

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND WASTE POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Environment, Highways and Waste Policy Overview Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 15 September 2009.

PRESENT: Mr C Hibberd (Chairman), Mr M Robertson (Vice-Chairman), Mr J R Bullock, MBE, Mr N J Collor, Mr H J Craske (Substitute for Mr M J Harrison), Mr J Cubitt, Mr J D Kirby, Mr S Manion, Mr R A Pascoe, Mr W Richardson, Mrs E M Tweed and Mr M Whiting

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D L Brazier, Mr N J D Chard and Mr R A Marsh

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Austerberry (Executive Director, Environment, Highways and Waste), Mrs C Bruce (Interim Director Kent Highway Services), Mr N Bateman (Head of Technical Services), Mr N Caddick (Policy and Performance Manager), Dr L Davies (Director, Environment & Waste), Ms L Day (Kent Parking Manager), Mrs T Easdown (Customer Standards Officer), Ms D Eden-Green (Public Involvement Manager), Mr D Hall (Head of Transport & Development), Mr R Hallett (Directorate Finance Manager), Mr R Hardy (Director of Improvement and Engagement), Ms R Jefferies (Business Change Manager), Ms C McKenzie (Greener Kent Manager), Mr G Mee (Director of Integrated Transport Strategy) and Mrs C Valentine (Community Delivery Manager) and Mrs K Mannering (Democratic Services Officer CED).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman informed Members that it was his intention to take Item B8 following Item A4; and to consider Item D1 as an Item for Discussion and so became Item B12.

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2009 (Item A3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2009 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

2. Dates of meetings - 2010 (Item A4)

RESOLVED that the following dates for meetings of the Committee in 2010, commencing at 10.00am be agreed:-

Friday, 22 January
Thursday, 25 March
Tuesday, 6 July
Tuesday, 14 September
Thursday, 4 November

3. Potential to Refocus and Restructure the Overview and Scrutiny Function

(Item B8 – Report by Mr Alex King, Deputy Leader)

(Mr A Marsh presented the report on behalf of the Deputy Leader)

(1) The paper represented current thinking from a variety of sources to develop a recommendation to full Council in October. The paper needed to be seen in the context of:-

- (a) the emerging Strategy for Localism for the County Council and the various models and Frameworks for Localism being established across the County in conjunction with Partners;
- (b) the development of the Member role(s) and County Council's application for the South East Employers Organisation Member Development Charter;
- (c) implementation of the recommendations arising from the Informal Member Group: Member Information;
- (d) the opportunities, working in partnership with Borough/District colleagues that might exist to pool the resources supporting Overview and Scrutiny across the County and to agree shared work programmes on issues which would add value without duplication to the communities served;
- (e) the emerging scrutiny roles for which legislation/regulations had been published including Scrutiny of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships; and
- (f) the scrutiny of the public sector bodies advocated in the consultation document "Strengthening Local Democracy".

(2) RESOLVED that Members submit any views and comments to Mr King and Mr Marsh direct.

4. Cabinet Member's Update

(Item B1)

(1) Mr Chard gave a verbal report on the following issues:-

KHS

- Freedom Pass
- LED Replacement programme

Strategy & Planning

- DaSTS Studies
- Operation Stack
- Kent International Gateway (KIG)
- Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS)

- Rail Services
- Planning Applications Committee
- Shaw Grange

Environment & Waste

- Implementation of the revised Household Waste Recycling Centre Policy
- East Kent Waste
- Customer Charter Mark Results for E&W
- Green Flags for Country Parks
- Explore Kent photo exhibition
- Coastal Access now on the horizon
- Successful External funding bids
- Explore Kent E-zine

(2) RESOLVED that the update be noted.

5. "My Kent Highways Online"

(Item B2 - Report by Ms Roxanne Jefferies, Business Change Manager)

(1) The Parish and Member Portal was a key part of Kent Highways Services Transformation initiative and was designed to offer a full range of highways services online and would now be known as **"My Kent Highways Online"**. This would provide the general public, parish representatives, and council members with a number of 'online services' to make access to highways services more convenient to all customers.

(2) Following a presentation by Roxanne Jefferies, the Committee was informed that KHS was proposing to go-live with **"My Kent Highways Online"** for Members during September 2009, which would be preceded by Member roadshows to explain the benefits of the new system. This would be followed by an extension of the service to the parishes. Subsequently, a new online fault reporting and tracking website was planned to be launched to the general public during October.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the progress of 'My Kent Highways Online', be noted; and
- (b) the Committee support its implementation.

6. Financial Monitoring 2009/10

(Item B3 - Report by Mr Nick Chard, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste; and Mr Mike Austerberry, Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Waste)

(1) A detailed quarterly budget monitoring report was presented to Cabinet, usually in September, December and March, and a draft final outturn report in June. The reports outlined the full financial position for each portfolio and were reported to POCs after they had been considered by Cabinet. In the intervening months an

exception report was made to Cabinet outlining any significant variations from the quarterly report. The first quarter's monitoring report for 2009/10 was submitted.

- (2) RESOLVED that the budget variations for the EHW Portfolio for 2009/10 based on the first quarter's monitoring report to Cabinet, be noted.

7. EHW Annual Complaints and Compliments 2009

(Item B4 - Report by Mr Nick Chard, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste; and Mr Mike Austerberry, Executive Director for Environment, Highways & Waste)

(1) The report informed the Committee of customer feedback received from complaints and compliments by the Environment, Highways and Waste Directorate during 2007/08 and 2008/09.

- (2) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the figures for the Directorate be noted; and
- (b) Members consider what further information the Committee should see as part of the evolving process of improved reporting of user feedback.

8. Towards 2010

(Item B5 - Report by Mr Nick Chard, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste; and Mr Mike Austerberry, Executive Director for Environment, Highways & Waste)

(1) Towards 2010, KCC's strategic statement that set out priorities for delivery in the period 2006-2010, was now entering its final year. Progress against the targets was monitored on a regular basis and reported annually. The third annual report would be presented to County Council on 15 October 2009.

(2) The draft annual report for each of the targets that were the responsibility of the Environment, Highways and Waste Directorate were appended to the report. Of the fifteen targets where the Directorate was the lead two were considered to be done and ongoing and twelve to be on course. The target to reduce the impact of KCC's buildings and vehicles on the environment was one where more progress was felt to be needed, and the target was a good example of how benefits in one area (in this case increased use of ICT and extended opening hours in schools) could have disbenefits in another (in this case increased energy use).

(3) Members were invited to study the Towards 2010 monitoring reports and make any suggestions, amendments or recommendations they felt appropriate prior to the consideration of the full Towards 2010 monitoring at the October meeting of the County Council.

(4) During debate the Interim Director, KHS stated that, in relation to Target 32, the third sentence in the fourth bullet point on page 50 of the report was premature, and would be deleted.

- (5) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

9. Draft Annual Performance Report 2008/09

(Item B6 – Report by Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services and Performance Management; and Mr Peter Gilroy, Chief Executive)

(1) The report provided an overview of the draft Annual Performance Report 2008/09 (APR). Up until this year, KCC was required by Central government to produce a Best Value Performance Plan (the “KCC Annual Plan”), reflecting on the previous year’s performance and setting out priorities and targets for the following year. The requirement had now been abolished. In its place, this year KCC was publishing an Annual Performance Report, which summarised key activities and outcomes for 2008/09, in an easily accessible format.

(2) The draft Report would be submitted to each September Policy Overview Committee for information, and would be discussed at Cabinet on 12 October, prior to being taken to County Council for approval on 15 October.

(3) RESOLVED that the draft report be noted.

10. Consultations, surveys and public involvement activity in 2008-2009

(Item B7 - Report by Mr Nick Chard, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste; and Mr Mike Austerberry, Executive Director, Environment, Highways & Waste)

(1) The report provided Members with a summary of the results of consultation, public involvement and survey activity in Environment and Regeneration directorate during 2008/09. It also looked forward to the current year 09/10, to show how information obtained had been, or would be utilised by service teams in the new Environment, Highways and Waste directorate.

(2) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the information contained in the report be noted; and

(b) Members consider what further information the Committee should see as part of the evolving process of improved public involvement.

11. Sustainability and Climate Change - Update

(Item B9 - Report by the KCC Environment Board; Mr Nick Chard, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste; and Mr Mike Austerberry, Executive Director, Environment, Highways & Waste)

(1) The KCC Sustainability and Climate Change Team were required on behalf of the KCC Environment Board and Climate Change Cabinet Working Group to report to each POC on a six monthly basis regarding the progress in delivery of KCC’s sustainability and climate change commitments, including implementation of the KCC Environment Policy. The report updated Members on any significant developments and new initiatives and opportunities.

(2) The KCC Climate Change Cabinet Working Group met as needed, usually on a quarterly or six monthly basis and provides a strong steer to the Climate Change Programme. The Programme as a whole was steered by the KCC Environment

Board. More targeted Member training and engagement initiatives, including the possibility of setting up a broader Member Group were being considered. Feedback from the POC on the most appropriate ways of engaging Members would be much appreciated.

(3) Kent County Council continued to make good progress towards the implementation of the KCC Environment Policy and achievement of KCC's sustainability and climate change commitments. However, significant challenges remained, and every effort would be needed to maintain momentum.

(4) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the report be noted; and

(b) the EHW POC replace the broader Member Group referred to in paragraph (2) above, as the owner of the project, inviting the other POCs for their input as and when necessary.

(NB It was subsequently established that it was beyond the powers of the POC to resolve (b) above, and that at its meeting on 16 October the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee would consider a paper on the matter and determine the way forward)

12. Update on Service Level Agreement with EDF Energy

(Item B10 - Report by Mr Norman Bateman, Head of Technical Services)

(1) Following a period of consultation with all South East highway authorities, Kent County Council signed up to a new Service Level Agreement (SLA) with EDF Energy in December of last year. The purpose of the report was to provide an update on EDF Energy's performance after two three month periods of reporting by EDF to Ofgem. The report also provided information on the working relationship with EDF Energy and the new working practices that had been employed, which were outside of the SLA; and considered the proposal for Ringway to seek approval to work on the EDF network.

(2) At a recent meeting with EDF, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste was able discuss the past performance of the provider and the proposals from EDF to continue with their improvement. EDF stated that they were very confident of maintaining the progress made so far and that they considered Kent County Council very important on their customer base.

(3) From a more operational point of view, a senior manager from EDF now formed part of the KHS Streetlighting Management Team thereby giving KHS immediate access into the management of EDF improving communication and cutting down on delays.

(4) The report was for information only, but highlighted that EDF Energy had responded to their poor performance over recent years showing improved response to KHS and that the improvements were ongoing. The next set of figures would be submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 25 March 2010.

(5) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

13. KHS Winter Service Review

(Item B11 - Report by Mr Nick Chard, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste)

(1) Further to Minute 11 of 16 July 2009, the report provided additional information relating to the winter of 2008/9 and sought approval of the Winter Service Policy and Plan for 2009/10.

(2) The KHS winter service budget for 2008/9 was £2,326,000 and the out turn was £2,438,854. For 2008/9 there was a requirement for funding from the corporate emergency fund for snow emergency which cost £339,927. The budget for 2009/10 had been set at £2,525,000.

(3) RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste be recommended to:

- (a) note the contents of the report, particularly the decision to tender the winter weather forecasting service and enter into a three year contract arrangement; and
- (b) approve the Winter Service Policy and Plan for 2009/10 noting the salt bin assessment process and payment arrangements.

14. The Management of Vehicle Obstructions to Private Access (White Access to Highlight Markings on the Public Highway (Dog Bone Markings))

(Item B12 (formerly D1) - Report by Mr Nick Chard, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste)

(1) Further to Minute 20 of 16 July 2009, representations from Members were made to the Cabinet Member to request some minor alterations to the new Policy as follows:-

- (a) *any existing vehicle access highlight markings (those introduced prior to September 2009) to be automatically refreshed with no requirement to meet the new criteria and no charge to be applied. This would include road re-surfacing. There will no requirement for the resident to provide Police evidence to support the renewal of highlight markings*
- (b) *any unusual and individual circumstances such as 'whole road' schemes to be investigated upon their own merits and not under the current criteria.*
- (c) *clarification to be made that any works carried out on the highway include for the remarking of any white access marking that has been removed at no cost to the applicant.*

(2) RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste be recommended to approve the updated policy on The Management of Vehicle Obstructions to Private Access, for adoption.

15. Select Committee - update

(Item C1 - Report by Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager)

- (1) The Committee received an updated report on the process for approving a Select Committee topic review work programme. Currently the only topics put forward which fell partly within the remit of the POC were topic reviews on Energy and Waste.
- (2) Following the meeting of the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee on 16 October 2009 Members would be informed of the agreed Select Committee topic review programme and specifically progress with any topics included which fell within the remit of the POC.
- (3) RESOLVED that the process for agreeing a Select Committee topic review programme, be noted