

## CLEANER & GREENER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. McArthur (Chairman)

Cllr. Roy (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Andrews, Barnett, Dr. Canet, Collins, G. Darrington, Griffiths, and Raikes

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Bayley

Cllrs. P. Darrington and Foster were also present.

Cllr. Harrison was also present via a virtual media platform that did not constitute attendance as recognised by the Local Government Act 1972.

### 35. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 36. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

### 37. Actions from Previous Meeting

There were none.

### 38. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman, gave an update on the services within her portfolio. One of the Food and Safety Team Officers was leaving their role to work at another local authority, and recruitment for the position would begin soon. The team undertook 100% of all higher risk food inspections, and 129% of lower risk inspections in February. There had been 99 new food business registrations in 2022/23. There had been 259 Environmental Protection service requests in February alone.

The Car Idling Project had been completed, with 66 entries from 5 schools within the District. Each school had 3 prize winners, with an overall District winner who received an additional £50 voucher prize. All participating schools were visited, and four hosted assemblies by the Leader of the Council and the Environmental Health Manager about vehicle idling and the campaign. The Council aimed to present the schools with posters and banners against vehicle idling by summer.

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The Environmental Health Team would bring an options report on the Out of Hours Service to the Committee in the future following the overturning of the SCIA by Cabinet. The Food and Safety team were also considering options regarding charging for pre-opening advice.

The Licensing Partnership achieved a majority of its key performance indicators at 100% across 2022. A new member of staff joined the Hub Team on 1<sup>st</sup> March after the Partnership Board agreed to provide some additional resource. The Council's Licensing Team brought a review against a problem premises within Sevenoaks Town for the first time, and the issue was currently resolved following a suspension and the imposition of stronger conditions. Aged debt was at an all-time low with a majority of annual fees being collected.

The Council had been invited by Historic England to undertake a national pilot for Heritage Crime Officer training - the first local authority to do so. This would enable the Direct Services team to work in partnership with Historic England and the police to protect the District's heritage environment. The Team also participated in the Kent Resilience Forum's FloodEx exercise in Maidstone to test flood plans across the County. The Bradbourne Lakes National Lottery Heritage Fund application was resubmitted at the end of February, and the Mill Pond desilting works were underway.

### 39. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit committee

There were none.

### 40. Pre-Application Fees - Review

The Chairman presented the report, which set out the proposed changes to pre-application advice charges. The Chairman explained that the fees were being restructured to clarify the process and help customers understand the different levels of advice available. Additional fees were being brought in for assisting with temporary event notices, updating records for lottery registrations, and for raising replacement invoices when requested by licence holders, to help cover costs.

The Committee discussed the report.

Resolved: That

- a) It be recommended to Cabinet that the restructured fees for Licensing pre-application advice be approved; and
- b) That it be recommended to Cabinet that the introduction of some new smaller admin fees to cover the resourcing cost of providing the service, be approved.

### 41. Environmental Protection Service Plan

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The Chairman presented the report, which outlined the how the Environmental Health Team would discharge its statutory obligations with regards to Statutory Nuisance, Animal Welfare, and Licensing and Environmental Permitting Regulations for the upcoming year. The report also outlined the volume of work undertaken by the team, and how it had streamlined its processes with technology to cope with increase workloads with current resources.

In response to questions, the Environmental Protection Team Leader explained that the team were awaiting clarification from central government on their duties under the Clean Air Act with regards to combatting particulate emissions from electric vehicles. The Officer further explained that most of the drainage issues in the District were the remit of sewage undertakers or the land drainage board. The Council helped advocate on behalf of residents but generally lacked the statutory powers to act. The Committee heard that the team had previously charged for land searches for contaminated sites, but that changes in the Council's software prevented the team from making the reports now. This was being examined as a possible future revenue source. The Officer clarified that most contaminated land sites did not meet the criteria in the Environmental Protection Act Part 2A, and were addressed through the planning process rather than the Environmental Protection Team.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that it recommends to Council that the Environmental Protection Service Plan 2023/24 be approved.

### 42. Active Travel and Net Zero 2030 Update

The Chairman presented the report, which updated the Committee on the Council's active travel initiatives. The Committee discussed the report. In response to questions, the Principal Infrastructure Delivery Officer explained that the plans aimed to strike a balance between the proposed East-West Sevenoaks cycle route and the need for on street parking, and that different options would be presented at the public consultation.

The Officer further explained that the £10,000 grant from Active Travel England was for feasibility work for the Sevenoaks to Otford cycle route, and that much of this would be built on previous detailed work. The most significant changes were likely to be related to the cost of delivering the route, due to national economic changes. The interconnection between Route 1 and Route 6 would help reduce consultancy costs. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) took into account all planned and proposed developments. Site promoters were actively engaged with when making the plan, to ensure the infrastructure would support future developments.

She further advised the Committee that the LCWIP aimed to lead behavioural changes by providing infrastructure to make cycling and walking safer and a more attractive option in busy urban areas. The consultancy work followed national guidance on cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20), which sought to achieve segregation of cycling and walking from cars wherever possible. Stakeholder

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engagement was a priority of the LCWIP also, to ensure that the needs of residents, interested parties and local Members would be met. This would involve understanding risks, such as private land ownership, and working to overcome them.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

### 43. Work Plan

The Work Plan was noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 19:40

CHAIRMAN