

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held in Committee Rooms 1 and 2, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **9th November 2021**.

Present:

Cllr. Ovenden (Chairman);

Cllrs. Burgess, Farrell, Howard-Smith, Krause, Ledger, Mulholland.

Apology:

Cllr. Meadon

Also Present:

Cllrs. Blanford, Chilton, Feacey, Hayward, Harman, Wright (remotely).

In attendance:

Spatial Planning Manager, Compliance and Data Protection Manager, Head of Corporate Policy, ED & Comms, Policy and Scrutiny Officer, Member Services Officer.

174 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 12th October 2021 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

175 S106 Task Group Final Report

The Policy and Scrutiny Officer introduced the report, which provided a summary of the Task Group meetings and outlined the key findings. There were a total of eight recommendations that the Committee were asked to approve to be submitted to Cabinet.

The Chairman thanked all the Officers and Members involved in the Task Group for their efforts.

The presentation was then opened up to the Committee and the following questions and points were raised: -

- It was confirmed that the deadline for Parish Councils to return the questionnaires had been extended on one occasion.
- Cllr. Farrell stated that although he was officially a Member of the S106 Task Group, he was unfortunately unable to attend any of the Meetings, therefore his name could be removed for completeness.

- A Member voiced his concern regarding the limited involvement from Ward Members and political leadership within the Council, and how at times Officers would determine priorities from the Corporate Plan, but these did not always marry up with the political strategy of the Council from its Members. He also asked about the Mapping Process, in particular the time frame and what it would seek to achieve. The Chairman responded that the actual S106 process was unclear for a lot of Members and Parish Council representatives, hence the decision was made to map the process. If approved by Cabinet, it was suggested that a six-month timeframe would be put in place to undertake the Process Mapping exercise.
- A Member spoke about Recommendation iii and improving communication between the Planning Service and Parish Councils. A handbook would be created to help explain and clarify the concepts of S106.
- The Spatial Planning Manager added that the starting point was to focus on the process, and communication was also a key area for improvement. He said that he'd been made aware that not all decisions made by Planning were supported by all parties, and the Task Group process had highlighted just how complicated the S106 process was.
- A final point was made about misdirection of S106 funding and the hope that after the Mapping Process, Ward Members and Parish Councillors would have a better understanding and be better prepared to get involved at an earlier stage to voice where S106 monies should be directed.

Resolved:

That the Committee approve the eight recommendations for submission to Cabinet.

176 Future Reports Tracker

Resolved:

That the Future Reports Tracker be received and noted.