

## POLICY & PERFORMANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2018 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Miss Stack (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Clark, Halford, Kelly, Maskell, McGregor, Mrs. Morris, Parkin and Thornton

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. C. Barnes

### 19. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Committee held on 20 September 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 20. Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

### 21. Actions from previous meeting

There were none.

### 22. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman, reported that the Council had won an award at the recent Investors in People ceremony in London. He explained that Sevenoaks District Council were one of only two councils up for an award, which included companies from all over the world.

He also advised Members that with the uncertainty surrounding Brexit, the M26 was being considered as a fall back option for lorries and other heavy goods vehicles going to Manston Airport. He believed this could impact the Swanley area.

The Portfolio Holder also advised Members about the Fair Funding Review, which government was hoping would help to solve funding issues. He mentioned that the government was also looking in to the future of Business Rates retention.

Members questioned whether being self-sufficient would hinder the Council's ability to receive funding. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that it should not, but the future direction of Business Rates retention remained unclear.

He also confirmed that he had visited the Buckhurst 2 car park site and the project was on time and on budget.

The Portfolio Holder also advised Members about developments in the Swanley area. He confirmed that talks were planned regarding the Working Men's Club, and that proposals for the White Oak Leisure Centre development were progressing with the aim that the leisure centre would be able to remain open whilst the site was developed.

**23. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee**

There were none.

**24. Communications Review**

The Chairman presented the report on the Communications review by the Local Government Association (LGA) that happened between 3 and 5 September 2018 on communications activity at Sevenoaks District Council.

The Head of Transformation & Strategy advised Members that Officers, Members and District Council partners had been spoken to. The LGA advised the Council that as part of their recommendations, they believed the Communications team needed to be increased.

The Vice Chairman stated that she believed the Council needed to address the issue of specialism within the Communications team and needed to be proactive instead of reactive in regards to social media.

The Chairman agreed and advised that he believed the day-to-day running of Communications was good, but he felt the capacity to think and plan long term needed to improve.

He also advised Members that the current six-month temporary contract for a Communications Officer was to "keep the wheels on the wagon" until the work regarding the communications strategic plan had been completed.

Members queried whether there was a problem with communicating with residents of the District. The Chairman stated that he believed social media had drastically changed the way the Council communicates with residents and believed that instead of a scattergun approach, less messages with more clarity was required.

The Chairman reiterated that this was a very positive report overall and set out a clear direction of travel.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

25. Budget 2019/20: Service Dashboard and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report, which explained that this was the second stage of the budget process and ensured that all Members of the Advisory Committees had a role to play in the governance of the Council and the budget decision making process. He explained that since the current financial strategy was introduced in 2011/12, over £7 million of savings had been agreed.

To continue to have a balanced budget position and remain financially self-sufficient, a net savings requirement of £100,000 per annum was included in the budget. The Chief Finance Officer also advised Members that other pressures may come out later in the budget process such as when the Local Government Finance Settlement was announced in December. These may result in additional savings being required.

Members discussed possible new growth proposals. They questioned whether there is a provision in the local plan budgets for a strategic communications strategy. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed there was.

Members also considered whether Sevenoaks District Council could have their car parks sponsored.

Also considered was whether there could be more advertising in InShape. The Chairman confirmed that this could not be done as the printing costs and posting for something with more pages would outweigh the revenue received by more advertising.

Finally, Members also expressed an interest in looking at associated costs with creating a training course hub for the District's taxi drivers, whether more could be done to publicise the Council's MOT test centre and whether a service level agreement could be put in place for operators of council premises to use the print studio.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) no growth and savings proposals had been identified; and
- b) the following saving suggestions be discussed further
  - sponsorship of the Council's car parks
  - a taxi licensing training centre at the Council's offices
  - an increase in the publicity of the Council's MOT test centre

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- A service level agreement for operators of council premises to use print studio

### 26. Work Plan

The work plan was noted with the following additions:

#### 28 February 2019

Communications Strategy update

IT Forward Plan update

Sevenoaks District Council website update

#### 20 June 2019

Street naming and numbering update

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.29 PM

CHAIRMAN