

TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes and report to Council of the meeting of the Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted on the 19 September 2023 at 7:30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Wren (Chair), Shiner (Vice-Chair), Bilton, Black, Crane, North, O'Driscoll, Patel, Sharp, Windsor and Gaffney (Substitute) (In place of Lee)

ALSO PRESENT (Virtually): Councillors Moore, Chris Farr, Sue Farr, Hammond and Pursehouse

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Lee

104. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2023

The minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

The Chair made the following statement on minute 31 (Review of Dog Walking Policy):

“Unfortunately, some misleading information has recently been shared in the public domain via the Woldingham Magazine by a councillor, this was then shared extensively by others across social media, suggesting that the Council is proposing that all dogs will need to be on a 1.5m lead throughout the district.

This is totally incorrect and any proposals asking for dogs to be on leads will only be for certain limited areas. The Council is keen to get a proportionate balance between asking for additional interventions that support heightened dog control in some mix use public spaces. All proposals progressed will be well consulted on, with the opportunity for residents and stakeholders to share their views on what types of controls they feel are necessary and in which spaces.

You will recall that in June, the Community Services Committee discussed what more the Council can do to promote responsible dog ownership and dog control. With the aim of enabling residents and visitors to use and enjoy public spaces without experiencing dog related anti-social behaviour.

With the sad death of a dog walker locally earlier this year and the well-publicised increase in dog attacks nationally, it is important that the Council considers what measures it can take to reduce the risk to the public and antisocial behaviour in the district.

After the June Committee meeting, a councillor and officer task and finish group was set up to progress the work in this area. This group is leading on behalf of the Council:

1. Work with stakeholders to encourage responsible dog ownership.
2. The review of dog licencing and dog walking policies, (we heard very thoughtful comments from Hayley Herbert-Hamilton in her role owner of a dog walking business).
3. The scope and development of the future consultation on the introduction of PSPOs.

This work will be reported on to the Committee later in the year.

I will remind members that before information is published in the public domain it's important to check with officers or myself that what they are sharing is accurate. The misleading statement made has led to a lot of additional work for officers and councillors across the whole district, but more importantly has caused unnecessary concern to residents across Tandridge.

It is imperative this does not happen again, particularly with such an emotive issue as this one.”

A Member asked for an update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Chief Finance Officer advised that final nominations to the working group had been received and an initial meeting would be arranged imminently.

105. FUTURE TANDRIDGE PROGRAMME COMMUNITY SERVICES - GROUNDS MAINTENANCE OPTIONS APPRAISAL OUTCOME

The Committee considered a report outlining the outcome of the Grounds Maintenance Options Appraisal. This followed a review to identify the best option for delivery of the ground maintenance service across the Council as part of the Future Tandridge Programme. Grounds maintenance had been delivered through a mixture of in-house and outsourced arrangements. Officers highlighted the recommendation that a future hybrid delivery model of in-house and outsourced work based on logical lot structures be implemented. Future contractors and the in-house team would work to improve specification and would be subject to rigorous performance monitoring.

R E S O L V E D – that:

- A) the progress made to date and the details of the Grounds Maintenance options appraisal be noted.
- B) the lot structure approach be approved
- C) that the resources required to deliver the preferred option will be recommended to Strategy & Resources Committee to approve as part of a wider Future Tandridge Programme update, be noted.

106. GRANT ALLOCATIONS 2023/24: VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND TANDRIDGE TOGETHER COMMUNITY LOTTERY

A report was presented in connection with the Committee's grants budget. In 2023/24, the Committee had committed to spend £249,143, allocating grants to community and voluntary sector organisations. The report summarised the grants provided to local organisations and highlighted the contributions they made in providing services to residents.

It was noted that ticket sales for the Community Lottery had reduced this year, and members were encouraged to promote the lottery to residents.

In response to questions from Members, Officers confirmed:

- the same process used to determine grants this year, through a sub-group of the Committee, would be used for grant determination in 2024/25. The list of those considered for grant funding would include the Surrey Museums Consultative Committee. Members commented that the process worked well last year.

- the Council received £20k from Surrey County Council which went towards the East Surrey Rural Transport advice line. £38k was provided by the Council for the provision of the Community transport service.

RESOLVED – that:

- A) for the allocation of voluntary grants in 2023/24 the current levels of funding allocations for the grants for 2023/24 be noted.
- B) the application process for the Tandridge Lottery Community grants 2023/24 to follow the timetable set out in paragraph 19 of the report.
- C) the overall total budget for small grants to be determined in December 2023 will be based on the money in the Tandridge Together Community Fund. This will be a minimum of £20,000, with any shortfall being met from the Council's future budgets.
- D) the criteria for assessing grant applications for the Tandridge Lottery Community grant 2023/2024 process be as per Appendix B to the report; and
- E) the award of Tandridge Lottery Community grants to be considered by a sub-group of the Tandridge Health & Wellbeing Board before being taken to the full Board in January 2024 to agree a formal recommendation. The recommendations will be submitted to the Deputy Chief Executive for formal agreement.

107. QUARTER 1 2023/24 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Committee received a report that contained data on the key performance indicators for Quarter 1 2023-24. The report covered operational services and it was mentioned that future reports would include more services within the Committee's remit.

Officers highlighted that one target, street cleansing, was not met as a result of staffing and reliability of the mechanical sweeper. The sweeper was currently operational, and staff were being trained to cover periods sickness or annual leave.

It was also noted that a trial of orange food waste caddies would begin on a limited basis to help improve the service and reduce investigation time for missed collections.

Members expressed gratitude for the inclusion of Key Performance Indicators and the efforts of officers to improve the service.

During the debate Members asked questions and Officers responded by explaining that:

- street cleansing concerns in certain areas of the District highlighted by members would be looked into. Staffing reductions had meant that achieving an 8-week street cleansing schedule was a challenge, officers were looking at how the schedule was structured and how the service could be delivered across the District. Officers explained that the environmental cleanliness standard of streets was measured based on 30m sections of chosen streets. Work was undertaken with Surrey County Council on coordinating gully cleansing and pothole clearances.
- the performance indicators reported were chosen based on the perceived level of resident interest. Officers would consider Member feedback in order to expand future performance indicators.

- the number of stray dogs that had been collected by the Dog Warden in the year to date was 113.
- Officers were looking into how to digitise ground maintenance monitoring to assist with reporting.
- difficulties in establishing the owners of fly-tipping incidents were due to the challenges in collecting substantial evidence to identify and prosecute.
- Officers were awaiting further samples before assessing when the public toilets in Godstone might reopen.

RESOLVED – that the Quarter 1 2023-2024 performance indicators for the Community Services Committee be noted.

108. QUARTER 1 2023/24 BUDGET MONITORING - COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Committee received a report outlining the financial position of the Committee's 2023/24 Revenue (£4,613k) and Capital (£2,077k) budgets as of Quarter 1 2023/24. The report set out a Month 3 forecast for a full-year balanced budget, with a number of offsetting risks and opportunities being managed within the budget.

A review had been undertaken to ensure the capital programme could be delivered in 2023/24. Following this, the capital budget forecast outturn was £1,740k, a variance of £337k which would be reprofiled to 2024/25. The variance was made up of £215k from Waste and Recycling and £122k from Community Infrastructure and Assets.

Of the £388k savings target, £198k had already been achieved while £26k had not been achieved due to delays in delivering savings in Regulatory Services, shared with Mole Valley.

During the debate Members asked questions and Officers responded to explain that capital carry forwards from previous years in relation to parks, playgrounds and open spaces had not yet been invested, primarily due to capacity issues. Officers recognised that this was a priority area and were in the process of recruiting to positions to oversee and drive forward delivery.

RESOLVED – that the Committee's forecast Revenue and Capital budget positions as at Quarter 1/M3 (June) 2023/24 be noted.

Rising 8.25 pm