

## ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2019 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Hogarth (Chairman)

Cllr. Maskell (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Dr. Canet, Esler, Eyre, Krogdahl, Lake, Maskell, McGarvey and McGregor

### 32. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 33. Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest made.

### 34. Actions from Previous Meeting

There were none.

### 35. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman advised Members that the Buckhurst 2 Car Park, now named the Sevenoaks Town Car Park, was close to completion.

He also advised that the Council was in active communications with the owners of the former Tesco site in Sevenoaks High Street. They were trying to encourage a short term use whilst also looking at long term plans for the site.

The Portfolio Holder expressed his delight at the recent Community and Voluntary Awards evening, which he believed was well received across the District.

He also advised that as part of his role with West Kent Partnership, he visited Hugh Lowe Farm, who employ over 700 migrant seasonal workers every year. He believed they were prepared for possible changes regarding Brexit.

The Portfolio Holder reported that he had visited both the Edenbridge Economic Forum, who were working on a new strategy for the town, and the opening of the Mental Health Drop In Centre in Swanley.

He also advised that the branding for the Sevenoaks Art Studio had been put up above 96 High Street.

The Portfolio Holder reported that he had attended the Citizens Advice Bureau Annual Review and advised Members that they were working very well with the budget given to them by Sevenoaks District Council but believed the work now undertaken by them was more complex than it had been.

And he also reported that he attended St Pauls Primary School in Swanley Village for the launch of Internet Safety Day, and the launch of the Scale Up West Kent, which helped a cohort of small businesses accelerate in growth at a greater speed.

36. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

37. Policing in the District

The Chairman welcomed Chief Superintendent of Kent Police West Division Simon Wilson and Chief Inspector Peter Steenhuis.

He explained that the police's new Horizon model had been implemented 18 months ago, which included the creation of new teams, including a child exploitation team, a RAPTOR team which dealt with cross-county crimes, and a SOLO (Sexual Offence Local Officer), who were the first point of contact for victims of sexual offences amongst others.

He reported that there had been an increase in employment by the police and stated that two new Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) will begin work in March 2019. He also believed the overall numbers would remain stable for the foreseeable future. He advised Members that 23 Police Cadets had been established since its inception in October 2018.

Chief Superintendent Wilson stated that they had increased the use of social media, which had improved engagement with the local community.

The Chairman queried whether the interaction on Twitter included direct messages from members of the public. Chief Inspector Steenhuis advised that Twitter was not the appropriate way to do this. Instead they focussed on different ways of communicating with the public.

Members queried whether the strategic location of the District meant that more offenders were crossing county lines to commit offences. Chief Superintendent Wilson advised that, because of the proximity of the Metropolitan area, information is shared with all neighbouring forces and a new intelligence system had just been implemented to do this.

Members also believed that the Police 101 telephone number was a cause for concern. Chief Superintendent Wilson advised that the 101 number was taking more phone calls and were in a better position than previously. Chief Inspector Steenhuis also advised that lots more can be done online now, including incident reporting, which only required a simple form filled out.

The Vice Chairman indicated that he believed the interaction with residents had dramatically improved and he was impressed with the systematic approach.

A Member queried whether the Speedwatch campaigns going on across the District were being looked at further by police. Chief Superintendent Wilson advised that he believed these groups were vital as shown by the data, which puts Sevenoaks as the fourth lowest in the County for people killed or seriously injured.

The Vice Chairman queried whether the extra 200 officers being added would increase the pressure on delivering for residents and whether there were systems in place for the wellbeing of Officers. The Chief Superintendent informed Members that increased numbers were good news for the Force. But he advised that measuring success was difficult but could be measured by overall output. He also advised that personnel meetings happened frequently, which looked at sickness, long term leave, and other issues.

The Chairman thanked Chief Superintendent Wilson and Chief Inspector Steenhuis for attending and commended the Police for the work they do in the District.

### 38. Community Grant Scheme Draft Allocations 2019/2020

The Community Projects & Funding Officer presented a report which set out information about the Community Grant Scheme and summarised applications received by the Council from voluntary organisation for funding during 2019/20, together with recommended grants. The amount of funding available for the grants was £54,800.

The Chairman advised that, in addition, a large amount of funding was given to the Citizens Advice Bureau under a three-year service level agreement, currently in its first year.

A Member queried whether there was a follow up appraisal once the grant had been provided. The Community Projects & Funding Officer advised that the team would monitor the performance indicators after six months and a year. For smaller grants, a form would be completed by the organisation informing the Council whether the funding had been successfully used.

Members also indicated that they believed the funding level for some cases was insufficient. The Community Projects & Funding Officer advised that the Council worked with unsuccessful applicants to guide them on how to make their application more successful or whether they could get access to alternative funding. It was suggested that the level of funding should be increased in future years.

The Chairman paid tribute to the work of the voluntary sector, stating that in Sevenoaks District we were lucky to have a strong and supportive voluntary network, through which so many volunteers make such a difference.

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### 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.

### 39. Work Plan

The Work Plan was noted with the Enterprise Coordinator Network update, the Sevenoaks District Arts Council update and the Sevenoaks District Sports Council update added to the 8 October 2019 meeting.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.27 PM

CHAIRMAN