

COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Communities Policy Overview Committee held in the Bewl Water Outdoor Education Centre, Bewl Water, Lamberhurst, Kent on Friday, 13 July 2007.

PRESENT: Mr P W A Lake (Chairman), Mr L Christie (Vice-Chairman), Mr A R Chell, Mr J Curwood (Substitute for Mr R E King), Mr D A Hirst, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr C J Law, Mrs E M Tweed and Mr B P Wood

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE and Mr R Morsley, Staff Officer to the Cabinet Member for Communities

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms C Anley (Head of Libraries), Mr C Bainbridge (Director Of Community Safety & Regulatory Services), Mr S Beaumont (County Manager, Community Safety), Mr D Crilley (Director of Libraries, Culture, Youth Services and Sport), Mr C Hespe (Head Of Sport, Leisure & Olympics), Ms A Honey (Managing Director Communities), Mrs C Singh (Democratic Services Officer), Ms A Slaven (Director Youth Offending & Substance Misuse) and Ms S Staples (Head Of Unit)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

36. Membership - to note that Mr L Christie has replaced Mrs C Angell (Item A1)

The Committee noted that Mr L Christie had replaced Mrs C Angell on the Committee.

37. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2007 (Item A4)

- (1) The Overview and Scrutiny Manager apologised to the Committee that the Minutes had not been published with the agenda and papers as not all the comments had been received from officers who had made presentations at the meeting.
- (2) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Matter arising – Library Service

- (3) In answer to a question from Mr Christie regarding the restructuring of the Library Service it was agreed that a summary of the current position of the restructuring of the service should be circulated to all Members of the Committee.
- (4) The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Liberal Democrat Spokesman would consider this being an agenda item for a future meeting of the Committee when they meet to plan the future work programme.

38. Portfolio Holder and Managing Director's Update

(Item B1)

(1) The Committee received an oral update from Mr M Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services and Ms A Honey, Managing Director Community Services on a range of issues.

Turner Contemporary

(2) The Committee noted that Mr Hill was optimistic that a bid for funding from the South East Economic Development Agency (SEEDA) as a contribution to Turner Contemporary would be supported. Mr Hill was pleased to report that the project was on target and budget.

(3) Since the Committee's last meeting there had been a public meeting held in Margate at which 400 people were present. This meeting had been very constructive. Mr Hill was encouraged by cross party support for the project and for the support of Thanet District Council.

(4) A planning application for the Turner Contemporary project would be made in the autumn, and there would be a further public meeting. Construction of the art gallery was planned to commence in the autumn of 2008.

Library Service

(5) PricewaterhouseCoopers had recently been commissioned to undertake a value for money review of the Library Service. The report would contribute to the future Libraries Strategy for the county. The review had confirmed that the service was well run but that the large number of libraries made the service comparatively expensive to operate.

(6) The PricewaterhouseCoopers report would be made available to all Members of the Committee.

Beaney Project

(7) The Committee noted that the Beaney Project was progressing well and would be delivered on budget. The project was due for completion in 2011.

(8) However, the Committee noted that acquiring Lottery funding for projects was becoming increasingly difficult. The Tunbridge Wells project (similar to the Beaney Project) had not been successful. Directorate staff were working with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council colleagues to look at the scope of the project following the unsuccessful bid for funding.

Library Service

(9) Ms Honey informed the Committee that she had written to Dr Eddy and Mrs Dean about the anticipated numbers of posts within the Library Service which were expected to be redundant and the continuing ongoing dialogue with the postholders

to find alternative employment. Ms Honey confirmed that Libraries and Archives would continue to explore with Personnel every opportunity to deploy the affected staff including exploring the possibility of redeployment with other local authorities across Kent.

Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope

(10) The Committee noted that the Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope had re-opened. As a result of this investment and refurbishment there had been a steady increase in the young people using the facility.

Disability Sports Games

(11) Mr Hill reported that there had been a very successful Disability Youth Games held at the Sevenoaks School. It was acknowledged that there had been a good response to these Games from special schools. The Committee suggested that it would be beneficial to encourage mainstream schools to participate in these Games in the future.

Hand crank cycling event

(12) This event had recently taken place at Westenhanger and was extremely successful.

World Archery

(13) The next major world event taking place in the County was the World Archery event to which all members of the Communities Policy Overview Committee were to be invited to attend for afternoon tea.

Awards and successes

(14) The Committee noted that the Community Wardens had won several top prizes in a South East regional award.

(15) The Kent Youth County Council had also been very successful in achieving an award for the work that they had undertaken for the Newsroom with BBC Radio Kent.

(16) Reference was made to the very successful Kent Youth Service Games which had been held in Sevenoaks recently.

(17) RESOLVED that the oral report of the Portfolio Holder and Managing Director be noted and the Committee's thanks be conveyed to all those who had been successful in achieving awards across the Directorate.

39. Presentation on the work of the Youth Service and the Youth Offending Service (YOS)

(Item B2)

(1) The Committee received a presentation from Nigel Baker, Head of the Youth Service and Angela Slaven, Head of Youth Offending and Substance Misuse. A copy of their presentation is attached as an appendix to these Minutes.

(2) The Committee had a very interesting debate and discussion with the two Heads of Service which was very informative for the Committee and would be of use to a wider audience.

(3) RESOLVED that the presentation be noted and Mr Baker and Mrs Slaven be thanked for the excellent work their services are providing.

40. Public Health

(Item B3)

(1) The draft Strategy for Public Health in Kent was launched for consultation by the Kent Department of Public Health in May 2007. The draft Strategy aims to provide an overview of the areas where local authorities and Primary Care Trusts in Kent can work to improve the health of the people of Kent.

(2) Set out in the report were examples of the contribution the Communities Directorate can make towards the aims, objectives and goals of the draft Public Health Strategy.

(3) The report also set out the health and wellbeing objectives contained within other frameworks to which the Communities Directorate contributes.

(4) RESOLVED that the contributions of the Communities Directorate towards the achievement of the Public Health priorities across the county be noted.

41. Service Performance Report 2006/2007

(Item B4)

(1) The Committee received a report which gave an overview of Service Performance during the first year of the Directorate's operation from 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.

(2) The report was constructed largely on a thematic rather than service unit basis to demonstrate the value of combining them in this way.

(3) The Committee noted that ensuring continuing improvement in service performance and securing value for money in management arrangements would continue to be priorities for the Directorate in 2007/08. There would be a focus on innovation and maximising the impact that the combination of these services could bring.

(4) The Committee noted that there were currently 13 Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) attributable to the Communities Portfolio, but that the BVPI list is being phased out from 2008/09 and the national standards for the library service are also being revised. A new national indicator set, which may include some of the former BVPIs, is being considered.

(5) The Committee also noted that the existing Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) framework will cease by the end of 2008. A new national Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) framework is being developed, to be introduced from 2009, and it is understood that it will be outcome focussed.

(6) The Director of Policy and Resources, informed the Committee that there was to be a special meeting of the Committee on 27 September 2007 at which the Committee would have the opportunity to ask questions about how the targets and aspirations set out in Towards 2010 were being achieved.

(7) In answer to a question about the number of attendances at youth centres during the year and the attendance on 'holiday programmes' Mr Baker said that he would clarify the situation for the Committee.

(8) In answer to a question about the description of the standards for the Best Value Performance Indicators the Committee noted that above the median was good.

(9) The Committee acknowledged the value and importance of the Kent Drugs and Alcohol Action Team and the cost to the County Council of drugs and alcohol misuse. The Committee was informed of a 'pilot' project at the Accident and Emergency Unit at Maidstone Hospital on those persons presenting to the hospital with drugs and alcohol related issues.

(10) With reference to BVPI 17a (the % of employees from the minority ethnic communities) clarification was sought on whether sessional staff were included in the statistics.

(11) Turning to BVPI 221a (% of youths engaged through youth work who gain no recorded outcome) and BVPI 222a (% of youths engaged through youth work who gain an accredited outcome). It was noted that whilst recording accredited outcomes is relatively straightforward, "other" outcomes are less simple to record and more work may be needed to standardise the approach in Kent, and to understand the effect of increased participation on the statistics.

(12) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

42. Communities Risk Register

(Item B5)

(1) In accordance with the Governance and Audit Committee decision on 7 March 2007 each Policy Overview Committee was being presented with the Risk Register relating to each Directorate. The Committee would then be able to monitor and review, and satisfy themselves, that the action being taken was being managed appropriately.

(2) The Committee noted that the requirement to maintain Risk Registers ensures that potential risks which may prevent the Authority from achieving its objectives were identified and controlled. It also ensured that controls are in place to prevent occurrence of events which it would be unacceptable or undesirable to allow to happen. The Committee noted that from time to time it may also highlight risks which are being over controlled.

(3) The process of developing the Registers was therefore important in underpinning performance management and service procedures. The Committee noted that considerable significance was attached to it by the external auditors and inspectors.

(4) In answer to a question about the top ten risks for the County Council the Committee noted that this was a register which applied to the Council as a whole.

(5) The Committee acknowledged the importance of risk management and they asked that a further report be submitted to the Committee early in the New Year.

(6) RESOLVED that the Risk Register for the Communities Directorate be noted and a further review of the Risk Register be considered by the Committee early in the New Year.

43. CPA Corporate Assessment

(Item B6)

(1) The Committee noted that the Kent County Council's Corporate Assessment inspection was due early in 2008. The report set out the details of the process, work undertaken to date and actions that need to be taken to prepare the County Council for this major element of the Corporate Performance Assessment framework.

(2) The Committee noted that a number of partner bodies, agencies and organisations would be asked to contribute to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment inspection and those to be interviewed would be notified by the Head of Corporate Performance.

(3) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

44. Select Committees Update

(Item C1)

(1) The Committee noted that the Alcohol Misuse Select Committee had started its hearings and was proposing to report to the Cabinet at its meeting on 3 December 2007. The views expressed by the Communities POC that this Select Committee should also consider looking at the criminality aspect of alcohol misuse had been reported to the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee (POCC) as a potential issue which warranted for a further piece of work. Attached to the report were the terms of reference and background information which had been agreed by the Select Committee looking at Alcohol Misuse.

(2) The Committee noted the Topic Review Work Programme and the reviews which had been identified by the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee to take place during the period autumn 2007 to spring 2008.

(3) The topic identified by the Committee on "Provision of Activities for Young People" remained in the Topic Review Programme and would be considered by the POCC when it next met in the autumn.

(4) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

