

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **25th October 2016**.

Present:

Cllr. Chilton (Chairman)

Cllr. Michael (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Burgess, Feacey, Hicks, Krause, Mrs. Martin.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Aaby, Link.

Also Present:

Cllr. Smith.

Policy & Performance Manager, Senior Policy, Performance & Scrutiny Officer, Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer, Member Services Officer.

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Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 27th September 2016 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

180 Anti-Social Behaviour – Scoping Report

The Chairman explained that the scoping report had been produced in response to a letter from the Brisley Court Neighbourhood Watch, requesting an O&S review into Anti-Social Behaviour. The Senior Policy, Performance & Scrutiny Officer went on to describe that the focus of the scoping report was on the role that alleyways, footpaths, and their lighting play in Anti-Social Behaviour. The following questions/comments were then raised by the Committee: -

- A Member asked whether recommendations for the role and type of footpaths and lighting included in future housing developments in Ashford could be given to the Planning Department. The Senior Policy, Performance & Scrutiny Officer advised that KCC oversaw most footpaths and lighting in the Borough, but that the Committee could make recommendations to KCC and ABC Planning Departments.
- A Member said that she felt that the Committee should request a robust

response from KCC, particularly around street lighting. It was also suggested that the Police should be more involved as the definition of Anti-Social Behaviour covered many different types of activities within official Police statistics, and they were consultees on the planning applications.

- A point was raised that larger housing estates do require some form of footpath to offer connectivity to walkers and cyclists.
- Members agreed that the topic was of great importance and should be reviewed, but questioned whether it was for the O&S Committee to scrutinise Anti-Social Behaviour itself, or whether the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) should be asked to formulate a response that could be presented with their annual report to O&S. The Chairman agreed that this was a feasible alternative but reminded Members of the importance of raising the profile of the O&S Committee.
- It was noted that the process of closing an alleyway or footpath required High Court action and could be very costly.

The Committee agreed that the letter be passed to the CSP and they be asked to conduct the requested review on Anti-Social Behaviour.

The Chairman volunteered to formulate and send a response to the letter from Brisley Court Neighbourhood Watch.

Resolved:

That

- (i) the Committee ask the CSP to review Anti-Social Behaviour linked to crime in the Borough, with a focus on the role of alleyways, footpaths, and their lighting.**
- (ii) the findings from such a review be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in early 2017.**

181 Adoption of Private Sewers and Pumping Stations

Sarah Feasey and Paul Kent from Southern Water attended the meeting and gave a presentation to the Committee, which covered the following: - Change of responsibility from 1st October 2016; What was transferable; How the adoption was publicised; Statistics for the Ashford area and Activities on Adoption. The following questions/comments were then put forward by the Committee: -

- A Member asked if it would be possible to have a list detailing the ABC owned pumping stations and the small number that were exempt from transfer. Paul Kent advised that he would e-mail the information across. The reasons for exemption included when the pumping station served only one property, did not sit outside the property boundary or did not flow into a public sewer.

- A Member spoke about the odour around Little Burton Farm and if there were any methods to eradicate the smell, other than chemical treatment. Paul Kent advised that chemical treatment was the preferred method, as opposed to wind turbines that allowed more of the odour into the atmosphere. He emphasised the importance of residents communicating any odour problems to them as soon as possible, so that investigations could be undertaken immediately. Paul also confirmed that the sewage plant was currently operating with spare capacity, and that an operational team (committed to growth forecasting) was in place at Southern Water.
- A question was raised asking for an explanation of Section 102 of the Water Industry Act 1991, in relation to restrictions on transfer. Paul Kent explained that the main principles when assessing eligibility included looking at the condition of the pump and advising customers on what repairs might be necessary. They would be reluctant to take on a pump that was sub-standard and would be costly further down the line. Paul advised that he would circulate more in-depth information to the Member by e-mail.

Resolved:

That no further information or clarification was required, other than the information that Paul Kent would circulate to Members via e-mail.

182 Budget Scrutiny Task Group

The Chairman informed the Committee that the membership of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group was complete and the dates for meetings confirmed. He reminded the Committee that all Members were welcome to attend the Budget Scrutiny Meetings.

183 Future Reviews and Report Tracker

The Chairman introduced the item and invited the Committee to discuss what topics they would like to select for future reviews. The following questions/comments were then put forward by the Committee: -

- The Senior Policy, Performance & Scrutiny Officer explained that Drug Use in Ashford was one of the CSP's priorities (under Substance Misuse), and would therefore be included in their annual report, which would be presented to O&S in February next year.
- A Member suggested the topic of Education be split into age categories and for O&S to review Early Years Education, since this would also be an area they were in a position to be able to have some influence over. Members agreed and discussed the problems facing Early Years practitioners including restricted funding and the lack of appropriate facilities.
- A Member advised that he had recently attended an information session presented by David Adams, the Area Education Officer, and the session had been very useful. Members agreed that it would be beneficial for the

Committee to be given an overview since there was a lack of knowledge in the Council regarding education provision around the Borough.

- A second topic discussed by Members was Developing Infrastructure to support Ashford's growth. It was agreed that the Committee would need to engage with KCC, Highways England and other agencies including Southern Water and South East Water to request their growth forecast data and future plans for the Borough's infrastructure. It was suggested that a KCC representative be invited to future meetings.
- A Member spoke about air quality and pollution in Ashford and the lack of monitoring stations and it was agreed that this could be another topic for future consideration.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) Drug Use would not be reviewed by the Committee at this time, but might be considered as a future review topic following the CSP's annual report in February 2017.**
 - (ii) on Education Provision, David Adams would be invited to attend a future Committee to advise on Ashford's overall education provision, with a view to the Committee scoping and considering a more detailed review in light of this information.**
 - (iii) on Developing Infrastructure, Officers be asked to provide a full scoping report to the next Committee.**

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Clare Ricketts:
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