

PEOPLE & PLACES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Collins (Chairman)

Cllr. Perry Cole (Vice-Chair)

Cllrs. Bulford, Cheeseman, Dyball, Edwards-Winsor, Esler, Pett and Raikes

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Dr. Canet, P. Darrington and Hudson

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

26. Minutes

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

27. Declarations of interest

There were none.

28. Actions from Previous Meeting

There were none.

29. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder updated the Committee on the progress of her Portfolio.

The Warm Spaces project was launched in October 2022 and to date the Health and Communities Team had 16 warm spaces signed up, which were spread across the District. An update was to be given in item 7 (Minute 34) of the meeting agenda.

Officers continued to work with KCC on the Homes for Ukraine scheme and had completed a host campaign, with an update included in InShape, the Council's magazine, in the coming weeks. The Council had been seen as providing best practice for helping Ukrainian guests and their hosts.

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The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) had held its first round of Community Grants for the year. Bids were received and appraised by the LSP. Organisations and Community Groups could bid up to £2k for initiatives supporting the cost of living.

The Council would be hosting a one day 'Access all Areas' festival on Sunday 19 February 2023, 11am - 3pm, showcasing a range of support, activities and services provided by local clubs and organisations for people with disabilities, their families and carers. The free activity and information event would be held at White Oak Leisure Centre, Swanley.

The Council was once again running the Community and Voluntary awards in 2023 and nominations could be made [on the Council's website](#).

Kent Police held a meeting to discuss potential changes to the Neighbourhood Policy model and the effectiveness of the Community Safety Unit (CSU). Consultation with Police staff is underway, concluding in January 2023, with changes commencing in June 2023. The Chief Executive of the Council had met with the new Chief Constable, Tim Smith. The Council had received £18k funding from the Violence Reduction Unit to address anti-social behaviour and support young people. The funding would focus on 4 areas in New Ash Green, Hartley, Swanley and Edenbridge. The CSU had developed an action plan and were meeting on a regular basis.

Safeguarding week had taken place the previous week and the CSU and Council had highlighted a number of local support services and how to report safeguarding concerns via Social Media.

On Friday 25 November, a Domestic Abuse Conference with Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Councils and CSUs was held. This was the start of a 16 day campaign to help end violence against women and girls and to highlight White Ribbon Day. During the 16 days 3 Domestic Abuse training courses run by Protection against Stalking would be held, male colleagues also produced a white ribbon [video](#) which was shown to the Committee.

30. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit committee (if any)

There were none.

CHANGE IN ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS

The Chairman, with the committee's agreement, brought forward consideration of item 8 - Budget 2023/24: Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact - (minute 31) and item 9 The Education People (TEP) Handover - Next Steps (Minute 32).

31. Budget 2023/24: Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)

The Head of Finance presented the report which set out updates to the 2023/24 budget process within the existing financial strategy. SDC was not immune from the financial challenges affecting the country therefore the budget process was expected to be particularly challenging.

No changes had been made to future assumptions at the current stage which would be reviewed during the budget process, as usual. However, due to the April 2022 pay award being higher than previously assumed and an annual savings target of £100,000 already included, an annual budget gap of £735,000 was currently reported.

The report presented growth and savings proposals that had been identified which needed to be considered. It requested further suggestions from Members before finalising the budget for 2023/24. Informed by the latest information from Government and discussions with Cabinet, it was proposed that the Council once again set a balanced 10-year budget and continued to aim to be financially self-sufficient.

The Committee considered the growth and savings proposals identified in Appendices E & F to the report. Further consideration was given to SCIA_10_ (23/24) which highlighted that the Health and Communities Team no longer required the use of its van. Members discussed the option of renting the van out but were informed that the vehicle would be passed into the ownership of the Property and Asset Maintenance Team.

Members gave consideration to additional suggestions for growth and savings which included looking into a digital library of training for Members and Officers which would reduce costs as well as additional learning material that could be used to sign-post Members and Officers to information. Members were informed that Human Resources were looking into providing additional digital training which could be charged externally to generate more income. As the suggestions did not relate to the remit of the People and Places Advisory Committee, Officers would refer the suggestions to the relevant Chief Officer.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved that:

- a) It be recommended to Cabinet that the growth proposals (SCIA's 10, 11, 12 and 13, 2022/23) identified in Appendices E & F to the report applicable to this Advisory Committee, be considered.
- b) No further income or growth proposals were identified applicable to this Advisory Committee.

32. The Education People (TEP) handover - Next Steps

Members considered a report which provided an update on the transfer of educational services from West Kent Enterprise Advisory Network (WKEAN) to the Kent County owned The Education People (TEP).

Prior to August 2022, Sevenoaks District Council was the accountable body for the WKEAN, which was responsible for assisting schools in West Kent with career advice services that were closely aligned with the economic needs of the district and future career opportunities. In August 2022, this service was transferred to TEP, a fully owned Kent County Council company providing similar services to the rest of Kent. The Council would continue to co-ordinate with and monitor TEP using the Gatsby Benchmarks which formed the quantitative benchmarks against which progress could be measured.

Members considered the report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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 Education People continue to deliver the WKEAN which would be monitored by the Council.
- b) Sevenoaks District Council encourage staff to volunteer time to support local schools in connection with Careers Hub activities and events.

33. Citizens Advice Edenbridge & Westerham, Swanley & Sevenoaks

The Chairman welcomed Angela Newey, Chief Executive of Sevenoaks and Swanley Citizens Advice (CA) Bureau and Sian Hiller Chief Executive of Edenbridge and Westerham CA Bureau who gave a presentation and an update on their Services over the past year. CA services had faced increased pressure from the pandemic and cost of living crisis as the number and complexity of cases they had dealt with had increased. The Chief Executive of Edenbridge and Westerham CA Bureau explained that the Bureau had formed various partnerships across the District. Various outreach projects included raising awareness of issues linked to the cost of living, scamming awareness and debt advice.

The Chief Executive of Sevenoaks and Swanley Citizens Advice (CA) [gave a presentation](#) to the Committee. The Bureau had offices in Blighs in Sevenoaks Town and also Swanley. The Bureau had been actively recruiting volunteers and was asking volunteers to work 2 days a week to maintain active involvement in the complex case work that staff often dealt with. The Council had continued to support CA services through its annual grant and the Helping Hands Fund which

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helped to provide additional capacity on adviceline telephone service for residents. The service dealt with over 550 calls per week, often with people seeking support for multiple and complex challenges.

Members asked questions of clarification. Members were advised that the Bureaus had been in close contact with other agencies and services to support with the complexity of issues faced by customers and the Bureaus also worked closely with the Council. Members asked further questions regarding the rising cost of living and outreach projects. The Bureaus were attempting to reach out to the community as much as possible and were looking at how best to use their resources, an assessment of need was vital to determine how best they could do this.

The Committee thanked the CA Chief Executives for all their hard work and for attending to give their updates.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

34. Warm Spaces project update

The Health and Communities Manager presented the report which updated the Committee on the Warm Spaces initiative.

The project included working with Town and Parish Councils in the District and partner organisations to build a Warm Spaces directory published online. Warm Spaces were free, non-judgmental public places where residents could go to stay warm and save money on their heating costs. The spaces would encourage social interaction and provide advice and support.

Members asked questions about the online directory and were advised that the directory held all the information residents would need to find a warm space. The directory was also being added into the national database. The Health and Communities Manager was happy to discuss specific accommodation for the warm spaces with prospective clients should they wish to join the scheme. The Council was also looking at the potential for opening a warm space in the Argyle Road offices. It was suggested that the directory be grouped by town or place to make clear the locations of all warm spaces in a given geographical area. The Council would also liaise with the KCC Communities Team to encourage more Warm Space holders to come forward.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

35. Work Plan

Members noted the work plan and requested an update on the Community Grant Scheme be provided twice annually to the Committee.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.30 PM

CHAIRMAN