

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 February 2017

### Present:

**Councillors Chapelard, Dawlings, Gray, Hannam, Hill, Huggett, Ms Palmer, Simmons, Uddin and Woodward**

**Officers in Attendance:** David Candlin (Head of Economic Development), Karen Fossett (Head of Planning Services), Terry Hughes (Community Safety Manager) and Gary Stevenson (Head of Environment and Street Scene)

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillors Dr Basu, Holden, Lidstone and March

### APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

OSC57/15 Councillor Palmer advised Members that she had received notification from the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Hills, who was due to Chair the meeting in Councillor Rankin's absence, that he was a late apology. Councillor Hills had requested that Councillor Palmer stand in as Chair for this meeting.

Councillor Palmer asked the Committee members whether they agreed to her Chairing the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Palmer take the Chair for this meeting only.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

OSC58/15 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hills, Huggett and Rankin.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

OSC59/15 There were no declarations of interest made, within the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Members.

### MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

OSC60/15 The minutes of the meeting dated 28 November 2016 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Committee meeting dated 28 November 2016 be agreed.

### ITEMS CALLED IN UNDER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 13

OSC61/15 There were no items which had been called-in under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 12.

### CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

OSC62/15 The Chair confirmed the order of the agenda.

### INTERIM REPORT OF THE TACKLING EXCESSIVE SPEEDS ON RURAL ROADS TASK AND FINISH GROUP - TO FOLLOW

OSC63/15 The Chairman introduced the report which detailed the work to date of the Tackling Excessive Speeds on Rural Roads Task and Finish Group.

Mike Lagden, a representative from Hawkhurst Speedwatch addressed the Committee and highlighted the following points:

- The Group had observed drivers on many occasions throughout the year and its aim was to improve the environment of the village and have its work taken seriously by decision makers. The Group agreed with the points raised in the report and its conclusions, and with the Task and Finish Group's view that current attitudes towards the strict criteria for the deployment of speed cameras needed to be relaxed.
- The Group felt the current government policy for speed camera deployment, which focussed on killed or seriously injured (KSI's), did not deal with the prevention of accidents before KSI's occurred or the cost to the public purse resulting from KSI's.
- The point of the Group's campaign was to slow drivers down when approaching and when travelling through the village - which could be achieved with the use of speed cameras.
- The Group and Hawkhurst village received a good level of support from the police but it was acknowledged that the resources available were limited. However, it was hoped that the data being collected during observations, would be used to target persistent offenders and educate speeding drivers.
- There was only one suitable site for a mobile camera van in Hawkhurst, which produced limited results. The Group's data, however, presented a different picture, particularly in those areas where the use of a camera van was not practical.
- The Group appreciated the support being shown for it's work in getting a permanent, technology based solution to the problem of speeding drivers in the village.

Councillor Sean Holden also addressed the Committee and highlighted the following points:

There had been a history in Hawkhurst of speeding and as a County Councillor, Councillor Holden received more complaints about speeding across the borough, than any other issue.

Councillor Holden, along with the MP for Maidstone and the Weald, Helen Grant, had set up a campaign group which was looking at the issue of speeding drivers. One of the areas of concern highlighted by the campaign group was the potential for community groups such as Speedwatch to become disheartened, as there were no tangible outcomes from their work and results were not being acted upon.

Councillor Holden felt that part of the solution to the requests of the Speedwatch groups, who were identifying areas where enforcement was needed, was for the police to provide the level of enforcement required.

Although limited by resources, the police had started to meet this need.

Councillor Holden advised that the campaign group had also worked towards bringing mobile camera vans to areas where a genuine need had been identified and before serious accidents occurred.

Sandhurst had received a greater number of visits by a speed camera van than Hawkhurst, which Councillor Holden felt was at odds with the results produced by the work of Hawkhurst Speedwatch.

Councillor Holden referred to advances in the technology for hand-held cameras, which he felt would be of benefit to Speedwatch groups. Overall, Councillor Holden felt the situation had improved, and he felt some impetuous had been gained through the efforts of the Speedwatch groups and the campaign group he was involved with.

Councillor Palmer reminded the Committee that the report was an interim version and would be subject to further work and fact-checking, prior to a final report being presented to the next meeting of the Committee on 10 April.

Members expressed the following views:

Councillor Dawlings wanted to underscore the points made by Mr Lagden and Councillor Holden, in that the issue was not just about the number of KSI's but an assessment of threat and risk levels by the Kent and Medway Speed Camera Partnership and other decision makers.

Councillor Hannam advised that, due to illness and being away, he had not been able to participate in the Task and Finish Group and did not feel he should be referred to as a Member.

**RESOLVED** to note the interim report.

## **PORTFOLIO HOLDER PLANS AND PROGRESS - SUSTAINABILITY**

OSC64/15 Councillor Ronen Basu, Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, outlined the achievements within his portfolio in 2015-2016 and his ambitions for 2016-17, as detailed in appendix A to the report. Councillor Basu highlighted the following areas of his portfolio:

Phase one of the Public Realms work was complete with £1 million of funding secured from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund for phase two.

50 tonnes of carbon emissions per year were saved as a result of the photo voltaic panels installed at the Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre. The panels also produced energy savings of £42,634 which were placed into the Council's general fund. Putlands and Weald centres were being considered for PV panels also.

Since February 2016 the Collective Switching Scheme has helped Tunbridge Wells residents save £62,000.

85% of the food businesses in the borough achieved a score of 5 - averaged across the year during 2016. From Food Standards Agency returns, 98% of food businesses were reported as broadly compliant in both 2015 and 2016.

In 2015/16, 25,228 tonnes of household waste was collected, including residual, street cleansing, bulky and civic amenity vehicle waste. 20,935 tonnes of recyclables were collected, 2,545 of glass, 5426 tonnes of paper and card from bring sites and green boxes. 1,209 tonnes of tins and plastic were collected from the kerbside.

The civic amenity vehicle service was modified six months previously and in that time 251 tonnes of waste, 64 tonnes of compost and 187 tonnes of landfill was collected. In the comparable period for 2015, 788 tonnes of mixed waste was sent to landfill. The Parish Chairman's Forum would be provided with an update on the six month review of the service in March.

978 cases of fly-tipping were reported, a third of which gave cause for investigation. 15 Police and Criminal Evidence Act investigations were carried out with 2 individuals prosecuted for waste document offences and 1 prosecuted for fly-tipping.

16 vehicles were seized, 3 were destroyed and 13 returned following investigation. 4 fixed penalty notices totalling £1200 were issued for either not having a waste carrier licence or not having waste documents.

112 vehicles were clamped and removed since January 2016, or removed immediately. In the last year 63 vehicles were removed as abandoned, 55 of which were scrapped.

Operation Tax-It replaced Operation Cubit and involved the Street Scene Enforcement team and the DVLA's contractors and was set up in Tunbridge Wells free of charge. The operation removed untaxed and abandoned vehicles and those that may have been used for crime.

Operation Discard was lead by the Council with support from Kent Police. Four operations were carried out in the last year to educate waste carriers in having the correct licencing and waste documentation. The operation resulted in uninsured or unsafe vehicles being seized, as well as drug seizures and arrests. 60 vehicles in total were checked for waste carriers licences, waste transfer documents and scrap metal collectors licences.

1 of the 25 commercial premises challenged over incorrect containment of waste failed to comply and was issued with a fixed penalty notice. The £110 notice was paid with no further breach. 1 of the 25 premises was prosecuted and found guilty of not having waste documentation and was ordered to pay £500 in fines and costs.

858 fixed penalty notices were issued for littering.

Operation Dog Watch involved two operations with seven dog walkers addressed regarding picking up after dog fouling or for the dogs not having tags or collars.

Safeguard training was provided for existing taxi licensees, making sure the drivers being licenced were fit and suitable to do the work. Every driver was written to with the offer of a 'winter vehicle check'. The Council was looking to provide a more efficient service through the partnership with online forms available for taxi drivers – this was being used successfully with 80 percent of

the forms completed online.

Officers supported the Recycling and Household Waste Contract Task and Finish Group in its work - a separate item on the agenda.

In 2016 the London Borough of Bexley joined the Licensing Partnership and the expanded partnership has been operating since November 2016.

Members expressed the following views:

Councillor Palmer asked if the timetable for the review of the civic amenity vehicle was available. Gary Stevenson, Head of Environment and Street Scene, advised that a report on the service over the previous six months would be presented to the Parish Chairman's Forum in March, prior to it being considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April, along with the responses of the Parish Chairmen's Forum.

Councillor Palmer also asked when the proposals for phase two of the public realm works would be available. Mr Stevenson advised that the concept designs had already been circulated and the Council had listened to initial comments from the Town Forum, who had asked that the designs incorporate the Cultural and Learning Hub and the planning framework for the Town Hall. Mr Stevenson said those points had been picked up on by the designers and architects during a recent meeting. Mr Stevenson added that outline proposals were due to be presented to the Council's Development Advisory Panel in March 2017, prior to a more detailed consultation. Mr Stevenson went on to confirm that the area included in the phase two enhancement was from the traffic lights between the Town Hall and the Cinema Site – up to the junction with Monson Road, where phase one finished. Mr Stevenson further confirmed that there would be no restrictions on vehicle movement, including busses, as part of phase two, and the emphasis was on making the area more pedestrian friendly, whilst maintaining access to bus transport.

Councillor Palmer asked about the results of a study the Council had undertaken to look at rerouting busses around Five Ways. The Head of Economic Development and Property, David Candlin, advised that the study highlighted a number of issues, including objections from all of bus companies. As a result of the findings, it was not considered an appropriate point at which to consider the option further. It was added that, Kent County Council, who as the Highways Authority and responsible for funding for Phase 2 public realm budget, were unlikely to be supportive if the works negatively impacted on sustainable forms of transport.

Councillor Palmer referred to the Car Club scheme and asked if the additional vehicles were of varying seat sizes. Councillor Basu advised that they were of similar size but were low emission, electric vehicles and had been provided by Co Wheels Section 106 contributions and Kent County Council (KCC) – the scheme continued to be well used, with no cost to the Council.

Councillor Chapelard expressed concern at the £1 million budget allocated to phase two of the public realm works, which he considered to be purely decorative, and better allocated to other areas such as glass collection - within the Recycling/Waste Collection service. Councillor Chapelard also asked if the suggestion by the Leader of the Council, that a clerk of works should be appointed to oversee phase two would materialise, and whether this would resolve the issues experienced during phase one. Councillor Basu

advised that the funding for phase two, provided from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, was identified specifically for the public realm works. Councillor Basu also confirmed that the intention was for a clerk of works to be appointed to oversee phase two. Councillor Chapelard went on to refer to the fines imposed for littering and dog fouling. He was unhappy at the level of the fine for littering - £50.00, as opposed to the fine for dog fouling - £10.00. Councillor Chapelard considered that this was merely an opportunity for the Council to produce revenue. Councillor Chapelard said he received weekly complaints within his own ward of St James regarding dog fouling. Councillor Basu advised that the witnessing of dog fouling was more difficult.

Councillor Dawlings asked for further detail on some of the figures quoted within the Waste Collection Service – namely the 270 tonnes collected by the civic amenity vehicles in 2016/17, including 60 tonnes to compost as compared to 750 tonnes of waste collected in the comparative period in 2015. Councillor Dawlings asked how the reduction had been accounted for. Councillor Basu advised that there could be many factors, with one in particular being the number of incidents in the past of individuals from outside the borough using the facility. Mr Stevenson reiterated this point and said that both commercial and domestic waste had been previously brought in from outside the borough. He added, however, that although there was no clear evidence for the reduction, the public was aware of enforcement action and in particular in incidents where commercial waste was being disposed of. Additionally, Mr Stevenson said other means, such as an increased use of KCC waste sites and the use of personal bins, could attribute to the decrease. Mr Stevenson further added that there had not been an increase in reports of fly-tipping.

Councillor Dawlings went on to ask for clarification on the figure quoted of 978 reported incidents of fly-tipping. Mr Stevenson advised that this figure was for the previous year and data was being collected for the current year for comparison. He added that there had not been a significant increase over the previous seven months. Councillor Basu added that current enforcement practice, including the seizing and destroying of vehicles, would help reduce the levels of fly-tipping. Councillor Dawlings felt that a definitive base-line for comparisons between years should be produced. Mr Stevenson agreed that the issue could be looked into following the meeting.

Councillor Uddin referred to the issue of dog fouling and the 'bag and flag' initiative - a piece of work previously undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Uddin felt this was a worthwhile programme, but that it required a collaborative effort and if dog fouling was an issue being raised by residents, the Council needed to be seen to be dealing with it. Councillor Uddin's understanding was that the levels set for the littering and dog fouling fines were national rather than local.

Councillor Uddin was pleased to note the good levels of food hygiene amongst businesses in the borough and felt it was a headline worth advertising by the Council. Councillor Uddin was also comforted by the level of taxi licensing work undertaken by the Council in ensuring a high degree of safety for the public.

Councillor Woodward also referred to the issue of dog fouling and noted it was a particular issue in areas of low footfall. He said encouraging public participation in initiatives such as 'bag and flag' was difficult. Councillor

Woodward went on to ask: what the return to the Council from the photo-voltaic panels installed at Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre was; when the 'Clean for the Queen' initiative had taken place and what was achieved; what the expected outcomes of the adoption of the refreshed Kent Environmental Strategy were; and what the intentions of the Food Service Plan were. Councillor Woodward added that his main concern regarding the licensing of taxi drivers was around driver behaviour and the safety of passengers, and he wanted to see more promotion of the police's 101 non-emergency number.

Councillor Basu requested that members and the public advise the Council if there were areas where incidents of dog fouling were particularly high. With regard to taxi licensing, Councillor Basu was aware of concerns around driver behaviour and that it was an issue that needed addressing. Regarding the photo-voltaic panels, Councillor Basu advised that a pay-back of £42, 630 had been achieved.

Mr Stevenson advised that the 'Clean for the Queen' initiative had been well publicised and involved graffiti over-painting and providing support to residents for schemes such as community litter picking. Mr Stevenson advised that this type of support was always available to those communities. Mr Stevenson went on to advise that an action plan from the Kent Environmental Strategy was due to be published and would include areas such as reductions in carbon emissions and water usage, as well as transport and energy usage. Mr Stevenson added that it was a high level strategy applying to both the private and public sector and also picked up on areas such as energy efficient new builds and retro-fitting existing properties to bring them up to standard. With regard to the Food Service Plan, Mr Stevenson advised that this involved looking at the resources available for the following year to support safety in food premises in the borough and how best to make business broadly compliant.

Councillor Hill asked how many dog wardens were available in the borough. Mr Stevenson advised that the Council did not have a dog-warden, however, there were three Street Scene Enforcement Officers who covered a range of issues including dog fouling. Councillor Hills felt the advertising of instances where fines had been imposed for dog fouling would provide a deterrent.

**RESOLVED** to note the update.

## **CIVIC COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT - PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE**

OSC65/15 The Chair for the meeting, Councillor Palmer, introduced the report which provided an update on the Council's Development Project. Councillor Palmer advised Members that the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jukes, who had authority to proceed to Royal Institute of British architects (RIBA) Stage 3, had agreed that a report seeking endorsement would go to Full Council.

Councillor Basu advised that the consultants to the development had, as part of the sustainability elements of the proposals within RIBA Stage 2, assessed the flood-risk element – which was considered to be low for the sites and with flood-risk measures in place to mitigate surface water run-off in place for the overall development. Councillor Basu added that the Council was seeking to achieve BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) Very Good standard. The current approach had a good comfort margin to enable the Council to achieve this. Councillor Basu further

added that the Council was currently the costing and payback of further sustainability, including air source heat-pumps and additional photo-voltaic panels as part of the development.

The Head of Economic Development and Property, David Candlin, confirmed that RIBA stage 2 of the development (concept design) had been completed. He said the report and appendices were available in the Members room at the Town Hall. Mr Candlin advised that, the documents were available on the Council's website, albeit redacted to exclude commercially sensitive details. Mr Candlin also confirmed that the documents included a large amount of detail on the sustainability of the development and reiterating Councillor Basu's points, Mr Candlin added that the Council's intention was not to increase the risk of flooding. Mr Candlin went on to highlight appendix I to the report which dealt with the BREEAM standards that Councillor Basu had outlined. Mr Candlin confirmed that the options of air-source heat-pumps and additional were being examined alongside the potential inclusion of rainwater and greywater harvesting as part of the sustainability element. Mr Candlin added that, as Councillor Basu had indicated, final decisions would be based on the business case. Mr Candlin went on to confirm the current timetable for the development which was submission of a report to Full Council on 22 February 2017, outlining the progress of the development and asking Members for their endorsement to progress to Stage 3. Mr Candlin added that some work on resolving key issues within the development had been authorised to progress in the interim.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **REPORT OF THE RECYCLING/HOUSEHOLD WASTE CONTRACT TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

OSC66/15 The Chairman of the Recycling/Household Waste Contract Task and Finish Group, Councillor Tom Dawlings, introduced the Group's final report which provided detail of the work done, including a number of recommendations for the Committee to consider. Councillor Dawlings advised the Committee that the Group had looked at many facets of the recycling and waste service and the members felt the recommendations that came out of the work were sensible and based on those areas that were within the Council's remit. Councillor Dawlings said that, of particular note, were the recommendations that looked to increase recycling rates and promote the inclusion of kerbside glass collection within the contract. Councillor Dawlings advised that representatives from Biffa, who provided the current service, had given testimony and part of the discussion was the Group's expectation, although possibly at odds with that of a service provider, that should a future contract including partner authorities, it would be subject to economies of scale. Councillor Dawlings also advised that the Group had discussed the Civic Amenity Vehicle service and whilst recognising its current requirement, due to the distances residents would otherwise have to travel, it was felt that a key recommendation was for the provision of a recycling centre in an appropriate location – possibly to the east of the borough, that would negate the need for the Civic Amenity Vehicle service. Councillor Dawlings added that, both Maidstone and Ashford Borough Councils experienced the same issues with their residents having to travel distances to reach a recycling centre. Councillor Dawlings further added that the Group were keen to look at the six month review of the Civic Amenity Vehicle service following its presentation to the Parish Chairman's Forum in March 2017.



Councillor Woodward asked how aligned the current contract was with those of potential partner authorities in a new contract. Councillor Woodward also asked if the overriding intention was that there be no net increase in the cost of a new contract. Councillor Dawlings advised that, the question to be asked was whether there were benefits in a partnership, which he currently believed there was. Councillor Dawlings referred to the example of Ashford, Maidstone and Swale Councils, who had formed a partnership within which they had sought to harmonise elements of the service, with a positive impact on areas such as recycling rates, particularly for Ashford Borough Council. However there were areas of all three boroughs where the collection of recycling was undertaken independently. Regarding the cost of a new contract, Councillor Dawlings felt personally, that there may be an increase in cost, but having received testimony from the head of service for Maidstone's Waste and Environment service regarding the positive impact on their recycling rates, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council shared the same aspirations, and if the Maidstone example was followed, the Council could expect to receive the type of service it needed.

Councillor Woodward went on to ask for clarification on the terms recyclables and recyclates. The Head of Environment and Street Scene, Gary Stevenson advised that both words were different terms for the same item. Mr Stevenson also advised Members that, in terms of cost, there was a cost to the Council as the collecting authority and a cost to Kent County Council (KCC) as the disposal authority, but that the modelling being looked at suggested that an increase in recycling rates and moving material through a less expensive processing route, reduced the cost of disposal. He said that individually, or within a partnership, the Council would hold discussions with KCC regarding the sharing of the disposal benefits. Mr Stevenson added that this principle had already been adopted through inter-authority arrangements in East and Mid-Kent. Mr Stevenson further added that there was the option of a cheaper contract but this would have the negative affect of increasing the KCC's disposal costs. Mr Stevenson went on to confirm that both Dartford and Tonbridge and Malling's current waste contracts were aligned for commissioning in 2019 - allowing for the option of joint procurement with Tunbridge Wells. He added that, ultimately, if the most positive outcome was for the Council to work on its own with KCC, this would be the option considered.

Councillor Simmons asked for clarification on the recyclability of glass if it were included as kerbside collection - as part of a new contract. Mr Stevenson confirmed that, when the existing contract had been negotiated, it was agreed that the glass would be collected via bring-banks, allowing it to be colour sorted 'at source'. Mr Stevenson further advised that, part of the ongoing work towards a new contract involved a bin audit, which confirmed that the bring-banks were well used but approximately 5.3 percent of residual waste was glass. He said there was a trade-off against a large volume of glass collected at kerbside which is then likely to be turned into aggregate and lower volumes of colour separated glass. He went on to say that the current view was that future improvements in technology and the provision of local facilities may enable the collection of glass at the kerbside, which can then be sorted and reused multiple times, more viable.

Councillor Hannam referred to the possibility of charging for garden waste, which he considered to be a significant change for residents, and asked what

the current situation was. Councillor Dawlings advised that the reference was included in the report as it was a chargeable service and one which other Kent authorities were already charging for. Councillor Dawlings considered this to be a difficult element to introduce as part of a new contract and said personally, he was fundamentally opposed to it.

Councillor Chapelard felt the Council should be more ambitious in its recycling targets and that, by 2020, the Council should be well above the suggested rate of 50 percent. He commented that the best performing authority had reached recycling rates of 67 percent. Councillor Chapelard was concerned that that the kerbside recycling of glass would be lost as part of a new contract and he urged Members to promote the issue. Councillor Palmer advised that this element of the contract would be looked at as part of the tendering process.

Councillor Chapelard went on to express concern that, with Dartford Borough Council's low recycling rates, there would be a negative impact on any future partnership arrangement and he did not consider there to be any reason why the Council needed to maintain a geographic connection with potential partner authorities.

**RESOLVED** to endorse the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group.

## **LGA CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE: REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

OSC67/15 The Chair for the meeting, Councillor Palmer, introduced the report which provided detail of a Peer Challenge Review recently undertaken by the Council. Councillor Palmer advised Members that the Communities Cabinet Advisory Board had considered the report earlier in the week, prior to its consideration by the Cabinet on 2 March, and supported the recommendation that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider a draft response to the recommendations in the review. Councillor Palmer added that the recommendation would need to be agreed by the Cabinet before this took place.

Councillor Woodward agreed that a task and finish group could be appointed to consider a response, but he felt the recommendations in the review and the language in the report were not easily interpreted, and that some further clarity was needed. Councillor Woodward also agreed to sit on a task and finish group subject to consideration of the report by the Cabinet.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **DEVOLUTION UPDATE REPORT**

OSC68/15 The Chair for the meeting, Councillor Palmer, introduced the report which provided an update on the current picture nationally, regionally and locally in terms of the government's Devolution agenda. Councillor Palmer advised that, unfortunately, the relevant officer support was not available and should Members have questions, they would be noted and responded to by email following the meeting.

Councillor Woodward referred to para. 2.17 of the update, which advised that a report released by the County Councils Network stated that, the creation

nationally, of 27 county-wide unitary authorities, would achieve savings of up to £2.4 billion. Councillor Woodward expressed concern that a piecemeal approach locally was not beneficial and that a more strategic direction was needed. Councillor Woodward supported the idea of driving towards a unitary authority for the area.

Councillor Simmons referred to 3.6 of the report which stated that, whilst there was no appetite for local government reorganisation, there had been discussion on the possibility of devolving some responsibilities between county and district level in West Kent, and asked for clarification. The Head of Environment and Street Scene, Gary Stevenson, advised that, while it was correct that there was no appetite for reorganisation, discussions had been held regarding the devolving and sharing of responsibilities for certain services, such as public health, and district councils in West Kent were providing some public health services on behalf of Kent County Council (KCC). Mr Stevenson further advised that there was a willingness to adopt a collaborative approach to this area through KCC's commissioning group and this would be a piece of combined work from the 1 April 2017.

Councillor Simmons considered there to be a fundamental difference between partnership working and devolution and he felt the Council should take a position on this.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

#### **NEW TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

OSC69/15 The Chair for the meeting, Councillor Palmer, advised that the item served as a reminder to Members that, when constituting task and finish groups, it was important that the terms of reference were clearly laid out and agreed.

#### **WORK PROGRAMME (INCLUDING ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION)**

OSC70/15 The Chair for the meeting, Councillor Palmer, introduced the item and advised Members that as well as providing an update on the Committee's work programme, there was report appended which highlighted a number of issues raised by the Tunbridge Wells Civic Society and members of the Committee in relation the Council's planning application process.

The Head of Planning, Karen Fossett, advised members one of the issues raised in the report – the call-in process, was being dealt with by the Council's Constitutional Review Working Party. With regard to the other issues raised in the report, Mrs Fossett advised that, should the Committee be minded, these could be included in an audit programme for the year, similar to one being undertaken by Swale Borough Council.

Members expressed the following views:

Councillor Woodward asked if the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be able to provide a clear remit for the audit and specific areas of focus, as his concern was that the scope of the audit would be to ensure processes were correct, rather than that of a task and finish group, which would be to identify areas of change and improvement. Mrs Fossett advised that the areas looked could be those identified in the report. Councillor Woodward asked for further detail following the meeting.

Councillor Palmer felt that, in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, it was a topic that should be revisited at the next meeting.

Councillor Palmer highlighted those topics that were due to be considered at the 10 April meeting.

**RESOLVED** to note the Committee's work programme.

**URGENT BUSINESS**

OSC71/15 There was no urgent business for the Committee to consider.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

OSC72/15 It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would take place on Monday 10 April 2017.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 8.20 pm.