

POLICY & PERFORMANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2016 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Miss. Stack (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Clark, Krogdahl, Maskell, McGregor, Mrs. Morris, Parkin and Thornton

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Abraham, Eyre and Kelly

1. Appointment of Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr. Fleming be appointed as Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

(Cllr. Fleming in the Chair)

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr. Miss. Stack be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

3. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2016, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

5. Actions from previous meeting

There were none.

6. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Chairman and Portfolio Holder for Policy & Performance advised that with reference to the Regeneration of Swanley the working mens' club as of that day, was about 90% demolished. Advertising Consent was being sought for the hoarding in order to use it as space to advertise what was happening in Swanley and to

Policy & Performance Advisory Committee - 7 June 2016

update the public on the masterplan etc. Swanley Town Council had now requested that something be done to tidy up 'meeting point'.

7. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

8. Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

The Corporate Customer Services & Delivery Manager presented a report which updated Members regarding customer complaints and feedback monitoring for the year 2015/16, as compared to 2014/15. The report provided details of formal complaints received by Sevenoaks District Council during the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. She responded to questions of clarification.

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.

9. Devolution - Update

Members considered a report which provided an update on devolution as it was progressing both nationally and at a local level in West Kent.

The Chairman advised that at the recent Kent Leaders meeting, at the moment alignment seemed to be with West Kent along with Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Councils. The Chief Executive advised that the relevant Chief Executives were leading on certain areas, his being Public Health and Community Safety.

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. Local Government Transparency - Consultation on changes to the 2015 Code

The Policy Officer presented a report advising that Government had set out a consultation to update the 2015 Local Government Transparency Code. Members were asked to provide their views to inform the Council's response to the consultation.

Members considered the consultation and were of the view that anything that was advantageously beneficial to Officers e.g. helped with Freedom of Information

Policy & Performance Advisory Committee - 7 June 2016

(FOI) responses, was worth pursuing. However various concerns were raised such as: all data had value; commercial applications; potential for fraud applications; questions of how up to date the data would be; and the potential for economic planning and development but also elements of danger.

Members also thought the aims were unclear and were not sure what Government was trying to achieve. They felt the purpose needed to be clarified, the benefit explained. Members were not against transparency and self service but not at the cost of loss of such things as competitive advantage. It needed to be cost effective, of use and beneficial. The Policy Officer advised that she was not aware of any evidence or research that had been carried out on how the current arrangements had enabled democratic accountability or shaped public services. The Policy Officer was advised to look at the consultation from a commitment point of view - comply where mandatory, when not, only do if of benefit to the Council as there were concerns with regards to the cost in resources.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That Officers be requested to formulate a response with the concerns raised at the meeting.

11. New Public Sector Duty on Apprenticeships and the Apprenticeship Levy

The Policy Officer presented a report which provided Members with an overview of the new duty for the public sector on apprenticeships, and the Government's apprenticeship levy. It outlined the information currently available from Government regarding how these were intended to work, and considered some of the known implications for Council.

Potentially the Council could face challenges in both finding the resources to meet the salaries and associated costs of apprentices, in finding the right training frameworks delivered locally for its particular needs, and in attracting young people to take up the opportunities. It was particularly noted that the targets being set by Government related to apprenticeship "starts". Based on the suggested 2.3% that would be 7 starts a year at the Council. Drop-out rates from apprenticeships nationally were often high, up to 60%, indicating that there could be challenges faced by all parties (employers, the young person and the training provider) in sustaining the role and providing support to the young person. It would be a 'duty' not a legal requirement, but there would be a requirement to annually report on how the target was being met. It was noted that while all employers with a paybill of £3m or more were liable for the levy, only the public sector was facing the double impact of the new duty and levy, due to come into force on 1 April 2017.

It was suggested that this could be used to solve challenges facing local government, and the potential for older people entering modern apprenticeships

Policy & Performance Advisory Committee - 7 June 2016

was discussed. However it was noted that the financial incentive was aimed at 16-18 year olds.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That new public sector apprenticeship duty and the cost of the apprenticeship levy be noted.

12. Work Plan

The work plan was noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.20 PM

CHAIRMAN