

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Communities Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 11 November 2009.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE 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 C Hespe (Head of Sport, Leisure & Olympics), Mr R Morsley (Project Manager - Turner Contemporary), Ms A Slaven (Director Youth Services and KDAAT), Ms L Spencer (Strategic Manager, Projects), Ms S Staples (Head of Kent Arts Development Unit) and Mr K Tilson (Head of Finance for Policy and Resources)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

27. Minutes - 17 September 2009

(Item A3)

Arising from the Minutes

Minute number 10 – Budget for the Coroners Service

(1) Mrs Tweed informed the Committee that she had contacted the Cabinet Member for Finance regarding splitting the budget for the Coroners service across the County Council. She was advised that the budget would remain with Communities at this time. Mr Hill stated that he would be having an ongoing discussion with his Cabinet colleagues about where the budget for this service should sit in the long term.

RESOLVED that, subject to Minute number 19 being amended to reflect that the Chairman was asked to suggest to the Cabinet Member for Finance that the budget for Coroners service should be spread across the County Council, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2009 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

28. Portfolio Holder and Managing Director's Verbal Update

(Item B1)

(1) Mr Hill updated the Committee and answered questions on the following issues:-

Capital programme

(2) In relation to the Ashford Gateway it was hoped that work would start on site in April 2010 with a completion date of April 2012.

(3) Regarding the Beaney in Canterbury following the tendering exercise a price had been achieved that was within budget and a provisional selection had been made. This tender was due to be awarded by Canterbury City Council at a meeting on 12 November 2009. It was anticipated that work would start on site in February 2010 and be completed in 2012.

(4) Good progress had been made with Gravesend Library and planning approval was being sought this month. Subject to planning permission being granted by Gravesham District Council work would start on site in Spring 2010 and it was hoped to open the library in April 2011.

(5) Turner Contemporary and the Kent History Centre were the subject of reports later in the meeting.

Cultural Summit

(6) The second Cultural Summit had been held on 28 September 2009 this had been very successful. It had been well attended and would provide a good basis for going forward.

Dover Torch

(7) On 2 October 2009 there had been a big event in Sandwich attended by hundreds of school children to celebrate the torches journey around local schools.

Olympics

(8) A commitment had been made to the first two training camps in the county. These were some of the first in the country.

Libraries

(9) The Council had receive a national award for the design of Ramsgate Library

Schools games

(10) The launch of the Kent School Games for 2010 had taken place at three schools across Kent, this had receive good press coverage. At the Conservative Party Conference, Dame Kelly Holmes had highlighted her own belief in the value of

the Kent School Games and issued a challenge for this to be adopted at a national level. A commitment had been given by Mr Hunt MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, that subject to the outcome of the general election, there would be a national schools games in 2012.

(11) Mrs Law asked a question about the Deaf School Games, Mr Sandhu reported that the games had been very successful. This was the first time that this event had been held and it had been very well attended. He hoped that there would be an even bigger event next year.

(12) Ms Edwards (on behalf of Ms Honey) highlighted “volunteer your skills”, a campaign which aimed to encourage those with professional skills to become volunteers. The Committee would be supplied with further information on this in due course.

(13) In relation to volunteering Mrs Tweed undertook to consider inviting representatives from local volunteer groups to briefly address the Committee when it met in other localities.

(14) The Chairman on behalf of the Committee congratulated the Head of Sport, Leisure & Olympics and his team on the work that they had done on the Kent School Games and the 2012 Olympics and also congratulated officers on the award that they had won for Ramsgate Library.

(15) RESOLVED that the updates be noted

29. Turner Contemporary - 6 month update

(Item B2)

(1) Mr Hill presented a report on Turner Contemporary which updated the Committee on the latest position regarding the construction of the gallery, operational developments and transition to the Turner Contemporary Trust. Mr Hill introduced Mr Morsley, (Project Manager - Turner Contemporary)

(2) It was noted that Mrs Tweed had spoken to the Chairman of the Regeneration and Economic Development POSC about both Committees having the opportunity to visit the Turner Contemporary development in the Spring and to discuss the regeneration and cultural aspects of the scheme.

(3) Members comments and questions were invited which included the following

- The legal team were congratulated on the successful settlement of the dispute in connection with the architectural design, engineering advice, cost advice, project management and intended construction of the first Turner Contemporary Gallery project which was abandoned in February 2006.
- Confirmation was sought that Turner Contemporary would be financially independent of the County Council in the long term. Mr Hill advised that the County Council would provide an annual grant to Turner Contemporary, but that Turner Contemporary should in the long term aspire to raise funds to reduce its dependence on the local authority.

- Mr Hill confirmed that there was a shortfall in funding for the construction of over £2m in the current year, but fundraising attempts were ongoing.
- Members were reminded that the Turner Contemporary hoped to attract 150,000 visitors to Margate in the first year but although the gallery was important it was part of a wider regeneration of the area.
- It was hoped that it would be possible to have an open ticket for a number of attractions in Kent including Turner Contemporary.
- The suggestion that there should be an update on Turner Contemporary at each meeting of this POSC was noted.

(4) RESOLVED that the latest developments on the Turner Contemporary project be noted.

30. Financial Monitoring Report : Community Services 2009/10

(Item B3)

(1) Mr Tilson presented a report on the forecast outturn against budget for the Communities portfolio. Members asked question which included the following:-

- In relation to the residential development connected to the Kent History Project it was confirmed that there was an agreement with the Developer to share the financial benefit from any increase in the market value of the properties.
- The increase in the Coroners budget was highlighted.
- It was confirmed that the library service were aware that the audio visual market was reducing and they were looking at, for example, e-books in order to keep up with the changing market and public demands.
- Mention was made of the need to still have older format audio visual material available for hire by people who may not have access to the new technology.
- It was confirmed that when funding to partner organisations was reduced full consideration was given to the impact and consequences of this action.

(2) RESOLVED that the projected outturn figures for the directorate for 2009/10 based on the first quarterly monitoring report, presented to the Committee in September 2009, and the subsequent exceptions reported to Cabinet in October 2009 be noted.

31. Medium Term Financial Plan - 2010-11 to 2012-13

(Item B4)

(1) Mr Hill introduced a report which identified the proposed strategy for determining next year's budget and the financial plans for the following two years. This included the latest indications of likely pressures facing the Communities portfolio, suggested areas for service improvements and the savings that might be needed in order to set a realistic three year budget plan.

(2) The Chairman reminded Members that there would be an informal meeting of the Committee to consider the Medium Term Financial Plan in more detail on 18 November 2009.

(3) Members made a number of comments which included the following:-

- The importance of the library service especially in areas of deprivation was emphasised. This was particularly important in a time of economic downturn.
- It was suggested that as Children, Families and Education Directorate was now responsible for Further Education there would be a logic in Adult Education being within that Directorate.
- A list setting out which of the Directorate's functions were discretionary and statutory was requested.

(4) RESOLVED that the comments made by Members be noted and a further a detailed discussion on Members priorities be held at the informal meeting of the Committee on 18 November 2009.

32. Cultural Olympiad

(Item B5)

(1) Ms Staples presented a report which provided an overview of the activity relating to the Cultural Olympiad and answered questions from Members.

(2) Ms Staples confirmed that she worked with the producers of the Kent Mela and there were aspirations for a county wide event in 2012.

(3) An assurance was given by Ms Staples that Kent TV were involved with the Dover big screen project.

(4) Mr Hespe was invited to give an update on the Kent 2012 campaign and set out the work being done to ensure that there was a Kent legacy from the 2012 Olympics.

(5) RESOLVED That the scale and range of opportunity around the Cultural Olympiad, the projects already successfully delivered by Kent County Council with partners within this context, and the work being undertaken for the 2012 Olympics be noted.

33. Kent History Centre

(Item B6)

(1) Mr Crilley introduced a report which summarised progress made to date on the Kent History Centre, the challenges and changes to the original programme and cost profile. It also outlined the current situation and revised timeline and information was provided regarding resource implications.

(2) There was a slight reduction in the number of residential units due to built on the site but Mr Crilley emphasised the achievement of delivering this project in the current economic climate.

(3) Mr Crilley confirmed that the Kent History Centre contained elements of archaeology. Mr Hill stated that there was still an aspiration to have a Kent Archaeological Resource Centre and efforts to identify a site for this. Currently,

discussions were taking place with English Heritage regarding the possibility of locating the Centre at Dover Castle.

(4) RESOLVED that progress on the Kent History Centre be noted.

34. Crime and Disorder Committee

(Item B7)

(1) The Committee received a report which updated them on the process of establishing a protocol for the operation of the County Council's Crime and Disorder Committees' functions.

(2) RESOLVED that the protocol be endorsed and submitted to County Council, via Selection and Members Services Committee, for approval.

35. Select Committees - update

(Item C1)

(1) The Committee were informed of their successful bid to establish a Select Committee on Extended Schools. There would be regular updates on the Select Committees progress.

(2) RESOLVED that the new Select Committee work programme, including the new Select Committee on Extended Schools, be noted.