

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Held at:	Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone
Date	Tuesday, 26 April 2022
Present	Councillors Miss Susan Carey, Gary Fuller, Michelle Keutenius (Chairman), Connor McConville, Terence Mullard, Rebecca Shoob (Vice-Chair) and John Wing
Apologies for Absence	Councillor Peter Gane and Councillor Patricia Rolfe
Officers Present:	Andy Blaszkowicz (Director of Housing and Operations), Gill Butler (Chief Officer - Housing), Kate Clark (Case Officer - Committee Services), Andrew Clarke (Senior Area Officer), Sharon Davy (Income Management Senior Specialist), Jonathan Hicks (Performance Specialist (Business Insight Manager)), Sarah Osborn (Community Safety Specialist), Jo Robinson (Corporate Debt & Business Rates Senior Specialist), Andrew Rush (Chief Officer Place & Regulatory Services), Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services), Karen Weller (Environmental Protection Senior Specialist) and Jemma West (Committee Service Specialist)
Others Present:	None

38. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Gary Fuller declared that he is a tenant of the Council's Housing Service.

Councillor Michelle Keutenius also declared that she is a tenant of the Council's Housing Service.

Both councillors did not take part in discussions or voting on agenda item 10 – Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy and Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

39. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2022 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

40. **Minutes of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2022 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

41. **Annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2021-22**

The report sets out the work that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Finance and Performance Sub-Committee have completed during 2021-2022.

All members agreed to receive and approve report OS/21/15.

42. **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-23**

This report sets out a proposed work programme for Overview and Scrutiny work for the municipal year 22/23.

It was noted that Otterpool Park scored the highest points as the most important subject for discussion.

Folca Phase 2 – a prominent subject on the Scrutiny work plan, this phase will explore options for the site not included within the Health provision in Folca phase1.

Councillor Miss Carey thanked Miss Jemma West, Committee Services Specialist for her hard work on the programme, ensuring full member participation in scoring.

Proposed by Councillor Michelle Keutenius
Seconded by Councillor Connor McConville; and

Resolved:

1. **To receive and note report OS/21/16.**
2. **To adopt and implement the Scrutiny work programme, set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report, for the municipal year 22/23.**

(Voting: For 7; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

43. **Income and Debt Management Policy**

This report was seeking a decision to adopt the proposed changes to the Income and Debt Management Policy and bring to Cabinet.

Members comments included:

- Collection of foreign HGV fines – although not mentioned specifically in the report, these fines are reported followed by an administration process for recovery.

- Breathing space – Government guidance, further details could be added to the Policy.
- Enforcement agencies – ensure good practise. The Council lays down the process the debt collection agencies should follow.

All members agreed to receive and note report OS/21/20.

44. Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order

On 23 February 2022, Cabinet agreed to consult the public on the new Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). The Dog Control PSPOs provided authorised council officers effective means to enforcement against irresponsible dog ownership and related anti-social behaviour.

The public consultation exercise ends on 4 May 2022 and the purpose of this report was to give the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to give feedback to be included in the consultation.

Mrs Karen Weller, Environmental Protection Senior Specialist, advised members of an amendment to the report at 3.6 as follows:

3.6 'The final section of the table under 3.9 outlines suggested changes to the seasonal beach from removal of 4 zones to partially allow and ban dogs access, to Dogs banned across the whole of the beach.'

Members sought clarification on aspects of the report and new Protection Order.

- Freemantle Road Play Area and Sandgate Play Area – dogs are banned from the play areas only.
- Dogs are banned from play areas, however outside of some areas dogs on leads are allowed.
- Members were pleased to see strengthened dog fouling enforcement which seemed to be a deterrent. Hotspot areas are concentrated on.
- Free poo bags? Other councils provide bags, including Sellindge PC and Sandgate PC, however dog owners must take responsibility.
- Public consultation ends on 4 May 2022. At present 180 supportive responses received.

The Chairman thanked officers and residents for their work and input on this report and consultation. She said it was important to keep children safe and play areas clean.

All members agreed to receive and note report OS/21/17.

45. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Public Spaces Protection Order

On 23 March 2022, Cabinet agreed to consult the public on the renewal of the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and to

retain the seven measures included within the order as unchanged. The renewal of the PSPOs provided authorised council officers and Kent Police with an additional tool in conjunction with the existing powers and legislation to help tackle specific issues of antisocial behaviour affecting parts of the District.

The public consultation exercise ends on 5 May 2022 and the purpose of this report was to give the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to give feedback to be included in the consultation.

Councillor McConville referred to 2.4 of the report and commented that there seemed to be an increase of nitrous oxide canisters reported by the Town Sprucers. Officers gave assurances that they would work with partners on this problem.

A rise in unauthorised camping was noted which may increase as the summer season progresses. Each case reported is treated individually to ensure homelessness is not the issue. Meetings with partners are frequent to discuss issues, however this PSPO can regulate any problems.

All members agreed to receive and note report OS/21/18.

The Chairman, Councillor Keutenius and Councillor Fuller left the meeting and did not return. Councillor Shoob, as Vice Chairman, took over proceedings for the following item.

46. **Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy and Rechargeable Repairs Policy**

Report OS/21/19 sets out the rationale for the development and adoption of two housing policies, vital for the continued growth of the housing service, and the effective management and delivery of repairs and maintenance under FHDC.

Ms Gill Butler, Chief Officer Housing, presented this report drawing members' attention to the appendices.

Members commented as follows:

- A very detailed report and policies.
- Damp and Mould – a suggestion that this needs more careful consideration as there could be more serious problems than condensation and ventilation. Further clarification will be added to the policy.
- How is performance and tenant satisfaction monitored? Measured through key performance indicators (KPIs) for compliance. Targets are monitored on a monthly basis and reported to the Corporate Leadership Team and the Strategic Tenants Advisory Panel. A tenant satisfaction survey is in place also.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 26 April 2022

- Performance is also measured by transactional surveys, the trend of these is upwards.
- Recharge considerations, for example, stolen keys and faulty smoke alarms. Circumstances would be taken into account and consideration given to vulnerable tenants.

Proposed by Councillor Rebecca Shoob
Seconded by Councillor John Wing; and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note report OS/21/19 and the draft policies for Housing Repairs and Maintenance, and Rechargeable Repairs.**
- 2. To provide comments and recommend approval of the policies for Cabinet in May 2022.**

(Voting: For 5; Against 0; Abstentions 0)