

Minutes of the meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 11 March 2024 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor C A Vinson

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

Also Present: Councillor K Mills (Leader of the Council)
Councillor C D Zosseder (Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property)
Detective Chief Inspector Keith Taylor (Kent Police)
Detective Inspector Leigh Woolnough (Kent Police)

Officers: Strategic Director (Finance and Housing)
Strategic Director (Place and Environment)
Head of Housing
Head of Property Assets
Community Development Manager
Community Safety and Resilience Manager
Community Development and Safety Team Leader
Head of Corporate Services and Democracy

102 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor H M Williams.

103 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillor J P Loffman had been appointed as substitute member for Councillor H M Williams.

104 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

105 MINUTES

The consideration of the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2024 was deferred to the next meeting.

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

There were no decisions for consideration.

107 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.

108 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.

109 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

Members received the following updates:

- NHS Kent and Medway Phlebotomy Services – to update the committee on the response received in respect of the tender for the Deal Hospital based service.
- NHS Kent and Medway Dentistry Services – To ask Members to provide their key questions prior to the end of the next week.
- Taxis – To seek clarification on the scope of the scrutiny in respect of taxis.

The Chairman advised that the scope of the taxi scrutiny would be (a) to follow up on the issue of accessible hackney carriage licenses; (b) provision of hackney and private hire across the district; and (c) to examine whether hackney carriage licenses should be delimited.

Members discussed the merits of the scrutiny on taxis based on the scope set out by the Chairman.

It was moved by Councillor S B Blair, duly seconded by Councillor M J Nee, that the scrutiny of taxis be removed from the work programme.

On being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED: That the scrutiny of taxis be removed from the work programme.

110 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.

111 CRIME AND DISORDER UPDATE

The members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee, received a Crime and Disorder Update. The Committee welcomed the following:

- Community Safety and Resilience Manager (Dover District Council)
- Community Development Manager (Dover District Council)
- Detective Chief Inspector Keith Taylor (Kent Police)
- Detective Inspector Leigh Woolnough (Kent Police)

The presentation covered the following points:

Kent Police

- Community Safety Partnership. The three priorities that formed its focus for 2023-2027 were as followed:
 - (i) Safeguarding (Adults, Young People and Children)
 - (ii) Serious Violence
 - (iii) People and Places
- Kent Police's Kent Control Strategy which was focussed on the following key areas while still maintaining a child centred policing approach and a focus on violence against women and girls:
 - (i) Exploitation
 - (ii) High Harm Crime
 - (iii) Serious Violence and Abuse
- The new structure for Kent Police in the Dover District that had been established in September 2023 and, whilst some elements were still not quite fully established, was progressing well. The new structure reduced the demand on keeping officers at the station and enabled great public visibility and ability to respond. It enabled greater ability to be proactive and more time to provide a quality service at the initial point of contact which improved the likelihood of subsequent outcomes. It also motivated officers who were enjoying their 'specialism'.
- The Victim Based Crime Team (VBCT) function provided specialist investigative resources, positive investigative mindset and investigative habits and an ability to focus towards problematic individuals and locations.
- The Community Safety Unit (CSU) provided the ability to flex resources to focus on specific issues and a greater ability to be proactive. The CSU worked closely with other partner agencies such as social services, homeless charities, mental health charities and victim support.
- Overall crime was down 5.7% year-on-year in the Dover District, which was 582 fewer recorded offences.
- All crimes with suspects and suspect arrest/interviewed were up and arrest rates were 2% up year-on-year.
- Violent crime (includes VAP, Homicide, Death or serious injury through unlawful driving, violence with injury, violence without injury, stalking and

harassment and MSV, Sexual offences and Robbery) was down 8.6% year-on-year. There was also a decrease in recorded hate crime.

- All crimes with solved outcomes were up 2.6% year-on-year.
- The majority of Anti-Social Behaviour related to drunken/rowdy behaviour, neighbour disputers and nuisance motor vehicles on roads. This information helps to identify where to focus attention and results in activity such as Operation Nebula, Additional GRIP patrolling and partnership approaches to neighbourhood issues and disputes.

Community Safety, Emergency Planning and CCTV

- Members received an update on the activity of the CCTV service which has recorded 3923 incidents across the district since 1 April 2023. The police had attended in 1850 cases and 327 arrests had been made. The service had also received 741 thanks. The main incidents were as followed:
 - (i) Nuisance Youths – 343
 - (ii) Missing Persons – 307
 - (iii) Shoplifting – 260
 - (iv) Other – 255
 - (v) Disturbance - 249
- The Out of Hours Service since moving in-house had received 905 total calls. The top five calls related to Homelessness (18.01%); Central Heating (12.71%); Other (10.94%); Noise (9.95%) and Plumbing (8.62%).
- The Community Safety team had opened 276 Anti-Social Behaviour cases since January 2023. The M3/Tascomi migration had completed in January 2024.
- The Beehive Project located in the old Roman Quay building, Stembrook had officially launched on the 11 November 2023. The project would contain a second-hand clothes shop and café and would provide individuals with any additional support they required.

Community Development

- Community Development worked closely with Community Safety to ensure that the most vulnerable residents in the district are supported. There were a number of innovative projects (Inspire to Change, Youth Conference, to combat issues such as Anti-Social Behaviour, social isolation, and community tension.
- The Household Support Fund provided £1 million of support over 3 tranches to the most vulnerable residents with support for fuel and food poverty.

Members raised the following points:

- To discuss the deployment of CCTV resources in the district.
- To enquire as to the progress in respect of nuisance vehicles.
- To enquire as to the progress in assigning a named police contact for each ward. Members were advised that 9 were in post currently with 3 places to fill.

The Chairman thanked the representatives of Kent Police and DDC officers for providing the update on crime and disorder.

112 EKS SERVICE TRANSITION BUSINESS CASE

The Strategic Director (Finance and Housing) presented the report on the EKS Service Transition Business Case.

Members were advised that there were three options in respect of the transition of services from the current Civica contract. These were as followed:

- (a) To form a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo)
- (b) To find an alternative outsourcing company
- (c) To bring the service back in-house

The LATCo option was the preferred option for the three partner authorities (Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council and Thanet District Council) as the market was not competitive for outsourcing and this was the option agreed by the Cabinet. The governance and other arrangements were in the process of being developed through a number of workstreams that had been set-up. Lessons learnt from experiences such as with East Kent Housing would be built upon.

Members discussed the following points:

- Whether there was buy-in from staff for the changes and what communication had been had with them. In response it was stated that informally, it was felt that staff were broadly neutral or supported the LATCo approach.
- How the project management would be conducted. In response it was stated that the multiple project workstreams would deal with different tasks.
- What would happen if the Council was not satisfied with the LATCo and wanted to bring the service in-house in the future. In response it was stated that the service could still be brought in-house at a future date if that was the decision of the Council.
- How Member oversight of the LATCo would be enabled to ensure that accountability was maintained.

It was agreed to note the report by the affirmation of the meeting.

113 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD - THIRD QUARTER 2023/24

The members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Strategic Performance Dashboard – 3rd Quarter 2023/24.

Members discussed the following points:

- The average days to relet empty properties. Members were advised that there was a high volume of voids requiring substantial works before they were suitable for reletting. There were also several long-term voids that had been completed during the quarter, and this was reflected in the length of time taken to complete properties with major works. The figures had also been affected by delays with allocations. Officers advised that processes were being reviewed to see if the re-let time could be reduced and that there was closer working between housing teams. It was expected that the figures would start to show an improvement from Quarter 1, 2024/25. Councillor M J Nee asked for a flow chart to show the re-let process and was advised that this was already being work on and would be shared when completed.
- To recognise the good work of the new homelessness prevention officer.
- The financial performance of the Kearsney Park Café. Members were advised that it was improving, and that the venue was seeking to establish itself within the wedding market.
- The number of visits to the leisure centres (LS001: Number of Leisure Centre Visits (Dover District Leisure Centre and Tides and Tennis Centre)). Members were advised that visits to the Dover District Leisure Centre were now above pre-covid levels.
- The on-going reduction in the level of household residual waste (WAS010: Residual household waste per household) in the district. Members were advised that the district had some of the lowest levels in Kent.
- Whether there was a national uniformity in bin colour coding. Members were advised that the Council was consistent with the national model having chosen the right colours in 2011.
- To question whether Veolia had missed contractual targets in respect of street cleansing. Members were advised that indicator WAS012 (Environmental cleanliness: Percentage of streets containing litter) was not a contractual target.
- To ask if an indicator showing the housing developments in the pipeline could be included for the future. Members were advised that such an indicator would show trends as it would be a snapshot of a given date due to the situation with developers often changing on a daily basis. However, it would be possible to do.
- To welcome the reduction in tenant arrears. Members were advised that this would show a temporary worsening performance for Quarter 4 due to the IT issues that affected the Council during that time.

Members were advised that if they wished to discuss the IT issues further that they would need to exclude the press and public from proceedings.

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.

Members discussed the IT issues that had affected the Council.

RESOLVED: That an item on IT Security and the recent issues be added to the work programme.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm.