

## Reports of the Select Committee Chairmen

### a) ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

#### Report of the meetings held on 31 August 2010 and 5 October 2010

Since my last report the Committee has met twice

On 31<sup>st</sup> August, the Committee was given a presentation on behalf of Biggin Hill Airport. A number of questions by Members were answered and it was understood that the airport were hoping to increase the number of movements for private/business aviation within the existing limits. There were a series of presentations on cycling from KCC, from the Portfolio Holder from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and from Sevenoaks Cycling Forum. On the basis of what they heard Members concluded that Sevenoaks District needed to take the initiative to develop a cycling strategy.

The Committee then considered the Annual Review of Parking Charges and other parking matters and made recommendations to the Cabinet accordingly.

On 5<sup>th</sup> October the Committee first of all considered a report on Tourism with particular reference to the 2012 Olympics. There was discussion about ways to promote tourism in the District. An update on Air Quality followed and there was considerable discussion on the basis for the service.

The Committee then considered the proposed Planning Brief for the land to the west of Blighs Meadow, Sevenoaks. There were considerable concerns raised in respect to the substantial loss of public parking, the layout and bulk and the proportions of residential and commercial property proposed. The committee recommended that the brief be substantially reconsidered.

Finally we examined the draft Kent Environment Strategy which Members found disappointing as they felt it was lacking in focus.

R.F.C.Walshe  
26/10/10

### b) SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

#### Report of the meeting held on 9 September 2010

##### 1. Balanced Communities Plan

The Head of Housing informed Members that the Balanced Communities Plan had been considered exceptionally good practice by a number of funding organisations and had proved very successful in helping the Council obtain external funding.

During a wide-ranging discussion, Members raised the following issues:

- The document did not give sufficient consideration to people working in traditional rural industries
- There was a general problem with poor energy efficiency housing in the District.
- For some Members, the document contained significant amounts of language which was too emotive.

The committee suggested some changes in wording around the issues raised.

## **2. Report of the Waste Recycling Group**

The Chairman of the Working Group informed Members that the report identified a number of options and although the Council would need to wait for the outcome of the Government's waste review before taking a decision, he felt this report provided a good framework for considering the issue again, probably in June 2011.

Members commended the report and thanked those Members and Officers who had worked together to produce it.

Chair

*Bryan Harrod*

Bryan Harrod

### **c) SOCIAL AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE**

#### Report of the meeting held on 7 October 2010

Dr Declan O'Neill, Director of the West Kent Primary Care Trust gave a presentation to Members explaining that the Trust covered six local authority areas supporting a population of just under three quarters of a million. Despite a budget of around one billion pounds the PCT was running at a deficit of some two to three percent. Whilst it was understood that funding for the National Health Service would be safe guarded during the forthcoming Government Spending Review he acknowledged that there was scope for efficiency savings.

He made reference to the ongoing discussions around women's and children's services which are due to be provided at the new Pembury Hospital and also to plans to improve Mental Health provision, which has so often been the Cinderella Service.

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Dr O'Neill was asked about the current campaign to encourage the over 60's and vulnerable groups to get vaccinated against the flu virus. The discussion was then broadened to examine the way in which the virus was constantly mutating and the need for the vaccine to evolve accordingly.

Government has signaled the disbandment of PCTs with services in future being commissioned through consortia of General Practitioners. He suggested that "the plans were revolutionary" and a major departure from the current control from Whitehall.

Members then received the Council's response to the Government's Health White Paper – Equality and Excellence, setting out its vision for a "Better NHS".

Unfortunately this Committee met after the consultation deadline for replies; however it had been previously considered and agreed by the Cabinet with some additional input from back bench members. A request to include quality of life indicators in addition to life expectancy in answer to one of the questions posed, was accepted.

The Committee had requested information on outdoor gym equipment. This was now available and could be forwarded to any interested town/parish Council. Whilst monies would not be forthcoming from the District Council there were other potential funding streams they could apply to.

The Young People's Action Plan monitoring in part was well received, though Members felt that Officers had been over harsh in recording the target relating to attendance figures to events as red, especially given the record number of youngsters taking part in the Youth Zone activities.

Alison J Cook  
Chairman

N.B. A report on the Rural Conference on 7-8 September 2010 is attached as an Appendix.

Council – 9 November 2010

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