

## 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 17 January 2023 at 7:30pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Wren (Chair), Swann (Vice-Chair), Allen, Bilton, Caulcott, S.Farr, Lee, North, O'Driscoll, Pinard, Shiner and Hammond (Substitute) (In place of G.Black)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors C.Farr, Sayer and N.White

**ALSO PRESENT (Virtually):** Councillors Moore, Gaffney and Gillman

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors G.Black

#### **203. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2022**

The minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

#### **204. APPOINTING A STAND FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGES ON THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY AT STATION ROAD EAST IN OXTED**

The Committee considered a proposal for the relocation of the taxi rank in the public highway on Station Road East in Oxted to the side of the public highway next to 129 to 131 Station Road East (Lorimers).

Local taxi drivers and the taxi representative group had raised safety concerns with the current position of the taxi rank, due to its location in the centre of the road and a lack of pavement access.

The rearrangement of the area was approved by the Tandridge Local Committee of Surrey County Council in December 2021 following a public consultation for residents and businesses, to which no responses were received.

A Traffic Regulation Order had been approved by Surrey County Council for the change of layout, with works commencing following the approval of the Committee and the outcome of the 28 day consultation.

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

- approval from the Highways Authority was for the change to the layout of the highway. Licensing Authority approval was required to make it a formal taxi rank.
- the process for approval of taxi stand was subject to a consultation. If no objections were raised during the consultation, the new taxi rank location would be approved without further Committee consideration. If any objections were received during the consultation, the matter would come back to committee for approval.

**RESOLVED** – that:

- A. The appointment of a stand for Hackney Carriages on the public highway at the proposed site of Station Road East, Oxted at the side of 129 to 131 (Lorimers), be approved.
- B. Officers will advertise in the local press for 28 days for comments to be submitted to the Council.
- C. Subject to no objections being received during the consultation phase, the appointment of the stand for Hackney Carriages as proposed will be constructed.

## **205. COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 2023/24 DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

A proposed 2023/24 revenue budget and capital programme for the Community Services Committee was presented as part of the overall Council's budget. The proposed budget was part of a balanced overall budget for 2023/24 which included savings of £1.7m. The budget would be presented to the Strategy & Resources Committee on 31 January and Full Council on 9 February.

The report set out a proposed revenue budget of £4.560m for 2023/24, and proposed Fees and Charges for 2023/24. A capital programme of £5m over four years, of which £990k was scheduled for delivery in 2023/24, was also proposed.

In response to questions from Members, Officers explained that:

- the 2022/23 projected outturn at Month 6 for the Committee was an overspend of £324k, of which £237k related to Waste Services and which were a result of inflationary pressures. This contributed to an overall projected Council overspend at Month 6 of £447k.
- income targets had been set using robust estimates. There were allocations within the Committee's budget to reduce Waste Services income target in line with performance.

In terms of the service provision, Officers responded to Member questions by explaining that:

- a comprehensive review of the Cesspool Service would be undertaken
- there were no plans to introduce a Christmas tree collection service
- any changes to the operation of Ellice Road car park would be the subject of a business case and Officers were working with contractors to identify a suitable proposal. The capital programme was based on reasonable assumptions, but it may be necessary for changes to be made.
- outdoor sport charges were necessary to recover a small amount of the high maintenance costs met by the Council
- the capital budget provided for the replacement of existing litter bins and the installation of new litter bins would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**RESOLVED** – that:

- A. the Community Services Committee’s draft revenue budget for 2023/24 of £4.560m, as shown in Appendix A and Appendix B, taking account of pressures and savings allocated to the Committee be agreed, and it be noted that further allocations will be made to distribute an amount equal to the agreed Council pay award, subject to approval at Strategy & Resources Committee and Full Council;
- B. the Community Services Committee’s Fees and Charges for 2023/24 as shown in Appendix C be agreed;
- C. the Community Services Committee’s Capital Programme for 2023/24 being the sum of £990k for 2023/24, as shown in Appendix D, be agreed
- D. the Subjective Revenue Budgets in Appendix B, showing movements from 2022/23 to 2023/24 and an estimated movement to 2024/25 be noted.

## **206. CONSIDERATION OF MOTION PRESENTED TO COUNCIL BY COUNCILLOR O’DRISCOLL**

The Committee considered a motion, which had been referred to the Committee from Full Council on 15 December 2022, in relation to the provision of accessible playground equipment.

Officers presented a report which recommended that future refurbishment and redesign of Council playgrounds would provide inclusive, accessible equipment and environments. A review of playground refurbishment was scheduled but had been delayed due to the service review in Operational Services. The review, which would commence shortly, would include assessing the suitability of new Disability Discrimination Act complaint equipment, engaging stakeholders and ensuring appropriate design was incorporated into future schemes.

Councillor O’Driscoll, who moved the motion at Full Council, explained that accessible playground equipment was a right, not a luxury. Residents were concerned about the access to equipment, and inclusive playgrounds in the District would ensure all children were able to benefit from play.

Members also commented that:

- Oxted Parish Council had recently agreed to the installation of two pieces of accessible playground equipment
- the review should take account of locations across the District, including more rural areas;
- the review should be mindful of the potential for anti-social behaviour

**RESOLVED** – that all refurbishment and redesign of Council playgrounds provide inclusive, accessible equipment and environments.

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

The Chairman considered it necessary for the Committee to consider an urgent item of business following a recent dog incident in Caterham, due to the public interest in the incident and dog ownership.

The Chairman expressed condolences to the family and friends of the deceased and acknowledged the public's concerns. Senior Members and Officers were supporting the Police investigation. The Council had previously adopted a policy for licensing professional dog walkers who use the Council's land. This included a limit of six dogs on each dog walker, that dog walkers are registered with a national body, hold a relevant qualification covering canine behaviour and control, and adhere to a code of conduct.

Councillor Lee made the following statement:

In light of the tragic incident on Gravelly Hill last week, this Council wishes to express its sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of the woman who lost her life.

1. This Committee instructs officers to prepare a report as soon as the Police investigation has concluded to be presented to the next available Community Services Committee or to convene an extraordinary Committee. The report should include possible actions this Council can take to both protect businesses engaged in dog walking, but also importantly, to enhance public safety. The evidence should be sought from other Districts, professional dog walking organisations and others. The report to include but not limited to:
  - A. A reduction in the limit of dogs to be walked by professional dog walker at one time.
  - B. Consideration of limits of dog sizes to be walked at the same time.
  - C. Other measures, as suggested by professional dog, walking organisations, the Police and others.
  - D. Communication campaigns to promote the Tandridge dog walker licensing with both the dog walking community and dog owners across the District.
2. Once the Police investigation has concluded, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and other Members should meet with the MP to present evidence, that could lead to changes to nationwide legislation or regulation.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Lee's statement and the course of action within be minuted.

Rising 8.26 pm