

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 9 November 2023 at 7:30pm.

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

ALSO PRESENT (Virtually): Councillors Chris Farr, Sue Farr and Smith

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Bilton and O'Driscoll

153. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2023

The minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

154. REVIEW OF THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE (TAXI) MAXIMUM TABLE OF FARES - NOVEMBER 2023

The local taxi trade representative group had requested an increase in the maximum table of fares for Hackney Carriages licensed by the Council to operate from ranks within the District. This request was in light of increasing fuel prices and the cost of living in general. The last revision was in November 2022. The report before the Committee set out both the current and proposed fare tables.

The proposal had been the subject of consultation with the 116 licensed Hackney Carriage drivers. Of the 71 responses, 50 were in favour of the increase (70.4%) and 21 were opposed (29.6%).

In response to Member queries, Officers explained that:

- There was no overriding reason as to why 21 were opposed to the increase.
- Drivers would be required to put the new maximum fares on their meter, but they could charge less than that if they wished.

RESOLVED – that

- A. the proposed variation to the Hackney Carriage table of maximum fares, as put forward by the taxi trade representative group, be approved in principle, with an implementation date of 1 December 2023
- B. arising from A above, the variation be advertised in the local press allowing 14 days for comments to be submitted to the Council; and
- C. subject to no objections being received during the consultation period, the variation will come into effect on 1 December 2023.

155. QUARTER 2 2023/24 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Committee received a report that contained data on the key performance indicators for Quarter 2 2023/24. Officers drew the Committees' attention to:

- street cleansing which was off target as a result of long term sickness. 2 new agency staff had been appointed.
- the increase in safeguarding cases, with self-neglect being the largest reason. Additional training had been given to the Customer Services team. In September, Surrey County Council Adult Safeguarding Board Annual Quality Assessment had been completed, with feedback due in December.
- the risk register, and in particular the risk in relation to monitoring Council owned trees. There was a backlog of assessments. Consideration would be given to reprofiling Housing Revenue Account inspections in order to allow inspections under this Committee to be completed.

In response to Member questions, Officers confirmed that:

- the Council would be looking to commission another local authority or other specialists to complete the outstanding high risk inspections. The description of high risk related to their allocation, rather than evidence of issues existing at those sites. Officers would liaise with the Communications Team in relation to communication of works to residents, and circulate the Council's Tree Policy to the Committee.
- in relation to fly tipping, a newly appointed enforcement officer would be considering better signage, CCTV and working with other local authorities to prevent fly-tipping. Officers would provide further information about how the fly-tipping data had been complied. Members thanked Officers for quickly responding to reported incidents.
- Officers had recently resolved a number of minor issues in playgrounds. A report was due back from the playground inspectors on recommendations for a capital replacement programme, which would include identification of sites for DDA compliant improvements. A report would be presented to the Committee in March 2024 at the earliest.
- works had taken place and were continuing at Godstone toilets following positive legionella test results. This included liaison with the water company following positive results found in incoming water.
- a new project manager post was being advertised to deliver capital programmes in relation to toilets, playgrounds and parks and open spaces.
- Officers would circulate information to the Committee in response to a number of questions around safeguarding and anti-social behaviour.

The Chair gave an update on the recent success of a bid for money from the Swimming Pool Support Fund. £197k had been allocated to Tandridge. A further bid had been submitted for capital resource, and the outcome of this was expected in December.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the Quarter 2 2023/24 performance indicators for the Community Services Committee be noted.
- B. the most critical risk for the Community Services Committee be noted.

156. QUARTER 2 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 budgets as of Quarter 2 2023/24. The Capital budget had been rephased following approval from the Strategy and Resources Committee and was set at £1,740k.

A full year Revenue underspend of £59k was forecast. There were underspend forecasts in salaries, leisure and communities service grants, environmental services and waste services. There were overspend forecasts in cesspool services and operational services. In terms of risks, the financial implications of ash die back had been included as a risk. There were no changes reported to the savings tracker.

In terms of the Capital budget, a full year underspend of £656k was forecast. This was principally as a result of slippage in parks, playgrounds and open spaces. It was expected that the recruitment of a project manager to deliver capital projects would accelerate the Capital spend.

RESOLVED – that the Committee's forecast Revenue and Capital budget positions as at Quarter 2/M6 (September) 2023/24 be noted.

157. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

The Chair considered it a matter of urgency to give a brief update on the progress of the work being undertaken in relation to responsible dog ownership. This included:

- the reviewing and refreshing of the Dog Walking Licencing process to encourage residents to use licenced dog walkers that met certain experience, training levels and dog walking practices.
- working alongside the Council's animal warden and dog charities to develop a communications campaign to promote responsible dog ownership.
- improving signage on Council land to encourage responsible ownership.

The Committee would be kept updated as the work progressed.

In response to Committee questions, the Chair confirmed:

- additional licenced, professional dog walkers would be consulted.
- dogs would continue to be allowed off their leads on Council land.
- any rating would be attached to the individual professional dog walker, not the dog walking company.

Rising 8.13 pm