

Minutes of the meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 14 October 2024 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor T J Bartlett

Councillors: M Bates
S H Beer
D R Friend
S Hill
J P Loffman
M J Nee
L M Wright

Also Present: Councillor K Mills, Leader of the Council

Officers: Strategic Director (Finance and Housing)
Strategic Director (Place and Environment)
Head of Planning and Development
Head of Property Assets
Transport and Parking Services Manager
Principal Planned Works Officer
Planning Policy and Projects Manager
Head of Corporate Services and Democracy

50 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D J Parks and M W Rose.

51 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members appointed.

52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor T J Bartlett declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in Minute No. 59 (Adoption of Dover District Local Plan 2020-40) by reason of his having land holdings within the proposed Local Plan and indicated that he would withdraw from the meeting for the consideration of that item of business.

Councillor D R Friend made a Voluntary Declaration of Other Interests (VAOI) in Minute No. 59 (Adoption of Dover District Local Plan 2020-40) by reason of comments he had made previously in respect of the inclusion of Archers Low Farm. He advised that he maintained an open mind in relation to its determination.

Councillor D R Friend declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in Minute No.55 (Issues referred to the Committee by Public Petition, Council, Cabinet, or another Committee) on the grounds that he was involved in the petition in respect of car parking charges and indicated that he would withdraw from the meeting for the consideration of that item of business.

53 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

The decisions of the Cabinet relating to recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 7 October 2024 were welcomed and noted.

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

The Head of Corporate Services and Democracy advised that there were two public petitions referred to the Committee.

(a) Public Petition: "Retention of our green space in front of Sandown Castle, Deal CT14 6QU"

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Eyvor Fogarty to present the petition which had received 418 valid signatures.

The Petition asked the Council to:

"The title of this public land is registered to our Dover District Council. - [] 97 square metres of this public grassland could be transferred from public to private land. The aim is to retain this area as an open green space. North Deal is deprived in terms of the living environment. At 3.8 square metres, it is well under the national average of 30 square metres per person. We need to retain this public green space as an integral part of the limited green space available to North Deal."

In addressing Members, Mrs Fogarty raised the following points:

- The lack of publicly accessible open green space in North Deal and concerns that the sale or lease of the land would reduce this.
- That the area was part of the heartland of Deal and had decades of community use (Deal Pirates was cited as an example)..
- That the site was a good fit for the Council's green infrastructure strategy.
- That Hog and Bean currently provided refreshments close by to the land.
- To point out that the land had been transferred to the Council over 40 years ago but to note that it wasn't on the land register.
- To state that Historic England had advised that Sandown Castle was a scheduled ancient monument. The land in question was part of a filled in moat and that Historic England advised against building on filled in moats.
- That any building on the land would obscure the castle fortifications and one of the best views of the community gardens.
- The need to rely on local democratic processes to prevent the sale or lease of the land and to urge the Council to retain it for public use.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Fogarty for presenting her petition and invited Members to discuss the petition.

Members agreed that the site was an important asset to the local community in a densely populated area lacking publicly accessible green spaces.

RESOLVED: That the petition be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

(b) Public Petition: "1 Hour Free Parking for Dover District Council Car Parks"

The Chairman welcomed Harry Sampson to present the petition on behalf of Councillor D R Friend. The petition had received 686 valid signatures.

The Petition asked the Council to:

"We the undersigned petition the council to consider implementing a policy to offer 1 hour of free parking in all Council-owned car parks. We believe that this initiative will encourage more residents and visitors to frequent local businesses, thereby stimulating our local economy and fostering a vibrant community atmosphere. By reducing the financial burden of parking, we can make our town centres more accessible and appealing to everyone, ultimately benefiting local businesses and the community as a whole. Thank you for considering our request. Sincerely, The Undersigned

Offering 1 hour of free parking in Council-owned car parks can have a significant positive impact on our local economy. It would make shopping locally a more attractive option, drawing more customers to our high streets and supporting small businesses. This increased footfall can lead to higher sales volumes, boosting business revenues and potentially leading to job creation. Furthermore, it can enhance the vibrancy and vitality of our town centres, making them more enjoyable places to visit and live near. This initiative could also reduce congestion and pollution in our town centres as people may be less inclined to drive further afield for their shopping needs. Overall, this simple change could bring substantial benefits to our community."

In addressing Members, Mr Sampson raised the following points:

- That the petition supported local businesses and would boost the local economy.
- That it would provide a wider social benefit by making the town centres more accessible by being free to visit.
- That shoppers staying local would reduce traffic congestion.
- That the petition did not ask for all parking to be free but instead offered a fiscally responsible alternative.
- That there was strong public and business support for the proposals.
- To ask that it be referred to Cabinet for inclusion in the parking strategy review.

The Chairman thanked Mr Sampson for presenting the petition and invited Members to discuss it.

Members raised concerns that the proposals were uncostered and that there was a lack of evidence concerning its impact.

RESOLVED: That officers be requested to consider these proposals as part of the parking strategy review.

(Councillor D R Friend declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in Minute No.55 (Issues referred to the Committee by Public Petition, Council, Cabinet, or another

Committee) on the grounds that he was involved in the organisation of the petition and withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of this item of business.)

56 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.

57 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

Members were advised that a report on Fasttrack was expected to go the Dover Joint Transportation Advisory Board in December 2024.

The scrutiny of the clean rivers and seas programme of Southern Waste for provisionally scheduled for the December 2024 meeting of the Committee. The Head of Corporate Services and Democracy advised that in addition to Southern Waste a number of other agencies were being contacted to see if they could attend.

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

- Blood Services at Deal Hospital (for January or February 2025)
- Infrastructure Funding Statement (Spring 2025)

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted, subject to the inclusion of an item on the Infrastructure Finding Statement and Blood Services at Deal Hospital.

58 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.

59 ADOPTION OF DOVER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2020-40

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the Committee was asked to elect a Chairman for the duration of this item of business.

It was proposed by Councillor M J Nee, duly seconded by Councillor S H Beer and

RESOLVED: That Councillor M Bates be elected Chairman for the duration of this item of business.

The Planning Policy and Projects Manager presented the report on the Adoption of the Dover District Local Plan 2020 – 40.

Councillor M J Nee questioned why the report was being scrutinised at the meeting and proposed that the Committee accept the report and thank officers for their work.

In respect to a question from Councillor M Bates about new housing targets, Members were advised that these were currently only being consulted on so there was nothing to adopt. Analysis by officers suggested that the impact of any changes would be under 200 additional dwellings which meant that the Local Plan would be for at least the next five years.

RESOLVED: That the report be accepted and that officers be thanked for their work in producing the Local Plan.

(Councillor T J Bartlett declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) by reason of his having land holdings within the proposed Local Plan and withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of this item of business.)

60 INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2023/24

Councillor T J Bartlett resumed the Chair at the start of this item of business.

Members welcomed the report and noted that it had already been agreed that a future scrutiny meeting would consider the matter in greater depth.

RESOLVED: That Members accept the report.

61 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor S H Beer, duly seconded by Councillor L M Wright 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.

62 AWARD OF RESPONSIVE MAINTENANCE AND VOIDS CONTRACT 2025-30

The Head of Property Assets presented the report to Members.

Members discussed the award of the Responsive Maintenance and Voids Contract 2025-30.

The meeting ended at 7.06 pm.