council, the overwhelming

majority of which had now had works completed. The remainder had works ordered and were in progress.

Members discussed the following points:

- The increase in the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) was raised. In response it was stated that new processes had been implemented in consultation with staff and areas were now being targeted based on need. The success of this approach was demonstrated in the low level of appeals against PCNs.
- To seek clarification that the percentage of appeals upheld for indicator PAD005 (Percentage of appeals upheld by the Planning Inspectorate as a percentage of those submitted) was correct.
- To seek clarification as to why the performance of PAD007 (Planning Fee Income) was down on previous years.
- In response to questions over the HUQ and Springboard data on footfall in the town centres, Members were advised that officers had similar concerns over the data and were working to identify an alternative provider.
- To ask that the definitions of detritus and litter be included within future editions of the Strategic Performance Dashboard.
- To raise concerns over the level of street cleanliness which members felt had worsened despite the figures to the contrary shown in the report. Members were advised that the data in WAS012 (Environmental cleanliness: Percentage of streets containing litter) was based on a visual sampling of streets by officers.
- To discuss the housing stock figures. The Strategic Housing Manager advised that while an indicative programme would be something that could be provided it would be subject to volatility.
- Members welcomed the support provided to tenants by benefit and money advisors.

#### 43 FULL STRUCTURAL SURVEY TO DEAL PIER

The Corporate Estate and Coastal Engineer presented the report on the Full Structural Survey to Deal Pier.

Members were advised that Deal Pier, which had officially opened in 1957, was constructed of reinforced concrete. A visual structural survey in 2017 had identified the need for repairs to the concrete beams, south steps and supporting stringer beams to the lower deck beneath the pier head and repairs were undertaken in 2018.

However, this survey did not include the pier legs, cross beams or substructure beneath the lower deck, and it is now evident that there are signs of further deterioration in some of the supporting pier legs. The report sought approval for a project to undertake a full structural survey of Deal Pier and any immediate repairs that were required. Members were reassured that there were no safety issues in respect of the Pier.

It was expected that the survey would be undertaken in October with the results available before the end of the year.

It was agreed to endorse the recommendations in the report.

44 ARRANGEMENTS FOR DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME FOR 2023/2024

The Community Safety & Development Team Leader presented the report on the Arrangements for Dover District Council Community Grants Scheme for 2023/24.

The proposed changes to the Scheme for 2023/24 were as follows:

- To refocus the scheme as the Cost-of-Living Community Impact Fund. This would provide funding to help support projects related to the cost-of-living crisis.
- To reduce the amount that applicants could apply for from up to £4000 to up to £2,500. This would enable the funding to be spread more widely to help the widest range of people.
- That the Scheme only have one grant round not two rounds.
- That the Scheme was not split into areas of the district based on County Divisions but instead apply to the whole district.
- That any injection of funds be added to the overall funding pot.

The grants panel would meet once per year in October or early November with the allocation of funding expected in late November or December.

The new scheme would be launched with a press release and all previous applicants would be advised of the new Scheme.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property, Councillor C D Zosseder, advised that the scheme had not been reviewed in seven years and that the new administration felt that it should be refocussed where funding was needed most against the backdrop of the cost-of-living crisis to help those already on low incomes and/or living in poverty.

Members welcomed the scheme and the move away from focussing on areas given the underspend in the rural areas and Sandwich in 2022/23.

In response to a question from Councillor C A Vinson, it was stated that 30 of the 68 previously successful applicants in 2022/23 would have been successful under the criteria for the new Scheme. It was expected that sports clubs would be less successful unless they looked to tailor their bids to the new criteria.

45 GARDEN WASTE CONTAINERISATION PROJECT

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor M Rose, took the Chair in the absence of the Chairman, Councillor C A Vinson.

Members discussed the following points:

- Why the consultation that had originally been requested by the Cabinet in December 2022 had not been undertaken before the elections in May 2023. Members were advised that the change to containerisation was in the waste contract and would have had to happen regardless undermining the point of a consultation.
- When the risk to staff of musculo-skeletal injuries caused by overladen (weight more than 20kg) garden waste sacks had first been identified and what alternatives to containerisation had been explored. Members were advised that 11 of the 12 Kent districts used bins as opposed to sacks.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to the Cabinet:

- (a) That, in the interests of the health and safety of the refuse collection contractor's workforce, the use of garden waste sacks be withdrawn and the sacks replaced with a 240-litre wheeled bin.
- (b) That a single wheeled bin be provided at no cost to subscribers in Year 1 of the revised service, and that residents who cannot access the service be offered a £25 voucher for a free home composter.
- (c) That the Head of Waste Services be authorised to work with the Head of Legal Services to finalise and approve the draft Garden Waste Service terms and conditions.

(Councillor C A Vinson declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in the Garden Waste Containerisation Project as a subscriber to the scheme and withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of this item of business.)

(Councillor H M Williams declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in the Garden Waste Containerisation Project as a subscriber to the scheme and withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of this item of business.)

(Councillor L M Wright declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in the Garden Waste Containerisation Project as a subscriber to the scheme and withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of this item of business.)

(Councillor M Bates declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in the Garden Waste Containerisation Project as a subscriber to the scheme and withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of this item of business.)

(Councillor D R Friend declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in the Garden Waste Containerisation Project as a subscriber to the scheme and withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of this item of business.)

## 46 FASTTRACK UPDATE

The Head of Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside presented the Fasttrack Update to Members.



It was stated that the work on the road bridge had progressed well and 90% of the retaining walls had been completed. The purchase of the land for the link road had completed in April and construction work was expected to complete in January or February 2024 with the service starting later than year.

In response to a question from Councillor C A Vinson it was stated that the road to Guston was nearly complete, but it would not be opened until the overall Fasttrack route was completed.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to the Dover Joint Transportation Advisory Board that the proposed Fasttrack timetable and publicity to support the service be considered at a future meeting of the Board.

47 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor C A Vinson, duly seconded by Councillor M J Nee 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.

48 FASTTRACK UPDATE

Following the exclusion of the press and public, Members discussed the financial and contractual details relating to the Fasttrack.

49 REGENERATION UPDATE

The Head of Place and Growth provided Members with an update on the regeneration projects in the district.

The meeting ended at 9.02 pm.