

## Item 4 (a) - Reference from Scrutiny Committee held on 3 May 2016

Relevant minute extract below

### 39. Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Direct & Trading Services

The Portfolio Holder for Direct & Trading Services provided an update on services within his Portfolio. He explained that the Council was the only District Council in the County still to run weekly refuse and recycling collection, with a 93% satisfaction rate compared to the national average of 77%. A Heritage Lottery Fund grant had recently been announced for the Greensand Ridge. The Council had proposed a CCTV Partnership, with Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councils which was due to create savings. A further 66 parking spaces had been added by expanding the car park in Westerham. He also noted that Direct Services had created a £233,000 surplus for the year.

The Chairman asked the Portfolio Holder's three greatest concerns. He explained that the first was the provision of greater parking in Sevenoaks, rather than merely restricting and displacing it. A small change in fuel prices could make a considerable difference on the 430,000 litres of diesel purchased each year. Finally he was keen for an increase in household waste recycling rates.

The Vice Chairman enquired about the current status of the CCTV Service and whether some parking charges in Sevenoaks Town were too high. The Portfolio Holder advised that the CCTV Partnership would provide staffing resilience and savings of £44,000 over 10 years. Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's out of hours telephone service already came to Sevenoaks but CCTV was fed to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The parking charges were a response to demand and customers were signposted to other car parks. However, there would be an impact on the High Street if there were not a turnover of parking.

A Member noted that the Council lost approximately half of parking ticket appeals to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal, whereas Planning Services had a target to win 75% of appeals. The Portfolio Holder explained that only 0.17% of appeals went to the Tribunal which was the fewest in Kent and less than half of the national average. Nationally more than half of such appeals were lost by Councils. Officers no longer attended appeals as it was not cost effective, but when they used to attend they would win more than half of the appeals. He felt that the 15 appeals in the last year were statistical outliers given the 1,897 notices at the previous stage of appeal. The Committee asked that the Portfolio Holder consider introducing such a target.

Members asked the benefits of an in-house CCTV service. The Portfolio Holder responded that it allowed Officers to become particularly familiar with the local areas and stay connected to local venues through the Pub Watch and Shop Safe schemes.. The partnership would be managed by a legal agreement between the three Authorities

The Portfolio Holder was asked for the Council's plans to tackle flytipping. He noted there were environmental and social costs to flytipping. The Council had become the first point of contact for reports for all matters and would remove all flytipping unless obstructing the carriageway or on private land, while advertisements for an Environmental Enforcement Officer would close shortly. Due to changes in legislation, householders could be held legally responsible if their waste were passed to somebody who later flytipped it.

**Resolved: That Cabinet be asked to consider whether it would be appropriate to apply a target of 75% of Penalty Charge Notice appeals to be won at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal.**