

LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2019 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Firth (Chairman)

Cllr. Pett (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Coleman, Eyre, Halford, Mrs. Hunter, Lake, and McGarvey

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Barnes and Bosley

Cllr. Dr. Canet was also present.

27. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Committee, held on 2 October 2018, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

28. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

29. Actions from Previous Meeting

The actions from the previous meeting were noted.

30. Update from Portfolio Holder

The update from the Portfolio Holder was noted.

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman, advised that Quercus7 had completed the purchase of a property in Westerham which would be let as soon as possible. This was the first part of a two-part investment which in total exceeded £1m and met the investment criteria.

She also advised that discussions on joining the Licensing Partnership were still ongoing with the London Borough of Bromley was looking positive, and highlighted the increased uptake of online registering for the electoral register.

The legal successes report was noted with a request for more information on costs with regards to the Emergency Hygiene Prohibition Notice.

31. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

32. Brexit Update

The Chairman welcomed Heidi Skinner, Public Affairs Manager of the Freight Transport Association (FTA) to the meeting, who gave a [presentation](#) on the plans for Dover and the knock on effects of Brexit for West Kent including an explanation of 'Operation Brock'. Members took the opportunity to ask questions. In response to some of those questions she advised that there were a lot of unknowns at the moment. Ideally the FTA would like to have more time and an implementation period, however, after any initial issues, businesses would adapt.

The Chairman thanked Heidi for the presentation and the Committee showed their appreciation.

The Policy Officer presented the report and Members discussed the latest news.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

33. Electoral Services Update

The Chief Officer Corporate Services, presented a report which updated Members on improvements which had been made in Electoral Services within the current legislative framework. Further improvements would continue to be sought to enable the Council to deliver efficiencies, enhance and automate processes and further improve the service delivered to customers.

In response to questions the Chief Officer Corporate Services advised that he did not know if the scheduled date had slipped for the Overseas Electors Bill's third reading due on 25 January 2019 and would check; the Council would not be involved in any of the Photo ID pilots; and dependant on the Brexit process, if there was a need to hold a European election, there may be a possible impact on local election timings but this was still a very uncertain position at present.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

34. Local Land Charges - Review of Fees

Members considered a report which sought an increase in the current Land Charges fees schedule.

It was confirmed that historical costs could not be accounted for within the new fee structure, and that the proposed fees were set on a cost recovery basis only in line with current legislation and benchmark data. It was thought useful if the fees could automatically rise annually in line with inflation.

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 it be recommended to Cabinet that

- a) the proposed Land Charges fees set out below be agreed to take effect on 1 April 2019;

Search Type	Current Fee (£)	Proposed Fee (£)
Full Search (LLC1 & CON29)	122	165
LLC1	20	33
CON29	102	135
Additional Parcel of Land	18	27
CON290 Printed Enquiry (Each) Q4 - Q22	18	20

- b) the fee schedule above be increased annually in line with the Council's standard inflationary measure and rounded to the nearest £1.00.

35. Work Plan

The expansion of the Licensing Partnership report was moved to the next meeting and the work plan was noted.

Members commented that they thought it would be useful to have a debrief with relevant officers as to what they thought would be useful information for newly elected Members in May 2019.

Action 1: Chief Officer Corporate Services to review the Member training questionnaire and arrange a feedback session with Members, especially newer ones, on Councillor induction packs and training.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.00 PM

CHAIRMAN