

COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Communities Policy Overview Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 17 September 2009.

PRESENT: Mrs E M Tweed (Chairman), Mr A R Chell (Vice-Chairman), Mr D L Brazier (Substitute for Mr A Wickham), Mr I S Chittenden, Mr H Craske, Mr D A Hirst, Mrs J Law, Mr J Ozog, Mr K Smith, Mr R Tolputt, Mr C T Wells and Mr A Willicombe

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr A J King, MBE and Mr A Sandhu, MBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr C Bainbridge (Director of Community Safety & Regulatory Services), Mr D Crilley (Director of Community Cultural Services), Ms J Edwards (Director of Policy and Resources, Communities Directorate), Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Service Manager (Policy Overview)), Mr I Forward (Head of Adult Education), Ms A Honey (Managing Director Communities), Ms C McKenzie (Greener Kent Manager), Ms A Slaven (Director Youth Services and KDAAT), Ms P Smith (County Manager - Supporting Independence Programme) and Mr K Tilson (Head of Finance for Policy and Resources)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

16. Minutes - 7 July 2009

(Item A3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2009 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

17. The Potential to Refocus and Restructure the Overview and Scrutiny Function

(Item B1)

(1) Mr King introduced a discussion paper which would be considered by each of the Policy Overview Committees (POC's), the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to a report being submitted to County Council on 15 October 2009.

(2) Members comments and suggestions were invited which included the following (NB some of these comments were put forward by Members later in the meeting when discussing other business but have been included here for ease of reference).

- Priority should be given to media training for Members (particularly valuable at a local level where press are in attendance and for promoting Select Committee topic reviews).
- The challenges of working with Partnership colleagues to deliver the outcomes of Select Committee topic reviews were highlighted. Some partners are less

willing to work with KCC and therefore it is necessary to find effective ways of working.

- There was a definite role to play in scrutinising the Police, and other Crime and Disorder partners and discussions were to be held with partners to agree the way that this would operate.
- Disappointment was expressed at the apparent lack of a method to identify co-optees.
- e-government was acknowledged as a positive way forward in engaging with local people.
- There were occasions where projects overlapped with other Directorates and Members would like to be privy to more information on the outcomes, with a view to informing local people. An example of this was the Turner Contemporary project, which was regularly discussed at the Communities POC, but Members of this Committee would like more information on the work of regeneration in this respect, so that outcomes could be properly identified.
- Mention was made of the quantity of papers circulated with POC agenda and it was questioned whether this was the most effective way of working.

(3) RESOLVED that the views expressed by Members as set out above be noted.

18. Portfolio Holder and Managing Director's Update

(Item B2)

(1) Mr Hill and Ms Honey gave an update on the following topics:-

- Turner Contemporary
- Capital Programme
- Cultural Strategy
- Sports Leisure and Olympics
- Community Safety
- Total Place
- Future Jobs Fund

(2) Members requested that a briefing paper be circulated on "Total Place"

(3) RESOLVED that the update be noted and that a progress report on the Kent History Centre be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

19. Financial Monitoring 2009/10

(Item B3)

(1) Mr Tilson presented the financial monitoring report for the first quarter in 2009/10 for the Communities portfolio. The report covered revenue and capital expenditure which had been considered by Cabinet on 14th September 2009.

(2) Members were invited to ask questions and make comments, which covered the following:-

- In response to questions Mr Bainbridge set out the background to the overspend on the Coroners budget, which was outside of the County Council's Control, and the action that had been taken mitigate this.
- Mr Hill confirmed that the County Councils commitment to the Marlowe theatre was a £2m grant.
- Ms Slaven confirmed that there were currently no plans to relocate the Maidstone Info zone.
- Ms Edwards explained that decisions on vacancy management were based on individual service requirements.
- Mr Tilson confirmed that the Communities Directorate was on course to achieve its efficiency savings.

(3) RESOLVED that the budget variations for the Communities Portfolio for 2009/10, based on the monitoring report to Cabinet, be noted.

20. Towards 2010 - Third Annual Report

(Item B4)

(1) Ms Edwards presented a paper which set out the process for finalising the third *Towards 2010* Annual Report prior to approval by County Council on 15 October 2009 and attached a draft of the report (concerning the 17 targets led by the Communities Directorate). Each of the Directors responsible for these targets gave a brief overview and invited comments from Members.

(2) Members comments and responses to questions included the following:-

- Ms Smith explained the way in which the apprentice scheme operated including how it was funded, the training provided and the success of the KCC scheme.
- It was suggested that 16+ disaffected young people should be benchmarked by the directorates who have responsibility for them and that Directorates should be encouraged to work together to support this group. Ms Slaven agreed that the data in this area was not robust and that more work needed to be done with colleagues in other directorates and other agencies to monitor the figures.
- The variation in the success of PACT meetings in across the County was discussed.
- The work being carried out by Community Wardens was commended.

(3) RESOLVED that (a) the report and the comments made by Members, as set out in the Minutes, be noted; (b) that there be a presentation on the Cultural Olympiad to the next meeting of the Committee.

21. Draft Annual Performance Report 2008/09

(Item B5)

(1) Mr Hardy introduced a report which provided an overview of the draft Annual Performance Report 2008/09 (APR) and an up to date draft of the report was circulated. Members were invited to submit their comments direct to Mr Hardy.

(2) RESOLVED that the draft report be noted.

22. Communities Directorate Annual Report on consultation activity 2008/09
(Item B6)

(1) Ms Edwards introduced a report which provided Members with information about Communities Directorate's activities and outcomes relating to consultation and survey activity during 2008/09.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

23. Annual Complaints Report 2008/09
(Item B7)

(1) The Committee received a report which provided information arising from the operation of the Communities Complaints Procedure for 2008/09.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

24. A summary of progress in delivery of KCC's Environment Policy, including climate change and an overview of next steps for KCC and the Communities.
(Item B8)

(1) Ms McKenzie presented a report highlighted the significant progress that had been made to date on delivering the Environment Policy (including climate change) and set out priorities for the next three years (2009-2012), together with the specific roles and contribution of the Communities Directorate. Mr Forward, the Communities Directorates lead on environmental issues, updated the Committee on the work being undertaken.

(2) Members requested that the next update report in six months time include details of progress with the recommendations of the Select Committees on Climate Change and Water & Waste Water.

RESOLVED that (a) the progress to date and the general shape of the 'Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan' be noted ; and (b) the proposed next steps for the Communities Directorate be approved.

25. Select Committee - Provision of Activities for Young People (PAYP) - Action Plan
(Item C1)

(1) Ms Slaven introduced the action plan arising from the Select Committee on PAYP was presented to Members for approval. Mr Chell, chairman of the Select Committee stated that he was happy with the action plan which would be monitored

by the Select Committee at a meeting one year after the recommendations had been submitted to Cabinet.

(2) RESOLVED that the action plan for implementing the recommendations of the Select Committee report on Provision of Activities for Young People be noted.

26. Select Committees - update

(Item C2)

(1) The Committee received a report which updated them on the process for approving a Select Committee topic review work programme. To date one topic had been put forward for consideration which partly fell within the remit of the Committee, which was "Extended Schools". All proposed topics would be considered by the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee on 16 October 2009.

(2) RESOLVED that the process for agreeing a Select Committee topic review programme be noted.