

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 17th March 2022 at 7:30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Wren (Chair), Allen, Bourne (substitute in place of Swann), Connolly, Crane, Gaffney (substitute in place of Caulcott), Hammond, Lee, Mansfield, North, O'Driscoll and Stamp.

PRESENT (Virtually): Councillor Swann

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Gillman

ALSO PRESENT (Virtually): Councillors Lockwood and Mills

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Swann and Caulcott

The Chair paid tribute to the Projects Specialist, Nikki Tagg, who would shortly be leaving the Council after 6 years of employment. The Chair commented that Nikki had been a huge asset to the Council, handling complex situations with professionalism. Members thanked Nikki for her support of Members and wished her success in her new role. Members were also informed that Richard Coles would also shortly be leaving the Council and the Chair wished him well and thanked him for this work.

280. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 18TH JANUARY 2022

These minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

281. QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

Questions had been submitted by Councillor O'Driscoll (2) and Councillor Crane (1). The questions and responses are provided at Appendix A to these minutes.

282. PETITION - WARLINGHAM PUBLIC CONVENIENCE

A petition was presented by Mr Perry Chotai, a Warlingham resident. The petition urged the Council to retain the public convenience in the centre of Warlingham, and to refurbish it to meet modern standards and facilitate efficient maintenance. The petition had 165 signatories.

On receipt of the petition, the Chair applied section 6(ii) of Standing Order 32 and the matter was referred to the next meeting of the Committee, where a report on the wider review of public conveniences would be considered.

283. COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE - 2022/23 BUDGET – TRANCHE 2 PRESSURE AND SAVINGS DISTRIBUTION

As explained during the previous cycle of meetings, the following approach had been taken to the allocation of pressures and savings to the respective policy committees as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process:

Tranche 1 – savings and pressures which were straightforward to allocate (these had been agreed by the respective policy committees during the previous cycle of meetings)

Tranche 2 – pressures regarding inflation (£174k), salary increments / National Insurance staffing costs (£193k) which were being held as ‘corporate items’, pending allocation to policy committees during the March / April 2022 cycle of meetings

Tranche 3 – the more complex cross-cutting savings (also being held as ‘corporate items’) which would require service reviews and business cases to ensure accurate distribution to policy committees during the June 2022 cycle of meetings.

A report was submitted which proposed that this Committee’s:

- share of Tranche 2 pressures be £76k as per Appendix B; and
- fees and charges be as per Appendix C.

The recommended fees and charges had, where appropriate, been uplifted by inflation.

In response to questions regarding budget distribution, Officers confirmed that:

- the movement from the Tranche 1 budget was made up of a virement, an increase in utility costs, contract inflation and income inflation. This figure had been built into the budget when agreed in February and the recommendation of the report was to reallocate this to the Community Services budget.
- car parking charges were not proposed to be increased in order to support local businesses.
- the Council only charged rent for using Westway Common where it was to be used for commercial activity. The Council did not charge rent where there was a community benefit.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. subject to further consideration by the Strategy & Resources Committee on the 7th April 2022 regarding the overall allocation of Tranche 2 pressures and savings, the revised 2022/23 net budget for the Community Services Committee at Appendix B be approved; and
- B. the uplifted Fees & Charges for the Community Services Committee (Appendix C) be approved.

284. COMMUNITY SERVICES Q3 2021-2022 PERFORMANCE REPORT

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

Officers drew the Committee's attention to:

- KPI CS5 which, as agreed at the January meeting of the Committee, would continue to be reported although it did not reflect the performance of the environmental health team. Therefore, performance information submitted to the Tandridge & Mole Valley Environmental Health/Licensing Partnership Board had been included in Appendix A to the report.
- KPI CS10 included parking warnings issued. This was because warnings had been issued following the resumption of enforcement activities following the Covid-19 pandemic. However, warnings were no longer being used and only Penalty Charge Notices were being issued. As a result, warnings would not be included in the report figures in the future.
- In terms of assisted refuse and recycling collections, Community Officers checked whether these were still required. It was confirmed that these cost 10% more than normal collections. There were currently 1,930 assisted collections a week.

In response to observations from Members, it was confirmed that:

- As part of the service review, consideration would be given to offering enhanced street cleaning services to Parish Councils for a fee.
- Fly tipping incidents would continue to be provided to the Committee. In terms of prosecutions relating to fly tipping, since 2015/16 the Council investigated 24% of incidents. 5% of the total number of incidents resulted in a warning letter, and the prosecution rate was 1%. CCTV continued to be used in spots which experienced regular fly tipping incidents.
- Officers would raise concerns around the condition of the pool at Village Health Club, Caterham with Freedom Leisure.
- In terms of Risk CS7, the provision of street cleaning schedules would assist Members to be proactive in informing residents about how flooding can be prevented by enabling the street cleaning team to remove the build-up of silt on roads.
- In terms of Risk CS9, whilst it was necessary to include the risk of the rising cost of building materials, the value to the Community Services budget was not great enough to warrant a higher RAG rating. The risk was higher to the Housing Revenue Account.
- Flooding to sports pitches and the risk of loss of income would be recorded in the risk register in the future. Work was being done to consider options for drainage systems.
- The Committee noted the impressive recycling performance and requested that thanks be passed onto officers.

RESOLVED – that the Quarter 2 (2021/22) performance and risks for the Community Services Committee be noted.

285. COMMUNITY TENNIS UPDATE

The Committee considered a report which sought approval for an application to be submitted to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for funding to improve the Council's public tennis courts.

The funding would be used to resurface two courts at Whyteleafe Recreation Ground. It would also be used to provide access control and a booking system at Whyteleafe and Queens Park which would give certainty to players allow coaching opportunities. It would be possible to charge coaches offering private lessons, and the Council may waive costs if coaching was free or low cost for local people.

It was confirmed that Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and private courts were not eligible for the funding.

The report also highlighted works being undertaken at other locations, which were funded through existing budgets.

Members made the following observations:

- Whilst the funding could not be used to improve the MUGA next to the two courts in Whyteleafe, the Council could consider utilising resources to improve the MUGA at this location.
- Wheelchair accessibility should be considered as part of future improvements

Councillor Gaffney moved an amendment that any proposal to implement charges for the use of public tennis courts be brought to the committee for decision. This was agreed.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. progress be noted and the Executive Head of Communities be authorised to:
 - (i) apply for DCMS funding to seek improvements to the condition of the courts and access to play at Whyteleafe Recreation Ground and Queens Park, Caterham, including the operation of a nil fee booking model for general play, but to also generate income through charging for professional coaching; and
 - (ii) keep under review the potential to charge for play at some peak times; and
- B. any proposals to implement charges for the use of public tennis courts are to be brought to the Committee for decision.

286. ANIMAL WARDEN UPDATE

The Executive Head of Communities gave a verbal update on the animal warden service. A four-month trial had commenced in August 2021 with one animal warden covering both Tandridge District and Mole Valley District as part of the shared environmental health service.

The out of hours arrangements were not affected during the trial. Animal licensing has been undertaken by the animal warden and environmental health technical officer. Where the animal warden had to prioritise, the environmental health technical officer had handled some work. In addition, the Council had support with stray dog collections from Valgrays Border Collie & Animal Rescue Centre.

The volume of work in 2021/22 had met or exceeded the volume of work carried out in the previous year. The trial demonstrated that it would be possible to maintain a satisfactory level of service with one animal warden, which would result in savings of £17.5k per annum.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that:

- during the year to date, 62 notifications had been received that dogs were stray or lost and had been contained for collection by the animal warden.
- the Council had access to backup kennels if capacity was likely to be reached. However, there had been no indication that capacity was close to the limit.

Rising 8.45 pm