

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 23rd November 2021 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Wren (Chair), Swann (Vice-Chair), Caulcott, Crane, Duck (substitute in place of North), Gaffney (substitute in place of Mansfield), Hammond, Lee, Moore (substitute in place of Allen), O'Driscoll and Stamp*

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Groves, Jones, Lockwood, Mansfield** and Mills

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Allen and North

* Councillor Stamp participated by Zoom and was therefore unable to vote

** Councillor Mansfield participated by Zoom in a non-voting capacity

180. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 21ST SEPTEMBER 2021

These minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

181. QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

Two questions had been submitted by Councillor Lee. The questions and responses are provided at Appendix A to these minutes.

182. PRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF THE CATERHAM & WARLINGHAM AND OXTED CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX

The Chair introduced this item by thanking the CAB for its work in supporting Tandridge communities. Sarah Henke-Monti and Catherine Wynchol (managers of the Caterham & Warlingham and Oxted Bureaux respectively) gave a joint presentation to inform Members about their services, including:

- the fact that the Bureaux are two local, independent charities, operating as members of one large national organisation, offering free, confidential and impartial advice to anyone living or working in the District
- confirmation that, in total, the two Tandridge bureaux employ over 40 volunteer advice and support staff (providing approximately 14,000 hours of free service per annum) supervised by 2.6 FTE core paid staff and 1.8 FTE paid project staff (each volunteer takes between 12 to 18 months to train)

- the critical nature of the Council's continued core funding and an explanation of income from other sources for one-off purposes and time limited projects (the projects were due to cease at the end of the financial year)
- metrics to quantify the value of the Bureaux to society (using HM Treasury approved calculations)
- key advice areas (e.g. benefits; tax credits; housing; debt; education; employment; health; housing; family & relationships; and referrals to other charities)
- a case study focusing on disability advice work
- performance during the Covid 19 pandemic
- future challenges.

In response to questions, the CAB managers explained:

- their approaches to recruiting and retaining volunteers and the fact that certain projects, while time limited, left positive legacies in terms of developing more experienced, specialist advisors
- the costs attributed to having two separate physical locations, notwithstanding the significant benefits of the dual site approach and the limitations of a fully remote operation.

The Committee welcomed the presentation and praised the Bureaux and its staff for their valued services to local residents.

183. COMMUNITY SERVICES QUARTER 2 (2021-22) PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered an analysis of progress against key performance indicators, together with an updated risk register for the second quarter of 2021/22.

The accompanying report recommended that KPI CS5 (% of establishments with a score of 3 or better under the food hygiene rating scheme) be removed from future performance reports. However, upon debating this matter, Members concluded that food hygiene standards should continue to be reported to the Committee, regardless of whether the information reflected the performance of businesses or the joint environmental health team. It was agreed that a decision on the future of KPI CS5 should be deferred until the next meeting.

In response to Members' questions, officers confirmed that:

- in future, waiting list data for parking permits would identify separate figures for Town End, Caterham and, potentially, for 'Hillside, Whyteleafe' and 'Station Road / Whyteleafe Rec' (waiting list figures for all three locations had been amalgamated within the Quarter 2 report)
- missed collections of food waste were rectified within 24 hours – CCTV footage had been reviewed to ascertain the reasons for these oversights

- a recycling collection service for Waste Electric and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and batteries was not offered for flats, apart from three locations where dedicated containers had been provided (the Locality Services Manager would confirm the three locations concerned after the meeting)
- some missed assisted collections had reoccurred from the same households – this was due mainly to the impact of changes to routes and crews and where greater awareness raising among the collection teams was required
- there had only been one instance of a request for parking enforcement not being actioned within 24 hours
- information about the number of fly-tips removed by the street cleaning team would be provided within future performance reports
- the information generated by the Council's online missed bin reporting system would be reviewed to check whether it is fit for purpose.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the Quarter 2 (2021/22) performance and risks for the Community Services Committee be noted; and
- B. a decision on the future of performance indicator CS5 (food establishment ratings) be deferred until the next meeting on the 18th January 2022, pending consideration of potential alternative means of measuring both the food hygiene standards of businesses and the performance of the food safety team.

184. REVIEW OF STATUTORY TAXI & PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE STANDARDS

A report was presented regarding the statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards which had been published by the Department for Transport (DfT). Licensing authorities had been advised to adopt the standards *“unless there is a compelling reason not to”*. The standards contained recommendations covering numerous aspects of the taxi licensing regime, including:

- timelines for reviewing policies and associated consultation requirements
- the duration of licenses
- safeguarding issues / subscription to the online disclosure and barring service
- information sharing with the police and other licensing authorities
- self-reporting of relevant incidents by licence holders
- processes for dealing with complaints
- processes for determining Member level decisions to refuse or revoke licences
- ‘fit and proper person’ standards
- whether CCTV should be installed in licensed vehicles

A review of current practice within Tandridge, with reference to each of the DfT's recommendations, had been undertaken by the licensing team. The report included a summary of the review (together with a delivery plan for achieving the standards) and advised that the Council's *‘guidance for proprietors and drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles’* would need to be revised following a public consultation.

The report also advised that the DfT expected reviews to be completed before the end of the calendar year so that any changes in policies can be effective as soon as possible in 2022. This was questioned by Members on the basis that some of the key actions within the delivery plan, including the adoption of a new licensing policy, were not scheduled for implementation until nine to twelve months hence. Officers responded by explaining that the work to date and future timelines reflected a pragmatic approach, given the relatively limited staffing resources within the licensing team available for dedicated policy work. In any event, some of the measures within the DfT standards had already been implemented.

Officers responded to various other questions from Members. This included reference to recent dialogue with the police and taxi trade regarding the intention to include county lines exploitation within safeguarding awareness training.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the review of the statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards be noted; and
- B. the delivery plan for meeting the statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards, as shown at Appendix B to these minutes, be agreed.

185. QUEENS PARK IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

This project formed one of the actions arising from the Open Spaces Strategy adopted by the Committee in March 2021, namely to upgrade the park and investigate possible improvements, including:

- flood alleviation measures
- accessible car parking
- better refreshment and WC facilities, ideally near the play area
- water play activity
- seating with shade and shelter near the play area
- permanent table tennis
- a cycle network to access the park and cycle storage
- a trim trail with dual cycle use
- measures to sustain playing surfaces for football, rugby and cricket
- renovation of the basketball court
- improved litter management
- improved community noticeboard

A report was presented to inform Members about the progress of the project. This also:

- highlighted the fact that the playground equipment now required replacing (although officers confirmed it was still subjected to a maintenance regime); and
- acknowledged Surrey County Council's advice that flood resilience in Caterham on the Hill would be greatly enhanced if excess surface water (during heavy rainfall) could be stored at Queens Park.

The report explained that a 'pre-design' engagement exercise had been undertaken with the local community in August / September 2021 to identify what issues were most important to regular users of the park. A landscape architect was progressing initial design options to be shared with Members and subjected to public consultation, the indicative timetable for which was:

Initial design work	Oct to Dec 2021
Meeting with councillors – early design work	Dec 2021
Public consultation / engagement on options	Jan to March 2022
Refine options	March/April 2022
Report and recommendations to the Committee	by June 2022
Planning and funding applications	by June 2022
Construction	2022/23

The budget for the early design work was £50,000, to be part funded from the capital programme with a £20,000 contribution from Surrey County Council. Total project costs were in the region of £1 million for which grants would be sought from various sources, including Community Infrastructure Levy, Surrey County Council and the Lottery. Officers also acknowledged the need for effective income generation to help meet the cost of providing park services.

Further views expressed by residents to Caterham on the Hill Members were conveyed during the debate, including suggestions for a caged football area, a running track, and observations that the park was valued as it is and that its natural ambience should be protected from over-development. Some Members expressed the desire for flood alleviation measures to be prioritised over other potential enhancements. The need to ensure that future maintenance costs are manageable was also discussed.

Regarding the consultation responses about suggested improvements (Appendix E to the report) Members asked if there was any quantitative analysis to demonstrate clear mandates for particular initiatives. In response, Officers agreed to present additional evidence to substantiate the extent of support for specific ideas. It was also confirmed that the queensparkproject@tandridge.gov.uk in-box was still being monitored.

RESOLVED – that the Committee supports the progress of the Queens Park improvements project and notes its aims, objectives and draft timetable.

Rising 9.42 pm

Community Services Committee – 23rd November 2021
Standing Order 30 questions and responses

Questions from Councillor Lee

After a recent fire at the Whyteleafe car park public toilets managed by TDC, please could you:

1. Give an update on the cause and remedial action taken?

Response from the Executive Head of Communities

The fire in the Whyteleafe public toilets on 15th November has been reported to the Police and they are monitoring the anti-social behaviour which was the cause of it. The fire did not cause any major damage and the toilets are now operational again.

2. Give an update on the plans to de-commission and / or refurbish TDC public toilets?

Response from the Executive Head of Communities

The public toilet refurbishment and rationalisation programme is being reviewed and will recommence early in 2022. A report will come back to Community Services Committee. The Council will carry out discussions with Parish Councils to assess if they wish to operate some of the public toilets. The Council will also discuss with local businesses a “local loo” scheme.

Supplementary question from Councillor Lee

Were we able to fix the damaged equipment in the Whyteleafe public toilets and when will the report be coming to the Committee?

Response from the Executive Head of Communities

I understand that the necessary repairs have been carried out and the report on the refurbishment and rationalisation programme will be submitted to either the 18th January or 17th March 2022 meetings.

APPENDIX 'B'**APPENDIX 'B'****Delivery plan for meeting the statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards**

No.	Action	Responsible Person	Target Completion Date
1	Improve the prominence of information on the Tandridge D.C. website on how to make a complaint in relation to taxis.	Licensing officer	1 month
2	'Ways to make complaint to the authority' to be displayed in licensed private hire vehicles.	Licensing officer	3 months
3	Identify and liaise with key stakeholders on areas of taxi licensing policy that may benefit from review (e.g. the licensing of electric vehicles, access to taxis by wheelchair users).	Senior licensing officer	3 months
4	Implement the new shared database for Environmental Health and Licensing to allow for the analysis of trends across all licensees as well as complaints against individual licensees.	Env Health & Licensing team leader	6 months
5	Review of delegations so that the Executive Head with responsibility for Environmental Health and Licensing is authorised to immediately revoke a licence when it is necessary to do so on the grounds of public safety.	Senior licensing officer	6 months
6	<p>Draft revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, to incorporate the following recommendation from the Statutory Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licence holders should be required to notify the issuing authority within 48 hours of an arrest and release, charge or conviction of any sexual offence, any offence involving dishonesty or violence and any motoring offence.• 'The Surrey Wide Convictions Policy' adopted by TDC be revised to incorporate the recommendations shown in Appendix to the Statutory Standards on the assessment of previous convictions.• Mandatory training in county lines exploitation for all licensed drivers, including those who have already completed the safeguarding awareness training.• The test of a driver's proficiency to include an oral language skills assessment.• Annual criminality checks for vehicle proprietors.	Senior licensing officer	6 months

No.	Action	Responsible Person	Target Completion Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment as to whether there are local circumstances which indicate that the installation of CCTV in vehicles would have either a positive or an adverse net effect on the safety of taxi and private hire vehicle users. • Annual criminality checks (basic DBS) for private hire vehicle operators. • Private hire vehicle operators to provide a register of booking and dispatch staff, and evidence that they have had sight of a Basic DBS check on all individuals listed on their register, and to ensure that Basic DBS checks are conducted on any individuals added to the register and that this is compatible with their policy on employing ex-offenders. • Amend the requirements for record keeping for private hire vehicle operators to align them with the Statutory Standards. 		
7	Seek approval from the Community Services Committee to consult on the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.	Senior licensing officer	6 months
8	12 week public consultation on proposed changes to licensing rules.	Senior licensing officer	9 months
9	Seek approval from the Community Services Committee for the adoption of the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.	Senior licensing officer	9 months
10	Publication of scheme of delegation that clearly authorises officers to suspend hackney carriage and private hire licences.	Senior licensing officer	9 months
11	Training for members of the Regulatory Sub-Committee on licensing procedures, natural justice, understanding the risks of CSAE, disability and equality awareness and the making of difficult and potentially controversial decisions.	Senior licensing officer	12 months
12	Review of the licences already issued that may be effected by any changes in licensing requirements as a result of policy review.	Licensing officer	12 months
13	Undertake further reviews of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.	Senior licensing officer	At least every 5 years