

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Thursday, 13th December, 2018 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## **Voting Members**

Cllr M.D. Smith (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr J.B. Canty (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr M.S. Choudhary  
Cllr R.M. Cooper  
Cllr K. Dibble  
Cllr Veronica Graham-Green  
Cllr B. Jones  
Cllr Nadia Martin  
Cllr B.A. Thomas

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr T.D. Bridgeman

## **19. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st November, 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

## **20. TRAVELLER INCURSIONS - ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee welcomed, Ms Helen Payne, Principal Environmental Health Officer, and Katharine Opie, Environmental Health Technical Officer, who were in attendance to give an overview of the Council's process of dealing with unauthorised encampments.

The key priority in the first instance of dealing with unauthorised encampments was to establish whose land the encampment was on. Once this was determined, the relevant organisation could begin the process to evict the travellers. If an encampment was on Council owned land a site visit would be carried out to assess the situation and identify any potential issues such as vulnerable people and those with particular educational, health and wellbeing or housing needs. Should any issues be identified the individuals would be signposted to organisations which could offer support and advice. Facilities on the site were also checked, including the provision of running water and toilets.

At this stage in the process a Notice of Direction would be issued to leave the land forthwith. This notice would be given to each individual and attached to every vehicle/caravan on the site and displayed at the entrance of the site. The individuals were requested to attend the Magistrates Court for the summons to be signed, once signed; 24 hours must pass until the court hearing. When the complaint had been

heard in the Magistrates Court, an eviction notice could be issued. The departure from the site would then be negotiated and the eviction enforced if necessary. The Committee noted that it was an offence not to comply with the order and individuals were not allowed to return to the site within three months of the Notice of Direction.

Police involvement in the process was part of the Section 61 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. The police would become involved if two or more people were found to be trespassing by residing on land and had caused damaged to property or land, and/or if six or more vehicles were situated on the land. The Council would carry out welfare checks on behalf of the Police and the land owner would then need to follow the process to remove the trespassers from their land. In some cases the Police may issue a Notice of Direction to leave the land.

The Committee discussed the recent incursion on the car park at the former Southwood Golf Course. The Council had successfully moved the travellers on within eight days, the site had then been cleared and new prevention measures put in place. Prevention measures had included new heavy weight concrete barriers over the entrance to the car park and a trench dug on the opposite side of the road to prevent the travellers gaining access. Court costs had been incurred as part of this eviction and a bailiff had been engaged.

The Committee reviewed data showing the number of unauthorised encampments over the last seven years to date across the Borough and the number, which had been on Council owned land; the numbers averaged about three per year on Council land during this period. The average length of stay on Council land was 2.6 days compared to 3.5 days for land owned by others over the same period.

The Committee discussed legitimate reasons why travellers might be allowed to remain on the land for longer periods, these might include pregnancy/birth and mechanical failure.

The Committee discussed the presentation and requested that great emphasis should be placed on prevention measures and that information should be obtained on the costs relating to the incursion at the former Southwood Golf Course car park.

**ACTION:**

Action to be taken:	By Whom:	When:
To provide detail of the costs incurred relating to the eviction of the travellers from the former Southwood Golf Course car park. Cost should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of court fees and the engagement of bailiffs</li> <li>• Cost of prevention measures, site clearance and man hours</li> </ul>	Helen Payne, Principal Environmental Health Officer  Ashley Sharpe, Principal Contracts Manager	January, 2019

21. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 2 2018/19**

The Committee reviewed the information provided on performance monitoring and the following issues were raised:

- **Rough sleeping and street drinking issues in our town centres, through enforcement, deterrent and prevention** – It was noted that the timetable for this had slipped due to uncertainties surrounding the corporate structure, the new structure was now in place and final arrangements were being made to implement the scheme. The Committee requested that some clarity should be given on this from a relevant officer.
- **Future shape of the CCTV service and procurement of new cameras and maintenance and supply contract** – The Committee agreed to keep a watching brief of this issue.
- **Website visits** – The Committee requested further data on website usage, in particular how people access the web, what transaction are carried out online and how people use the Council’s website for this purpose.

A discussion was held on key indicators and the availability of live data in some areas. It was agreed that a discussion would be held at a future meeting to identify areas for further scrutiny, what a good deliverable looked like and how target dates were chosen.

The Committee were updated on the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). It was noted that 37 Councillors were using Rushmoor email addresses successfully and some training had been provided to Members with more to be provided in early 2019. It was noted that not all paid staff had been trained, and consideration was being given to how this would take place going forward. An E-learning package had been identified as a potential way forward.

A discussion were held on Freedom of Information Requests. It was noted that the Council averaged an 80% on time return rate per month. Services that received the most requests included Operations and Finance. The Committee requested some further information relating to the requestors and subjects of the requests received.

**ACTION:**

Action to be taken:	By Whom:	When:
To provide further data on Freedom of Information Requests including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requestor - Individual/Organisation/Business</li> <li>• Nature of the request</li> </ul>	Andrew Colver, Head of Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships	March, 2019

22. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee noted the current Work Plan.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

CLLR M.D. SMITH (CHAIRMAN)

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