

---

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

---

**MINUTES** of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 14 January 2015 from 7.00 - 9.17 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Lloyd Bowen (Chairman), Derek Conway, John Coulter, Mike Henderson (substitute for Councillor Monique Bonney) and Peter Marchington.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** David Clifford, Steph Curtis, Charlotte Hudson, Kellie MacKenzie, Len Mayatt, Lindsey Oldfield, Bob Pullen, Graeme Tuff and Emma Wiggins

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Ken Pugh (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health).

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Monique Bonney, Andy Booth, David Simmons (Cabinet Member for Environmental and Rural Affairs) and Ben Stokes.

### 429 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 November 2014 (Minute Nos. 349 – 353) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 430 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

### 431 COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health, the Economy and Community Services Manager and Safer and the Stronger Communities Officer to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health referred Members to the Community Safety Plan 2014/15, Appendix I of the report. He explained that the document was refreshed annually following the completion of a community safety strategic assessment.

The Safer and Stronger Communities Officer explained that the priorities of the Strategic Assessment would be considered by the Strategic Partnership at their annual Away Day on 19 January 2015. She also spoke about a workshop for front line staff recently held allowing them to comment on the draft assessment. The Safer and Stronger Communities Officer referred Members to the community safety issue questionnaire set out at Appendix II of the report, had been sent out to local residents to enable them to feed into the priority selection process.

The Economy and Community Services Manager stated the importance of Ward Councillor knowledge. She outlined some of the key activities delivered by the

Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in the last year which included: formation of a Violence Against Women and Girls Group; Swale Action To End Domestic Abuse (SATEDA) Freedom Programme; and tackling anti-social behaviour.

A Member considered that individual ward members should have been approached to comment on the document and complete the Community Safety Questionnaire 2014. He queried whether Councillors could attend the Strategic Planning Session?

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health advised that the Strategic Planning Session meetings were not open meetings as some confidential information was discussed. There was some discussion about the possibility of a Member briefing and the Economy and Community Services Manager advised that all Members would be consulted and should have been sent the questionnaire.

In response to a query from a Member about issues with the Community Payback Scheme, the Economy and Community Services Manager stated that there had recently been significant changes to this service and that 'Seetec' had recently secured the local contract for providing this scheme. She agreed to provide an update on their progress for Members.

- Economy and Community Services Manager

In response to queries from a Member about migration of people following Welfare Reform and emerging communities, the Economy and Community Services Manager explained that migration to the Borough brought with it fresh issues and it was about understanding how to engage better with those communities. She spoke about a project that Swale would be running with both Gravesham and Medway authorities to explore how to resolve these issues within Sheerness East ward.

A Member raised concern that the SATEDA Freedom Programme was not provided in Faversham.

The Safer and Stronger Communities Officer stated that funding had been secured for six Freedom Programmes. These would enable two for each area ie. Sittingbourne, Sheerness and Faversham. She was aware that one was currently already operating in Faversham.

In response to a query, the Economy and Community Services Manager confirmed that as a member of the Strategic Board AmicusHorizon were being consulted.

A Member referred to the issue of child sexual exploitation and queried how this would be monitored in Swale as it would need to be resolved as swiftly as possible.

The Economy and Community Services Manager stated that this was a national issue and was something that would be considered as a priority by the Partnership at its Away Day next week. It was also covered under the Safeguarding Policy.

In response to queries about the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) relationship with the Swale Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health stated that links were improving. He advised that he attended all of the Swale CCG meetings and also the Canterbury and Coastal Commissioning Group meetings as they were responsible for the Faversham area.

Following a request from a Member, the Safer and Stronger Communities Officer agreed to forward the most up-to-date quarterly baseline targets for 2014/15 to Members for information.

- Safer and Stronger Communities Officer

In response to a query about crime report numbers, the Safer and Stronger Communities Officer agreed to establish whether this was now referred to as an Incident number.

- Safer and Stronger Communities Officer

A Member referred to the Summary of progress of 2013/14 Community Safety table and raised concern that Swale did not appear to perform that well compared to other Kent authorities in relation to dealing with crime.

The Safer and Stronger Communities Officer reported that following a recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) review, a number of changes had been made to crime recording within Kent Police. The changes made following the review had led to inflated crime numbers making it difficult to accurately assess current performance.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health, Economy and Community Services Manager and Safer and Stronger Communities Officer for attending the meeting.

**432 (I) DRAFT SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY - CUSTOMER USE STATEMENT (II) SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS**

The Chairman welcomed the Head of Economy and Communities and Digital Communications Manager to the meeting. He explained that the Cabinet Member responsible for communications was the Leader who was currently out of the country and therefore had not been invited to attend the meeting.

The Chairman drew attention to the tabled papers which included an updated Draft Social Media Policy – Customer Use Statement and questions from the Head of Economy and Communities (both documents had previously been emailed to the Committee).

The Digital Communications Manager gave a short presentation which showed Swale Borough Council's (SBC) Facebook pages and Twitter. She explained that to raise awareness and ensure that Officers and Members were clear on how to use social media a draft Social Media Policy – Customer Use Statement and draft Social Media Policy and Guidelines for Officers and Members had been developed.

In response to a query from a Member, the Digital Communications Manager confirmed that the draft Social Media Policy and Guidelines for Officers and Members was currently out for consultation and had been forwarded to Members for comment.

A Member considered that it was important to note in the document that social media was not the only way to contact SBC as there was a proportion of local residents who did not have access to Facebook or Twitter.

In response to a request from a Member, the Head of Economy and Communities agreed to update the Draft Social Media Policy and Guidelines for Officers and Members to ensure that no images of vulnerable adults were used as well as children under the age of 18 years..

- Head of Economy and Communities

Following a request from a Member, the Digital Communications Manager agreed to look into the 'Adult Media Use and Attitudes' statistics for Swale.

- Digital Communications Manager

There was some discussion about possible training for Members on how to use Facebook/Twitter. A Member, also a member of the Member Development Working Group, advised that he believed this was something that would be arranged after the elections in May 2015 and be included as part of the New Member Induction sessions.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Economy and Communities and Digital Communications Manager for attending the meeting.

#### **433 DRAFT TREE POLICY**

The Chairman welcomed the Commissioning and Open Spaces Manager and Greenspaces Manager to the meeting.

The Commissioning and Open Spaces Manager introduced the draft Tree Policy which he advised would be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 4 February 2015. He explained that trees were a valuable and positive part of the Borough and needed to be managed responsibly.

The Commissioning and Open Spaces Manager reported that this was the first time Swale had provided a Tree Policy and SBC's Greenspaces Manager had researched best practice to ensure all requirements were met. He drew attention to the five objectives of the Policy.

A Member asked whether there were in-house statistics highlighting trouble-spots. He also considered that residents were often not sure who to contact about issues with trees and improved signposting was required perhaps by including in an edition of 'Inside Swale'.

The Landscape Officer reported that whilst officers had a 'general feel' of where trouble-spots were, there was no accurate record kept. He considered that the Tree Policy would assist with improving this. The Greenspaces Manager agreed that more could be done to inform residents about who to contact and that residents should be referred to Swale's Customer Services Centre (CSC) in the first instance as they could advise whether the tree was on SBC or Kent County Council land.

A Member considered that item (10) Replanting, should be moved to appear at the beginning of the Policy, and that SBC should be saying that they were looking to improve and increase the use and value of trees within the Borough. He also considered that the Policy should ensure that Planning Services worked alongside

developers to ensure re-planting was provided as part of planning applications. The Member further requested that the second paragraph of item (10) be amended to read *'The Council is committed to the replanting of trees to ensure that the amenity of the area is maintained **and** enhanced.'*

Members considered the proposal but felt that re-wording was not necessary and that the policy was fine in its current format.

The Commissioning and Open Spaces Manager explained that the proposed Tree Policy was more about maintenance of existing trees within SBC ownership and replanting on private land was outside the scope of this particular Policy.

The Chairman thanked the Commissioning and Open Spaces Manager and Greenspaces Manager for attending the meeting.

#### **434 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Policy and Performance Officer referred Members to the Work Programme. He reported that the Head of Planning had advised that unfortunately he was not now able to provide an update on Planning Enforcement Strategy and Service Charter for the next meeting on 25 February 2015.

The Chairman suggested that the item could be considered at the meeting scheduled for 27 May 2015.

Some Members considered the delay unacceptable and requested that the Head of Planning provided reasons for the delay.

#### Chairman

Copies of this document are available on the Council website <http://www.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. If you would like hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact Swale Borough Council at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT or telephone the Customer Service Centre 01795 417850.

All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel