

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### **CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children, Families & Education - Resources and Infrastructure Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 18th September, 2009.

PRESENT: Mr C J Capon (Chairman), Mr R W Bayford, Mr D L Brazier, Mr T Gates (Vice-Chairman), Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr B J Sweetland and Mr R Tolputt

TEACHER ADVISERS: Miss S Kemsley

PRESENT: Mr G Cooke, Deputy Lead Member

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr K Abbott (Director, Finance & Corporate Support), Mr G Ward (Director Resources), Ms S Dunn (Head of 14-24 Innovation Unit), Ms C McKenzie (Greener Kent Manager) and Mrs C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer)

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

**3. Election of Vice Chairman**  
(Item. A2)

(1) Mr Tolputt proposed, seconded by Mr Brazier, that Mr T Gates be elected as Vice- Chairman of this Committee.

*Agreed without a vote*

**4. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting**  
(Item. A3)

Mr Long made a declaration of interest as he was the Director of Integrated Services Programme, which was an Independent Fostering Agency in Kent.

**5. Dates of Future Meetings**  
(Item. A4)

**RESOLVED** that the meeting dates for 2009/2010 be noted as follows:

Thursday, 19 November 2009  
Friday, 15 January 2010 - *all 3 CFE POCs*  
Thursday, 15 April 2010  
Tuesday, 20 July 2010  
Friday, 17 September 2010  
Wednesday, 24 November 2010  
(*All meetings will commence at 10.00 am*)

**6. Areas of Focus for Future Meetings verbal report**  
(Item. B1)

(1) The Chairman invited Mr Cooke, Deputy Lead Member to opened the discussion and put forward the priorities for future agendas. Mr Cooke suggested that the POC should be monitoring the Revenue and Capital programmes in terms of the budgets the issue of admissions and transport.

(2) Members were then invited to indentify any areas of work where they thought the POC could have an impact on the work of the County Council which included the following:

- Mr Brazier suggested looking at the environmental efficiency of school buildings old and new. To include what is done how it is done and the steps are planned for the existing estate of schools.
- Mr G Ward agreed to submit a detailed report on the BSF Capital Programme and Structural Maintenance Programme and the environmental efficiencies.

(3) The Chairman reminded Members that they were welcome to suggest agenda items either to the Democratic Services Officer or himself.

(4) RESOLVED that the items suggested for future meetings be considered further at the agenda discussion meeting.

**7. CFE Budget Monitoring 2009/10**  
(Item. B2)

*Report by Ms R Turner, Managing Director*  
(Mr K Abbott and Mr G Ward were present for this item)

(1) Mr Abbott introduced the report and highlighted the key issues in the report that included; the Directorate forecast that the budget would balance by the end of the year. There were pressures of £1.711k which were being managed. This position was better than previous years. One school was looking to a judicial review against the claw back decision, which it was hoped would soon be resolved. Work was being undertaken with 19 schools that were in deficit and 60 schools that were at risk of going into deficit during their 3 year financial plan are also being assisted. Mr Abbott advised that the pressures continued around the asylum budget, due to cost that can not be claimed back under the Home Office grant rules, and KCC was due to meet with the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) and GOSE; on behalf of the DCSF, to discuss Kent gaining long term stability around funding.

(2) Mr Tolputt sought clarification on how payments for asylum seekers under 18 years old and those who are 18-21 years old are they banned from working. For under 18 there is a degree of funding, a contribution. The issue over the years has been that Kent cost are over the funding. Mr Abbott said that he would report back outside the meeting on this as it was not his area of expertise.

(3) Mr Sweetland referred to page 8 of the report and the pressures of £470k on SEN School Transport and sought advice on the reasons why there had been an increase. Mr Sweetland proposed an Informal Member Group on SEN Transport.

(4) Mr Cooke advised that savings had already been made of £230k, due to work undertaken by Commercial Services in renegotiating the number of contracts. He suggested that the IMG on SEN transport adopt a three stage approach; understand the requirements and the current position; carry out the review and develop recommendations to remain within the statutory duties but in a cost effective manner.

(5) Mr Abbott added that there had been an increase in the cost of providing SEN Transport due to; increased numbers and costs, in particular the cost of the single occupancy taxis. He suggested that this mixture would be the focus for the Informal Member Group.

(6) Members were invited to volunteer to serve on the IMG on SEN Transport; Mr Tolputt, Mr Sweetland, Miss Kemsley, volunteered. Mr Chittenden and Mr Horne were nominated in their absence.

(7) The Chairman reminded the Committee Members that an IMG to discuss the Medium Term Plan, would be held in November with 2 Members from each of the 3 CFE POCs, Mrs Rook and Mr Brazier had been nominated by the Chairman from this Committee.

(8) RESOLVED that :-

(a) approval be given to an IMG on SEN Transport and an IMG on the Medium Term Plan being established; and

(b) the projected outturn figures for the directorate as at the first full quarterly monitoring report be noted.

## **8. Playbuilder Funding**

*(Item. B3)*

*(Report by Ms R Turner, Managing Director and Mrs A Graham, Projects Manager)  
(Mr K Abbott and Mr G Ward were present for this item)*

(1) In the absence of Mrs M White, who was presenting at another CFE POC meeting, the Chairman sought Members agreement to questions that could not be answered by the officers present to be sent to Mrs White for answers in writing outside the meeting.

(2) Members agreed and made comments and asked questions that included the following:

- Mr Brazier sought clarification on the on accessing the funding pool for a local resident
- Mr Long sought an explanation on whether rural areas around the county would receive a fair chance in receiving funding for play areas

- (3) RESOLVED that the Members questions be forward to Mrs White for a response and the proposals set out in the report be approved.

*(Following the meeting the following response had been received by Members)*

Kent received its Playbuilder allocation a year ahead of the date originally notified (originally notified it would be April 2009 - Mach 2011) when the Government decided that it would bring forward a number of capital programmes to help deal with the economic downturn and the effect it was having on capital programmes elsewhere in the economy.

The result was that for Year 1, there was little time for planning and consultation and the planning process had to be in place before the official grant letter was received. As Year 1 agreed programmes would have to be in place by the end of the financial year, with no ability to roll funds into the next year, a pragmatic approach had to be taken. A minimum of 22 schemes over the two year period have to be delivered.

Districts already have Play strategies in place, have undertaken audits and have plans for the development of their Play areas. It was therefore agreed with the Districts and with other representatives that in Year One we would invite the Districts to put forward applications. Applications were reviewed by a selection panel ( this has KCC, Districsts, Voluntary sector reps plus a technical expert from Play England). The aim was to ensure that there was at least one scheme in each District. Below is the list of Year One schemes (Maidstone withdrew their scheme and will resubmit in Year 2):

- Ashford (Mersham Recreation ground)
- Ashford (Hothfield)
- Canterbury (Herne Bay Memorial Park)
- Dartford (Darenth Park)
- Dover (Connaught)
- Gravesham (Judsons)
- Sevenoaks (Swanley)
- Shepway (Cheriton)
- Swale (Faversham)
- Thanet (Northdown)
- Tonbridge & Malling (Leybourne Lakes)
- Tunbridge Wells (Frittenden)

Year two planning is just starting and will be opened out beyond Districts

## **9. Climate Change: Six monthly progress report**

*(Item. B4)*

*(Mrs C McKenzie, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager)*

*Mrs C McKenzie and Mr G Ward were present to answer questions)*

- (1) The Committee considered a six monthly report which aimed to provide an update for sustainability and climate change as well as fulfilling the requirements of the KCC ISO140001 reporting requirements and the priorities for the next 3 years 2009-2011.

(2) The Chairman invited Mrs McKenzie to introduce the report. Mrs McKenzie highlighted key issues advising that since agreeing the Environment Policy there had been a rise in the number of policy drivers as summarised on page 36 of the report. The pressures faced by KCC would be the carbon reduction commitment; this was especially an area of pressure for CFE as it had the largest portion of the estate; and the Climate Change Act 2008. There had been good progress made in the last 2 years. KCC was one of only 3 County Councils to be accredited with the ISO 14001.

(3) The Committee noted that there had been 20 renewable energy saving schemes in Kent schools. Mrs McKenzie identified travel and transport as a key area of impact for KCC, 700 tonnes of carbon had been saved through Kent Staff Car Share. For CFE directorate between 2006/2009 there had been 2.5% saving in business mileage. Significant challenges remain for CFE with the reduction of carbon omissions as CFE was the largest portion of the estate and the need for a step approach to work with schools if KCC was to fulfil its commitments. Mrs McKenzie concluding that the issue of fuel poverty and the rising fuel prices would have an impact on KCC and a coordinated approach was needed to tackle this. The Schools were an excellent showcase on KCC environment achievement through the improvements in the schools estate and the sustainable schools programme, Building Schools for the Future was key.

(4) Members asked questions and made comments which included the following:

(5) In response to two questions by Mr Long regarding "Food Wise", Mr Ward advised that raw ingredients, for school meals, were sourced as much as possible from local producers, although this was not always possible. He explained that this was within the school meals contracts; every effort was made to ensure that the food was cooked in Kent too. Mr Ward agreed to provide more data on how food was sourced for school meals outside the meeting.

(6) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the comments and requests by Members be noted;
- (b) the progress to date and the general shape of the Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan going forward noted;
- (c) the proposed next steps for CFE directorate in particular as outlined in Section 6 of the report be agreed; and
- (d) the report be noted

## **10. The Transfer of Learning & Skills Council functions to Local Authorities** *(Item. B5)*

*(Report by Ms R Turner, Managing Director)*

*(Mrs S Dunn, Joint Head 14-24 Innovation Unit was present for this item)*

(1) The Committee considered a report that provided an update on the current developments relating to 16+ transition, outlined the progress made to date on the

transfer of functions from the Learning and Skills Council to the local authority and gave information about the proposed sub regional decision making process.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.