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## **ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND WELLBEING CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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**MINUTES** of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 20 October 2021 from 7.00 pm - 8.42 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Derek Carnell (Substitute for Councillor Elliott Jayes), Steve Davey, Alastair Gould, Ann Hampshire, Nicholas Hampshire, Carole Jackson (Vice-Chairman), Peter Marchington, Pete Neal, Ken Pugh, Ken Rowles (Chairman) and Sarah Stephen.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Christopher Blandford (remotely), Martyn Cassell, Janet Dart, Kerrie Houghting (remotely), Joanne Johnson (remotely), Kellie MacKenzie (remotely), Lyn Newton (remotely), Larissa Reed and Graeme Tuff (remotely).

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillors Cameron Beart (remotely), Angela Harrison (Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing), Julian Saunders (Cabinet Member for Environment), David Simmons (remotely), Roger Truelove (remotely), Tim Valentine (Cabinet Member for Climate and Ecological Emergency) and Ghlin Whelan (remotely).

Casie Young, Seashells Early Childhood Development Coordinator.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors James Hall, Elliott Jayes and Corrie Woodford.

### **385 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chairman outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

### **386 CONFIRMATION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Ken Rowles was confirmed as Chairman and Councillor Carole Jackson was confirmed as Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

### **387 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2021 (Minute Nos. 160 – 165) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **388 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **389 VERBAL UPDATE FROM CABINET MEMBER**

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing updated the Committee on the following:

- An NHS Briefing for Members would take place on Tuesday 9 November 2021 virtually.

The Cabinet Member for Environment updated the Committee on the following matters:

- Waste collection – a challenging period due to the national HGV driver shortage but Swale had experienced limited disruption to services. It was likely to remain a challenging period into and after Christmas;
- preparation was underway for retendering the Waste services contract;
- mobilisation was underway for the new Grounds Maintenance contract;
- there had been challenges in the Projects Team but they had managed to complete a number of projects;
- there had been a successful bid for national funding for tree planting;
- Oare Gunpowder Works received a Green Flag Award;
- there had been good results in the regional Royal Horticultural Society In Bloom competition; and
- there had been a rise in the garden waste bin subscriptions.

The Cabinet Member for Climate & Ecological Emergency updated the Committee on the following matters:

- Swale Borough Council (SBC) had been invited to join UK100 which was a network of local government leaders who sought to devise plans for the transition to clean energy;
- SBC had been invited to join the Wilder Carbon Project which spans Essex, East Sussex and Kent looking at nature based solutions for offsetting carbon emissions;
- SBC were developing plans for a car club in Faversham with the aim to extend to other areas;
- a business event was taking place on 3 November 2021 launching green business grants as part of the pandemic recovery;
- the Cabinet Member would be attending COP26 the UN International Climate Negotiations Conference in Glasgow and would be representing SBC at a UK100 event;
- wardens had been trained on the anti-idling legislation and signs were put up where there was an idling problem, publicity to take place on this;
- work was continuing on low emissions zones, engagement to take place with Kent County Council (KCC) to find out what was possible; and
- the Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Strategy would be coming forward by the beginning of next year.

### **390 PLAY AREAS**

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing introduced the report and stated that she had inherited the programme from the previous administration. In years three and four of the programme, the bulk of proposals relied on achievement of match funding. Some of the play areas would be refurbished once Section 106 money became available. The programme was behind due to officer vacancy and the

Covid-19 Pandemic. The Cabinet Member asked the Committee to let her know if there were any play areas in their Wards that were continually vandalised.

Members raised comments which are summarised below:

- A Member asked about Ward councillors attending quarterly inspections and it was confirmed that whilst this would be administratively difficult to organise in the schedule of work, officers were always willing to meet Members on-site to inspect if requested;
- it was confirmed that all inspections were up-to-date;
- a Member asked about ensuring developers maintain play areas, it was confirmed that they should be undertaking repairs and officers could write to them if this was not happening;
- a Member asked about play areas owned by Parish/Town Councils or community interest groups and if a secure draw-down scheme could be used to encourage improvements. The Head of Environment and Leisure stated that officers worked closely with parishes already and diverted Section 106 money to the parishes if relevant. He would discuss the draw-down scheme with the Member outside the meeting;
- a Member asked about play areas being built in new developments, it was confirmed that the Greenspaces Manager was involved in planning applications to ensure that there was sufficient play area coverage;
- Members suggested no further changes to the playground development programme; and
- at the request of a Member, officers would look into the issues raised concerning Whiting Crescent, Faversham.

### **391 CYCLING AND WALKING GUIDANCE STATEMENT 2018 - 2022 UPDATE**

The Cabinet Member for Climate & Ecological Emergency introduced the report which gave an update on the Swale Cycling and Walking Guidance Statement 2018-2022. The Cabinet Member noted there were a number of initiatives listed in the report and questions posed at the end for Committee Members to consider.

The Economic Development Support Officer added that SBC's role was to influence and lobby KCC as the responsible authority for cycling and walking and to support the Town and Parish Councils.

Members raised comments which are summarised below:

- A Member noted the link with Planning where builders blocked rights of way and there was a need for dialogue between KCC and SBC to deal with this;
- a Member suggested implementing a bike rental scheme;
- a Member raised an issue where rubbish and overgrown vegetation was blocking a public right of way and KCC had been advised. For proposed railway crossings on new developments, pressure needed to be put on Network Rail and KCC. It was suggested that Planning could be asked to follow-up on this;
- the Cabinet Member for Environment commented that the Guidance Statement was outdated and needed reviewing with a view to updating it; and

- a Member suggested the Strategy should include pump priming initiatives in preparation for tranches of funding coming-up.

**392 SWALE CEMETERY REGULATIONS 2021**

The Cabinet Member for Environment introduced the report on the Swale Cemetery Regulations 2021 and commented that the SBC regulations had not been updated for 25 years. The Cabinet Member said officers had been working with the national body that looked after standards in cemetery management to update SBC's regulations. He went on to say it was important to get feedback from this Committee on the proposed regulations and pointed out that the cemetery at Iwade had specific provisions.

The Head of Environment and Leisure added that the regulations aimed to control how people used cemeteries, providing a balance between freedom of access and addressing anti-social behaviour and maintenance issues. The report would go onto Cabinet and the Committee's comments would be welcomed.

Following questions by Members, the Head of Environment and Leisure confirmed that the Iwade cemetery provision was anticipated to have a 10-year life cycle. Lack of availability of land reduced the potential for local authority woodland/natural burial grounds.

**393 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PILOT**

The Chief Executive said that SBC had been working with the Seashells Children & Families Centre, Sheerness on an Early Childhood Development pilot programme and introduced Casie Young.

Casie Young, The Seashells Early Childhood Development Coordinator, went through a presentation setting out the background of the pilot project and progress of the initiatives taken on.

Members raised comments which are summarised below:

- The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing commented that she could not speak highly enough of Children and Families, they saw a need and acted on it;
- in response to a question, the Committee was advised that engagement was made through networking, health visitors and midwives passing on Seashell's details;
- most people could be seen via walk-in requests and in-house referrals could be made where people could be seen by a support worker within a couple of days;
- the Head of Environment and Leisure offered to provide links to leisure centres. A focus group could be set-up to establish playground needs; and
- the pilot project was funded for one year.

Chairman

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