

Minutes of the meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 15 July 2024 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor T J Bartlett

Councillors: S H Beer
D R Friend
S Hill
R M Knight (as substitute for Councillor M Bates)
J P Loffman
M J Nee
D J Parks
M W Rose
L M Wright

Also Present: Councillor S B Blair
Doug Bannister, Chief Executive Port of Dover
Andy Jeffrey, Head of Resilience & Emergency Planning, Kent County Council and Chair, KMRF EES Tactical Planning Group
Toby Howe – Strategic Resilience Manager, Highways & Transportation, Kent County Council

Officers: Strategic Director (Corporate and Regulatory)
Strategic Director (Finance and Housing)
Strategic Director (Place and Environment)
Head of Housing
Community Safety and Resilience Manager
Technology Lead
Head of Corporate Services and Democracy

17 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M Bates.

18 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillor R M Knight had been appointed as substitute member for Councillor M Bates.

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2024 were approved as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

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

There were no decisions to note.

22 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.

23 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: (a) That the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions be noted.

24 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

Members requested that cyber security be identified for inclusion in the work programme.

A discussion was held in respect of changing the gap between Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings and the Head of Corporate Services and Democracy was requested to bring forward proposals for new dates to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted, subject to the inclusion of an item on cybersecurity.

25 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.

26 EUROPEAN ENTRY/EXIT SYSTEM (EES) ARRANGEMENTS AND SUMMER TRAVEL PREPARATION AT THE PORT OF DOVER

gttttThe Chairman welcomed the following attendees to discuss the arrangements for the European Entry and Exit System (EES) and preparation for summer travel at the Port of Dover:

- Andy Jeffrey - Head of Resilience & Emergency Planning, Kent County Council and Chair, KMRF EES Tactical Planning Group
- Toby Howe – Strategic Resilience Manager, Highways & Transportation, Kent County Council
- Doug Bannister – Chief Executive, Port of Dover

The Committee was given a presentation that covered the following points:

- That the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF) had been planning for the impact of EES since the end of 2023. Kent County Council was the lead agency working with National Highways, Port of Dover and Eurotunnel.
- partners are reviewing their business continuity plans, updating their internal That KMRF partners were reviewing their business continuity plans, updating their internal response plans, and ensuring they had sufficient competent staff to respond.
- That implementation of EES was originally expected to be implemented from 6 October 2024, although this had not been confirmed and there might be some slight slippage in the date.
- A bespoke communication plan was being developed by KMRF to keep the public, businesses, road users and key stakeholders informed.
- EES would primarily impact non-freight traffic. However, most KMRF capabilities were based around freight, although some of it would be adaptable to non-freight traffic. It was emphasised that there was currently a lack of legislation relating to passenger traffic as opposed to HGV traffic which could hinder measures to keep traffic in Dover moving.
- The KMRF was finalising plans and capabilities and was looking to agree strategic intentions and tolerable levels of disruption.
- A number of issues would be escalated to the government including access for all KMRF partners to all relevant information and modelling; funding and planning decisions in respect of off-highway sites; agreeing funding for KMRF costs in respect of EES planning and response; concerns over issues with proposed technological solutions for the Port of Dover and liaison with the European Union and Police aux Frontieres.
- Exercise Bute would be held on 4 September 2024.
- That Operation Brock could hold up to 2,000 HGV's and could be a pressure valve to stop gridlock in Dover and Folkestone.
- That Dover TAP could hold traffic outside of Dover to prevent the town from becoming gridlocked.
- That Brock and TAP had a degree of fragility which could mean that any incidents could have a significant impact on Dover.
- That compliance with and enforcement of any arrangements would be key to avoiding gridlock in Dover. This included junction management and there would be potential for the use of private companies to help the Police with this.
- Trials of a permit system had been undertaken, requiring any HGV without a permit to return to the back of the queue.
- That the KMRF Community Impact Group was jointly chaired by Dover District Council and Folkestone and Hythe District Council. It would be made clear to the public and local businesses what could and could not be done but drivers would need to prepare for delays.
- That the infrastructure at the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel needed investment to deal with EES.

In respect of the Port of Dover, Members were advised:

- That outbound controls would create holding capacity in the Port equivalent to TAP and this would help keep Dover moving.
- That the Port needed the £45 million of funding from the government which it would match.
- That the Port of Dover had been working on EES since 2018 and had attended meetings in the European Union on it.

- That EES was a UK passport holder issue not a Dover issue.
- That as part of Phase 1 of the Port's plans, construction at the Old Boat Yard site had created space for coaches to be processed. It was expected that once a coach had been checked it would be sealed and would be able to proceed straight to the ferry. It was not possible for cars to be sealed in the same way.
- The Port of Dover would be able to process 420 cars per hour. However, 600 cars per hour would be arriving in the Summer peak. There will be triage arrangements needed to deal with the difference between the number of cars that could be processed per hour and the number arriving. Work was being done to model traffic flows.
- In Phase 2 of the Port's plans, new land at Catherine Dock's would raise the capacity for processing cars to 600 per hour.
- There were a number of technological challenges that could impact on how quickly vehicles could be processed.
- The importance of real time updates for people heading to the Port.
- The importance of the remaining part of the A2 being dualled.
- The feedback from last summer was that the traffic was busy but okay.

Members raised the following points:

- To confirm that KMRF was meeting with the government in respect of this matter. Members were advised that meetings were being held with government.
- To express concern over the impact of EES on the people of Aycliffe.
- To question whether enough was being done to bring the impact of EES to the attention of the public.
- To raise concerns over the impact of EES on the Whitfield Roundabout.
- To support moves to get pre-registration of passenger traffic in place. It was suggested that Sevington could be used to hold traffic. In response, Members were advised that although there was space for 600 vehicles it was located on the wrong side of the motorway.
- To question what the impact of EES would be on the three major NHS Hospitals in East Kent.
- To ask if the results of Exercise Bute would be shared. In response Members were advised that the results would be shared with Dover District Council.
- To ask if the EES checks could be charged for. In response it was stated that they were a European Union matter and applied to all the European Union's external borders.
- To express support for the dualling of the A2. However, it was noted that this was not in the current road plans.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and welcomed the offer from the Port of Dover to attend a future meeting to update Members on progress. He emphasised that the Committee did not want to see Dover gridlocked as a result of EES.

The Head of Corporate Services and Democracy presented the Revised Complaints Policy. Members were advised that the Policy had been considered by the Cabinet

at its meeting held on 8 July 2024 and would be considered by the Council at its meeting to be held on 17 July 2024.

The Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman have introduced a new Joint Complaint Handling Code for local authorities to use as the basis for their complaints policy. The current DDC Complaints Policy was compliant in all key areas of operation with the Joint Complaint Handling Codes. The Council operated the required two stage complaints process and had arrangements in place for dealing with service requests. However, the structure of the Council's current Complaints Policy and in places some of the language used was different from that set out in the Joint Complaint Handling Code. Accordingly, to ensure that there would be no doubt about compliance with the Joint Complaint Handling Code, a revised Complaints Policy had been developed.

It was agreed to note the report.

28 FIRST HOMES POLICY 2024

The Head of Housing presented the First Homes Policy 2024 report.

Members were advised that the Council has an established policy for First Homes which was approved by Cabinet in 2022. This set out how the Council would manage its administrative and governance duties. However, the Policy needed to be reviewed and updated on a two-year basis and the government had recently published 'Local Authority Guidance Notes' which updated the scheme, eligibility and qualifying criteria and provided for a better understanding of the administrative and governance duties and responsibilities expected of local authorities.

It was agreed to note the report.

29 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Technology Lead presented the report on procuring and implementing a Customer Relationship Management System. Members were advised that the project was at an early stage.

Members welcomed the proposals and were reassured that the system would not have any adverse impact on residents who were digitally excluded.

It was agreed to note the report.

30 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor L M Wright, 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.

31 UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE 8 FLATS AT MILITARY ROAD, DOVER

Members considered the report of the Head of Housing in respect of the Update on Development to Provide 8 Flats at Military Road, Dover.

It was agreed to note the report.

32 PURCHASE OF NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT WALLERS FIELD, DEAL

Members received the report of the Head of Housing on the Purchase of New Affordable Housing at Wallers Field, Deal.

It was agreed to note the report.

The meeting ended at 7.46 pm.