

DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 9 July 2019 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Sacha Gosine (Chairman)
Councillor Emma Ben Moussa
Councillor John Burrell
Councillor Sue Butterfill
Councillor Paul Cutler
Councillor Matthew Davis
Councillor Derek E Hunnisett
Councillor Ricky Jones
Councillor Danny Nicklen
Councillor Adrian Oakley-Dow
Councillor Tom Oliver
Councillor Lucas J Reynolds
Councillor Mrs Rebecca F Storey

ABSENT: Councillor Mrs Rosanna M Currans
Councillor Brian Garden
Councillor Calvin S McLean
Councillor Victoria Oguntope
Councillor Julie A Ozog
Councillor Denzil J Reynolds
Councillor Avtar Sandhu MBE

Dartford Borough Council Officers:-

David Hook – Democratic Services Officer
(Committee Co-ordinator)

CABINET MEMBERS: Leader of the Council, Councillor J A Kite MBE

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors: Mrs R M Currans, B Garden (Substitute Cllr. M Davis), C S McLean, V Oguntope (Sub. Cllr. R Jones), J A Ozog, D J Reynolds (Sub. Cllr. D E Hunnisett).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018

RESOLVED:

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That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2018 be confirmed as accurate by those Members present who had attended those proceedings.

4. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

In his first meeting as Chairman of the Committee, the Shadow Leader of the Council asked Members to introduce themselves.

He advised that he had no policy statements to make concerning the future direction of the Committee's work at present.

5. COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORS)

Members RESOLVED to:

Note the Committee's Terms of Reference (ToRs) as approved at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 22 May 2019.

6. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman confirmed that there were no urgent items for consideration by Members.

7. TO CONSIDER REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES (IF ANY)

The Chairman confirmed that there were no references from other Committees for Members to consider.

8. REGULATION 9 NOTICE

The Committee Co-ordinator confirmed, for the benefit of new Members, that any item listed on the Regulation 9 Notice could be drawn-down by the Committee for consideration at a future date, under the Draw downs process set out in the Committee's Protocol [Min. No. 11 refers].

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Regulation 9 Notice (formerly the Forward Plan) for the period 14 June 2019 to 31 October 2019 be noted.

9. PRINCES PARK ANNUAL UPDATE 2018-19

This report was presented by the Committee Co-ordinator in the absence of the report author.

Appendix A to the report comprised an annual activity report from the Operations Manager, Dartford Football Club (DFC) for the period **July 2018 to May 2019**.

Principal areas highlighted in the Appendix included: increased golf usage (including foot golf), increased use of the Community and Mini football

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pitches, a successful 1st season pitch-share with Millwall Lionesses who played on Sundays in the Women's Super League Division 2, continued use by local football clubs of the Community Pitch and Mini Pitches, strong uptake of the Leigh Academy programme – a 2 year full-time education and football development programme for 16-18 year olds, a thriving pre-Academy operation for 7-16 year olds, plus a Girls Squad and a Dartford Juniors Section.

In response to a specific question from a Member concerning the Council grant to Dartford Football Club of £90K in 2018-19 [set to continue in 2019-20], the Leader of the Council responded on behalf of Cabinet, rather than as a Director of the Club.

He advised Members that the Council's grant to DFC was aimed at ensuring the best possible range of facilities in Princess Park for the use of the wider Dartford community, it was not simply a grant to fund the Club. Prior to 2005/6 Princess Park had essentially comprised an expensive to run golf facility. The Council's grant of £90K per annum had transformed Princess Park from a golf facility into a multi-facility community asset. The Council's policy of enhancing and developing such community facilities had been repeated in the development of the Dartford Judo Centre, the new Cricket Pavilion in Hesketh Park, the re-development of the Fairfield complex and pool, and the soon to be completed Dartford Rugby Club facility.

RESOLVED:

That Members note the report and Appendix A from Dartford Football Club.

10. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

The report from the Committee's Co-ordinating Officer detailed the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee in the previous 2018-19 municipal year.

The Acting Vice-Chairman, who had been Vice-Chairman of the Committee in the period under review, commended the report to Members and thanked the report author for his report and general support to the Committee in the period under review.

RESOLVED:

1. That Members note the report and Appendices detailing the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee in the preceding 2018-19 municipal year;
2. That the report be submitted to the General Assembly of the Council.

11. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROTOCOL

Members were asked to note the Committee's Protocol, recently updated by the Council's Head of Legal Services [June 2019].

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The Leader of the Council highlighted for the Chairman and other new Members, the importance of the draw-down facility in the Protocol (paras A.1 to A.7) which enabled the Committee to draw-down for the purposes of scrutiny, decisions/action of the Council and Cabinet and/or the scrutiny of the effects/outcomes of a [Cabinet/Council] decision post implementation.

He explained that previously, Dartford Council (and many others) had been run on a Committee system, with responsibility for specific areas of Council policy devolved to relevant Committees. The Council had subsequently voted to adopt a Cabinet form of governance (similar to central government), with the power for all Council decision making and policy implementation residing with Cabinet, with reference to the General Assembly of the Council as appropriate.

In the case of Dartford, following the adoption of the Cabinet model of governance, the present administration had created the Cabinet Advisory bodies CAP A and CAP B, which purposely sat on Mondays **prior** to Cabinet meetings on Thursdays, and shared the same meeting agendas. CAP A and CAP B through the sharing of those common meeting agendas, were able to scrutinise Cabinet decisions **prior** to implementation: this was not the case with the Scrutiny Committee who met subsequent to Cabinet with its own agenda. This made the draw-down function available to the Scrutiny Committee all the more important and relevant, and enabled Members to scrutinise Cabinet decisions on an ad-hoc basis outside of the Committee's Work Plan [Min. No. 13 refers].

The Chairman thanked the Leader for his comments and advice.

RESOLVED:

That Members note the Committee's Protocol [dated June 2019] as updated by the Head of Legal Services.

12. STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN LOCAL AND COMBINED AUTHORITIES

The covering report presented at Appendix A, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities for Members to note.

The Committee Co-ordinator confirmed, on behalf of the Council's Head of Legal Services, that the salient points in the Ministry guidance were contained in the Committee's Protocol [Min. No. 11 refers].

13. COMMITTEE ROLLING WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2019-20 AND BEYOND

The report asked Members to identify further items for inclusion in the Committee's current rolling Work Plan (attached as Appendix A to the report) for the remainder of the 2019-20 municipal year and beyond.

The Chairman noted that the current Work Plan consisted primarily of annual updates for Princess Park, Dartford Cricket Club in Hesketh Park and the

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Annual Report and Accounts for the Orchard Theatre Dartford. He encouraged Members to make further proposals that evening, or subsequently to himself or the Vice-Chairman Councillor Garden.

RESOLVED:

That Members note the contents of the Committee's current Work Plan for the remainder of the 2019-20 municipal cycle as set out in Appendix A to the report.

The meeting closed at 7.29 pm

Councillor S N Gosine
CHAIRMAN

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