

LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2018 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Firth (Chairman)

Cllr. Pett (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Barnes, Bosley, Eyre, Halford, Mrs. Hunter, Pett and Raikes

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Coleman, Lake and McGarvey

Cllrs. Mrs. Bosley, Dr. Canet and Purves were also present.

1. Appointment of Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr. Firth be appointed as Chairman of the Advisory Committee for 2018/19.

Cllr. Firth in the Chair

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr. Pett be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Advisory Committee for 2018/19.

3. Minutes

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

4. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman declared that she had a non-pecuniary interest in the already launched Every Step Counts initiative.

5. Actions from Previous Meeting

The Chief Officer Corporate Services confirmed that the Action from the previous meeting had been completed. Review letters that had been tested had been sent to Members, with some feedback received. He also confirmed the Annual Canvass would start in August.

6. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder's update was noted. She confirmed that the first 'Democracy Roadshow' - as part of National Democracy Week, would take place on Monday 2 July at Orchards Academy, Swanley. The roadshow would visit three schools during July. Sir Michael Fallon and the Chairman of the District, along with other local Members had helped promote the roadshow.

The Portfolio Holder also confirmed that the Licensing Partnership were exploring a new partnership with the London Borough of Bromley.

7. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

8. Affordable Housing Company - Update

The Chief Officer Communities & Business presented an update to Members on the setting up of an Affordable Housing Company. The Council had agreed the setting up of the Company at Council on 21 November 2017 subject to a sound business case being established. A special meeting of the Legal & Democratic Services Advisory Committee had been held on 14 December 2017 to consider the commissioned business case. Members identified Option G as the preferred option, based on an investment of £3million. Further work was needed to look at whether, with a higher level of investment, as anticipated, sufficient surpluses would be generated to cover the running costs of the company.

The Chief Officer for Community & Business reported on activity that had taken place that since that meeting, including the remodelling of the business case using a higher level of investment, potential end of life replacement costs, the company running costs, whether S106 monies could be used for running costs, potential for Right to Buy and void rates. This information was summarised in the report and appendices. Members and Officers with delegated authority had subsequently confirmed that there was a sound business case and the company had been incorporated.

Members questioned the age of current housing stock in the District and whether 60 years would be a reasonable lifetime for the stock and whether surpluses would be used for housing alone. The Chief Officer Communities & Business confirmed that the industry standard is 60 years and the surpluses obtained after running costs could only be used on housing.

She also confirmed to Members that the company was looking at several potential sites to be discussed at the first meeting of the Board at the end of July.

Members questioned what percentage of houses built would be affordable housing. The Chairman confirmed that the intention was that all houses built would be affordable housing. The Chief Officer Communities & Business said that in some

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cases it may be necessary to invest in market housing alongside the affordable in order to make the project as a whole viable.

Members also queried whether affordable housing projects would be built on land owned by the District Council. The Chief Officer Communities & Business confirmed that the company would always consider using District Council-owned land if it were offered. However, the decision to provide the land would be one for Members to make at the time; it was not something within the control of the Company. The business case modelling included paying full market price for the land used.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the report be noted.

CHANGE IN ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS

With the Committee's agreement, the Chairman brought forward the consideration of agenda item 11.

9. Licensing and How It Impacts Public Health

The Head of Licensing Partnership gave a presentation to Members providing them with information on how licensing can affect the health and wellbeing of residents.

The presentation provided figures on the sale of alcohol, taxi licensing and gambling.

She explained to Members that the Licensing Partnership has associated itself with a Metropolitan Police initiative called WAVE (Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement). This initiative was set up to remind/train the industry and officers about having a positive impact on health outcomes.

For taxi drivers in the District, the aim was to educate, and to understand "red flag issues" that taxi drivers may see when at work.

The Head of Licensing Partnership explained that no new betting shop applications would be likely as this type of shop was on the decline due to the competition with online gaming. She did however confirm that some betting shops across the country were turning into Adult Gaming Centres.

Members thanked the Head of Licensing Partnership for her presentation.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the report be noted.

10. Equalities Action Plan

The Head of Transformation & Strategy provided an update of the progress made by the Council concerning the equality policy adopted by Cabinet in April 2016.

He explained that the actions taken in 2017-18, as set out in the report, had made a positive difference to the District and its residents.

The Chairman questioned whether the Council had addressed the gender pay gap seen across the country.

The Head of Transformation & Strategy confirmed that the Council's gender pay gap is relatively low when compared to other organisations, and the Council recruited on ability, irrespective of gender, and the recruitment process followed equalities requirements.

The Chief Officer Corporate Services told Members of the Committee that the Scrutiny Committee had a working group that looked into areas relating to staffing and have had numerous meetings including that with external agencies.

He also confirmed that, in relation to the Council's workforce, the balance was near to 50-50, with 52% male and 48% female working for the Council.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the report be noted and ideas for any priorities for action in 2018-19 be made known to the Head of Transformation and Strategy at a later date.

11. Brexit Update

The Head of Transformation & Strategy provided an update to Members about how Brexit will affect the District and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

He confirmed that the Prime Minister will be meeting with her Cabinet on 6 July and, more information on the customs agreement with the EU is expected shortly afterwards.

Members questioned what impact Brexit would have on the Council. The Head of Transformation & Strategy said it was his view that there would be no significant impact in the short to medium term. He also confirmed that Brexit would likely have an impact on the District's economy and the Council has prioritised supporting and developing its local economy through its Corporate Plan.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the report be noted.

12. National Democracy Week - update

The Chief Officer Corporate Services confirmed to Members that the inaugural National Democracy Week would take place from 2 to 6 July 2018 and that a number of activities were undertaken involving District Councillors, the Member of Parliament for Sevenoaks and officers from the Council itself.

As per the Portfolio Holder's update, there would be a 'democracy roadshow' across the District, going to schools and giving them the information necessary to be a part of future democracy and elections. This would include electoral registration and a mock poll would be held.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the report be noted.

13. Work Plan

The Chairman wanted it to be noted of the appreciation and congratulations to the Legal team for the successful implementation of GDPR across the Council. The following amendments were made to the work plan:

22 January 2019

Update on the Licensing Policies

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.56 PM

CHAIRMAN

