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Minutes of the meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 24 January 2022 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor C D Zosseder

Councillors: T A Bond
P M Brivio
D R Friend
D A Hawkes
M Rose
R S Walkden
P Walker
H M Williams

Also Present: Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property, Councillor O C de R Richardson
Inspector Paul Barrell, Dover District Police CSU lead
Karen Beckley (Regional Director – Mears)
Mark Lindop (General Manager – Mears)

Officers: Strategic Director (Corporate Resources)
Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)
Head of Assets and Building Control
Head of Commercial Services
Head of Community and Digital Services
Community Services Manager
Asset Manager
Democratic and Corporate Services Manager

92 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S C Manion.

93 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Democratic and Corporate Services Manager advised that no notice had been received for the appointment of substitute members.

94 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

95 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2021 and 29 November 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

The Cabinet at its meeting held on 17 January 2022 did not consider any recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

97 ISSUES REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY COUNCIL, CABINET, OR ANOTHER COMMITTEE

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

98 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

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

There being no dissent indicated, it was agreed that the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions be noted.

99 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

Councillor T A Bond requested that the item relating to Blood Tests at Deal Hospital be prioritised in the work programme. The Democratic and Corporate Services Manager advised that she would contact the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group to discuss a date for when it could send representatives to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

There being no dissent indicated, it was agreed that the Work Programme be noted.

100 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.

101 CRIME AND DISORDER UPDATE

The Head of Community and Digital Services presented the Crime and Disorder updated in conjunction with the Community Services Manager and Inspector Paul Barrell, Dover District Police CSU lead.

The presentation covered the following points:

- The work of the Community Services team
 - Work to support the local voluntary sector groups who provided food support across the district
 - Supporting the voluntary sector with grants and advice
 - Represented on East Kent Food Poverty Action Group (councils) and the East Kent Food Alliance (voluntary sector)
- The work of the Community Safety Unit
 - Latest Dover Crime Figures
 - Members were advised that the Dover District had the 2nd lowest reported crime rates by volume in East Kent and the district was consistently one of the highest performing districts in Kent for solving crime and delivering positive outcomes for victims.

- In terms of specific crimes, burglary was down 22%, serious violent crime was down 9% and weapon offences were down 2% compared to the previous year. The robbery rate was the lowest in East Kent.
 - Areas of Continued Focus
 - Domestic Abuse - encouraging reporting of domestic abuse, improving safeguarding, improving post-incident support and increasing victim 'buy in' for positive Criminal Justice outcomes.
 - Violence against women and girls - ensuring that the Dover District nighttime economy was a safe place for females to work and socialize.
 - Safer Winter Plan
 - Operation GRIP funding from the Home Office had secured more than 300 hours of extra high visibility police patrolling in the district.
- CCTV/Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
 - Members were advised that a full digital upgrade of the CCTV provision had been undertaken and CCTV had 61 new fixed cameras, 5 ANPR cameras and additional fully integrated rapid deployment cameras.
 - Port of Dover cameras were integrated with the CCTV system
 - The new multi-purpose Emergency Centre had been utilized regularly
 - Dedicated 24/7 phone line for ASB reporting
 - The Top 3 reported ASB incidents for 2021 were domestic noise; drugs and acts (other).
 - There were 287 safeguarding incidents between 1 April – 31 December 2021
 - Household Support Fund
 - The Council had issued grants of £171,826 to local voluntary sector groups to support households with essentials over the winter. This had included Foodbanks, Age Concern, Citizens Advice Bureau and support for rough sleepers in severe weather
 - Inspire / Inspire Families
 - Inspire is a project to provide funding to enable children aged 5 – 16 years of age to create new friendships, introduce them to healthy lifestyles and open new doors into work with opportunities to learn new skills through activities such as sports and arts and crafts.
 - Inspire Families is a family-based package designed to improve the wellbeing of the family unit by enabling families to take part in activities that would normally be unattainable due to financial or personal circumstances.
 - Acquire
 - An externally funded project for 1 year to improve employment outcomes and prospects for future employment targeted at district residents who had been unemployed or facing barriers to work.
 - Aspire
 - A free programme to support people in improving their health and wellbeing and access work through increased skills. It was based at Bechange in Aylesham and was open to anyone over 18 years of age who was either unemployed or in temporary insecure work

- My Community Voice
 - This was a messaging service that assisted residents, businesses, and community groups in keeping in touch with their local policing teams.

Members discussed the My Community Voice service and ward ASB and crime concerns.

Councillor C D Zosseder advised the Committee that the next Crime and Disorder Update would be held as a single item agenda.

102 RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

The Head of Assets and Building Control provided an update on the issue of responsive repairs in respect of the council housing stock.

Members were introduced to Karen Beckley (Regional Director) and Mark Lindop (General Manager) of Mears who were in attendance to provide a presentation on the works undertaken by Mears on behalf of the Council.

The key points covered in the presentation were as followed:

- That the structure of Mears had been aligned with that of East Kent Housing and not Dover District Council and steps were being taken to respond to the new arrangements.
- Mears acknowledged that performance had decreased over the last two years and that a new management model had been introduced to better align with the current demands of the service.
- That Mears had experienced high levels of staff sickness
- That there had been issues with staff recruitment and retention
- That there had been unpredictable fluctuations in service demand
- An improvement plan had been put into effect in October 2021 which had seen an increase in salaries and conditions to attract and retain staff; an increase the size of the call centre team to meet demand and reduce call waiting time; an interface with the Council's IT system to enable the council to monitor performance better, including weekly performance metrics; changes in working arrangements to increase productivity; and an increase in operatives on the repairs contract to reduce the time taken to complete works. The backlog of works would be cleared using additional internal resources from February 2022.
- Customer satisfaction surveys would be designed in conjunction with DDC residents.
- 'MCM Live' would be launched that would give tenants the ability to track operative attendance and interact with the operative via messaging. This would include the ability to reschedule appointments digitally.

Members welcomed the proposals to improve the responsive repairs service by Mears and discussed the best method for contacting Mears to escalate cases raised by constituents.

103 PERFORMANCE REPORT - SECOND QUARTER 2021/22

Members were presented with the Performance Report for Quarter 2, 2021/22.

The red performance indicators were as followed:

- HOM18 (Average days to re-let empty properties (from tenancy termination to new tenancy start date) including time spent on major works)
- MUS002 (The number of visits to the museum in person per 1,000 population)
- WAS003 (Number of collections missed per 100,000 collections of household waste)
- WAS010 (Residual household waste per household (kg/hh))

Members considered the following points:

- The impact of historical performance from East Kent Housing in respect of several indicators and the work being undertaken by officers to improve the service performance.
- The impact of covid and other factors on the supply chain.
- The impact of WISE on the figures for litter and dog fouling enforcement action during their time working with the Council.

104 THE GREENING OF URBAN DOVER

The Head of Commercial Services advised that there were a number of challenges in respect of plans for the greening of urban Dover and identified some key areas that needed to be addressed.

An update would be brought to the committee in the future when these challenges had been addressed.

105 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor D R Friend, duly seconded by Councillor P Walker 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.

106 AWARD OF 3-YEAR CONTRACT FOR CLEANING AND ROUTINE MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AND LOCKING/UNLOCKING OF OTHER COUNCIL ASSETS

The Head of Assets and Building Control presented the report on the Award of a 3 Year Contract for Cleaning and Routine Maintenance of Public Conveniences and the Locking/Unlocking of Other Council Assets.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property, Councillor O C de R Richardson was also in attendance to answer questions from Members in respect of the report.

There being no dissent indicated, it was agreed that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.42 pm.