

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee held in the Medway Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 8 December 2010.

PRESENT: Mrs T Dean (Chairman), Mr A R Chell, Mr R Brookbank, Mr L Christie, Mr R F Manning, Mr M J Jarvis, Mrs J P Law, Mr R J Lees, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mrs J A Rook, Mr J E Scholes and Mr M J Whiting

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P B Carter and Mrs S V Hohler

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms K Kerswell (Group Managing Director), Mr D Tonks (Head of Audit & Risk), Ms R Turner (Managing Director Children, Families and Education), Mr D Whittle (Policy Manager), Mr A Wood (Acting Director of Finance), Mr J Burr (Director of Kent Highway Services), Mr D Shipton (Finance Strategy Manager), Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership) and Mr A Webb (Research Officer To The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee)

#### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

##### **80. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2010** *(Item A4)*

(1) Members felt that the section of paragraph 18, which referred to the measurement of progress of implementation of the restructure, should be reworded to make it clearer.

RESOLVED: that, subject to the amendment of paragraph 18 for clarity, the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2010 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

##### **81. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2010** *(Item A5)*

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2010 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

##### **82. Follow-up Items from Cabinet Scrutiny Committee** *(Item A6)*

(1) There was a discussion around the format of follow-up items report, and the Committee agreed that the individual recommendations should be presented in a format which made them easier to identify quickly.

RESOLVED: that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee:

(2) Note the follow-up items report and responses to previous recommendations

(3) Welcome the assurances given by Mr Sass and Mr Webb that the format of the report would be revised to make the recommendations easier to identify.

**83. Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues held on 8 October 2010**  
*(Item A7)*

(1) Referring to paragraph 6(1) on page 41, the Chairman expressed a desire for clarification on whether the Council had taken a view on whether decisions about schools becoming academies would be made on an individual or whole council basis.

RESOLVED: that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee approve the notes of the Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues held on 8 October 2010.

**84. Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues held on 26 November 2010**  
*(Item A8)*

(1) The notes were agreed

RESOLVED: that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee approve the notes of the Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues held on 26 November 2010.

**85. Briefing note on Gully Emptying Schedules**  
*(Item B1)*

*Mr J Burr, Director of Kent Highway Services, was present for this item.*

(1) Mr Burr spoke to the briefing note which had been circulated to Members with the agenda pack. He acknowledged that officers had not delivered what the Committee had originally requested, and had met with the Chairman a few weeks previously to discuss the issue.

(2) The original aim was to undertake needs-based gully emptying, but that this had not progressed as much as officers would have liked. Instead gully emptying had been reactive, but Kent Highways Services were moving toward a more needs-based approach.

(3) Mr Burr explained that Members had received maps of the 'drainage hotspots' in their individual divisions and that their specialist local knowledge could be used to add to the increasing number of gullies that had been recorded. There were approximately 300,000 gullies in the county, and they would ideally all be emptied within one year, but realistically this might take 18 months.

(4) Mr Manning expressed a view that since the originally-promised gully emptying schedule was beyond the remit of Kent Highway Services to provide and a marathon task, and that Members were grateful for the further information that had been provided that the matter should not be pursued further by the Committee.

(5) Mrs Rook spoke of the significant issues that had been experienced in Deal and congratulated the drainage team on their response to the issues which has been communicated by the public, but expressed a view that an indication of when further gullies would be emptied should be made available. Mrs Law raised the specific

issues of Station Road in Herne Bay, the only division with utility cables through its drainage system. Mr Burr said that he was in formal discussions with the utility company and would update Mrs Law outside of the meeting.

(7) The Chairman asked if officers would deliver on the original intention. Mr Burr explained that they were looking at which gullies needed prioritising, but that more cost was involved in travelling between sites than emptying individual gullies so it made sense to empty all the gullies in an area with each visit. Emptying gullies involved not only emptying water but also clearing any detritus blocking them.

## **86. Briefing on the Identification and Recording of Risks**

*(Item B2)*

*Mr D Tonks, Head of Audit and Risk, and Mr A Wood, Acting Director of Finance, were present for this item.*

(1) The Chairman explained that Mr Tonks had been invited to give Members a guide to how the process of risk assessment worked. Mr Tonks gave a brief presentation to Members, which covered:

- Overview of Risk Management Process
- Risk Assessment
  - Identification
  - Analysis
  - Evaluation
- Theory of risk appetite
- Recording of Risk
- Role of Corporate Risk

(2) Mr Tonks responded to a number of questions from Members. He explained that all risks, including those outside Council control, such as the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review, were recorded in the risk register. The interface with his team and the Directorates involved 'risk champions' who owned the risk register for their Directorate, and they came together quarterly to review risks. Officers within Directorates used their professional judgement to identify risks, with challenge taking place within that Directorate. Where risks were shared between Directorates there would be associated risks on the risk recording system. Formal risk training would be delivered the following year. Mr Tonks spoke of the ability to terminate risk or transfer it. He explained that any duty of care that a local authority has cannot be transferred however.

(3) Mr Wood added that Appendix G of the Medium Term Plan contained three high risks, including the Comprehensive Spending Review. Responding to a question about disaster recovery, Mr Tonks stated that it sat along with emergency planning within the Communities Directorate, but that risk leads identified and employed treatment of risk and as Head of Audit he audited business continuity each year.

## **87. Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services**

*(Item D1)*

*Mr P Carter, Leader of the Council, Mrs S Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, Ms R Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and*

*Education, Mr A Wood, Acting Director of Finance, and Mr D Tonks, Head of Audit and Risk were present for this item.*

(1) The Chairman asked whether the report by Ofsted was a fair one and if problems had occurred more recently than a number of earlier judgements which had not raised any serious concerns. These included a 4-star rating received in 2008, a report in April 2010 by the then Chief Executive and the report by a consultant who was employed to look at serious case reviews after the Baby P case.

(2) Ms Turner explained that the Ofsted framework was now very different - it was case based, and only two weeks' notice was given. All open cases were given to Ofsted, and the Council was asked to audit them. It was a test of performance management and audit and as such was different to a Joint Area Review, where one year's notice was given and preparation could take place over several months. It was not possible to say if it was a fair assessment, but it had been a more managed process.

(3) Members had already been aware of a number of risks, including a high level of vacancies, a difficulty retaining social workers, many newly qualified social workers and increasing demand. The judgement found process-driven practice and a focus on performance indicators, resulting in quality assurance and performance management which was not sufficient to report on outcomes. The Council's response had been to take a radical look at the service and Ms Turner added that it was crucial that managers within the service flagged up problems, such as increasing demand and the working conditions of social workers in order that they could be addressed.

(4) The Leader felt this was the most important issue that had been before the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee, and there was a need to reflect on and address the issues outlined in the report. Although there had been warning signs, including a report by the former Chief Executive which portrayed a service just about coping, the severity of the Ofsted report had been a surprise. He believed that it was a mistake to disaggregate children's and adult social care across the country, and this is why they were being brought back together in the restructure proposals. Kent had areas of high deprivation and large numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) placed by other Councils, and this was why a detailed report had been commissioned in 2008.

(5) The Leader stated that if the recommendations of the reports by the previous Chief Executive and the external consultant had been acted upon more promptly and rigorously and embedded across the organisation, KCC would not have received such a critical judgement. He felt there had been failures in delivery of the recommendations and there had also been opportunities for Members to monitor and scrutinise their progress, including through the Children's Champion board, Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) and POSCs. The focus would now be on the recovery plan, and the Leader would be going with senior officers to speak with the Minister the following week. Responding to a question about how retention of the political and professional leadership which had been in place before the report could be justified, the Leader stated that Members were 'in this together' and during the impending restructure officers would have to apply for their posts within the service. He added that the inspector would be returning a year from the date of the inspection and if substantial progress had not been made, he would resign.

(6) Responding to a query about what should have been done in preparation for an Ofsted inspection, Ms Turner stated that she had joined the Council in May 2009 and there had been a peer review of the quality and standards of duty and assessment teams' against the Ofsted framework which had shown variable practice. The audit went to the Senior Management Team in July 2009, an action plan was agreed and she made changes such as the appointment of the Director for Specialist Children's Services. There had been a tradition of audits stopping at the level of Children's Social Services management which meant that senior managers and Members were not always informed of progress.

(7) Ms Turner explained that Children Families and Education (CFE) had focussed on improving the quality of its response to referrals, which had increased by 27%, while a third of social work posts were vacant and this had been a contributory factor in performance. CFE had concentrated on recruiting more staff, changed the management team and ensured there were integral, coterminous teams in each district with twelve preventative service managers who had been working with partners to ensure appropriate referrals. Much had been done to boost the teams, recruit to vacant posts, strengthen the leadership and management of the service and manage down inappropriate referrals, but Ms Turner believed that the service had not been able to improve quickly enough, and this is what had resulted in the poor judgement.

(8) A question was raised as to why, given that the Council had acknowledged the risks and had put in place recommendations and an improvement plan, Ofsted had judged that Kent had inadequate capacity to improve. It was explained that under the Ofsted grade criteria, good capacity to improve would be awarded if there was sustained evidence of improvement. Although the report acknowledged that problems had been recognised and actions had been taken to improve the service it was not yet embedded. The example of Essex County Council was cited where, after two years of intervention, safeguarding had been rated inadequate with adequate capacity to improve.

(9) Concerns were expressed around the scrutiny arrangements, and whether they had contributed to the situation. A view was expressed that boards and committees rely on information from senior management, but not all the relevant information had been made available to Members, and that Members should be more challenging of the information in front of them. The Leader explained that a review of governance arrangements would form part of the recovery plan.

(10) Mrs Hohler explained that an improvement and development steering group, which was multi-agency and cross-party, was set up immediately after the unannounced inspection and monitored the improvement plan for each district team. Ofsted had acknowledged this during the announced inspection but had said it was too soon to see if there had been improvements. An additional improvement board and improvement plan would be set up after a meeting with the minister the following week.

(11) On the recovery plan, Mr Carter explained that three individuals who had been involved in the recovery of other authorities from poor judgements had been recruited, work was ongoing to ensure the Integrated Children's System (ICS) was working to the best of its ability and 7000 case files were being reviewed before December. Work to be done included looking at the intelligent deployment of staff,

with experienced social workers alongside newer staff, reviewing reward packages and career progression to attract and retain social workers, and sensible caseloads. Priorities would be looking at the number of inappropriate referrals due to universal application of thresholds, being creative and innovative about mechanisms to support young people, and a renewed effort on working with other agencies. Staff had been moved away from Looked After Children (LAC) to safeguarding, and consequently there needed to be a renewed focus on transforming the way LAC were cared for and ensuring that those suitable for adoption were adopted, as well as the possibility of exploring rotation between LAC and safeguarding to reduce 'burnout'. On the monitoring and scrutiny of the recovery plan, the Leader explained that the process would be open and honest, making use of Member expertise where possible.

(12) Responding to a question about when the situation would improve, the Leader stated that the aim was to sort out the fundamentals within six months with significant improvement within one year. It was explained that once a council is given a bad judgement, it can take time for Ofsted to agree that changes had become fully embedded throughout the organisation.

(13) On the recruitment of new staff, Ms Turner explained that there had been a batch of newly qualified and experienced recruits from Europe and she expected the service to be almost fully staffed by April 2011. However, experience would need to be grown around making judgements correctly, and supervising social workers were being recruited to support new front line staff, although these experienced staff were still hard to find. Other issues included the fact that there was limited career progression available to social workers, and that Kent was recruiting from the same pool as other councils looking to fill vacancies. The Leader felt there was a need to increase the profile of front line social work, and that attracting local graduates would ensure sustainability.

(14) In response to a request for numbers, rather than percentages of vacancies, Ms Turner undertook to produce a report on the numbers of the establishment for social workers and principal social workers. On retention rates of staff compared with other services, Ms Turner stated that retention rates were currently satisfactory. There had been a mixture of internal and external recruitment to the District Manager posts, but that extensive training would be necessary throughout the service, as frontline quality assurance was of paramount importance.

(15) On the subject of training, Ms Turner explained that the new supervisory policy was already underway, and that continuous training and workforce development was necessary to keep critical judgements in complex situations sharp. An issue that had arisen in the past was that managers were ensuring that assessments were being carried out but without a focus on the quality of the judgements and outcomes of those assessments. A culture had developed whereby social workers felt that they were not able to openly express their concerns. There was therefore a need to change the culture of the service as well as holding staff to account for managing their own and others' performance. Members expressed concern that social workers did not feel that they could talk openly before, and it was asked if this was being addressed in the staff behaviours document.

(16) Responding to question about whether the process in place to identify and mitigate risks was sufficiently robust to recognise and respond to similar issues in the future, Mr Tonks explained that in his role as Head of Risk he relied on the

professionals and senior management of a service to identify risks, but it would be in his remit as Head of Audit to carry out an audit of the response plan (although Ofsted would be returning in a year's time to do this anyway). Replying to a query about whether his remit extended to identifying threats to the implementation plan, Mr Tonks explained that he would expect the CFE Senior Management Team to do so, and that the response plan would include a risk register.

(17) Responding to a query about progress on partnership working, Ms Turner explained that the response from other agencies had been very supportive, including the police examining their referral practice and adopting a more risk-managed approach. The potential for multi-agency teams was being examined, with an initial contact and triage system.

(18) In response to a query on what proportion of safeguarding referrals came from police, Ms Turner stated that it was the vast majority, and promised that the figures would be made available in a separate report. Concern was also expressed that a low level of referrals came from schools due to their regular contact with children. Referring to the Council restructure proposals, the Chairman asked whether the arrangement for the Director of Children's Services to sit in a different Directorate was fit for purpose, since they would have to answer for such mistakes in the future but would not have direct control over the staff responsible.

(19) On the subject of Member involvement, Ms Turner explained that she had discussed opportunities for Member input in individual cases with Mrs Hohler. Whilst it might not be appropriate to provide written case details, it would be legitimate for cases which came to the attention of a Member to be discussed face to face with the social worker and their manager. This is something that could be included in the improvement plan.

(20) On the wider involvement of Members, Ms Turner clarified that the formulation of the improvement plan would be influenced by the discussions at Cabinet and Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and that the external help that had been brought in would also bring challenge and rigour. There was a need to map out how progress would be reported to scrutiny. The Children's Champion Board would be recast as the Corporate Parenting Board, with a particular focus on LAC, and the improvement board would be cross party and represent a cross section of the organisation. The Leader suggested an open and full briefing early January, perhaps as part of Children's Champions Board to get members fully up to speed and enable them to contribute to the recovery plan.

(21) Mr Christie moved that the Committee formally recommend that the Cabinet Member and Leader consider their positions in light of the Ofsted judgement. The motion was not seconded.

RESOLVED: that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee:

(22) Thank Mr Carter, Mrs Hohler, Ms Turner, Mr Wood and Mr Tonks for attending the meeting and answering Members' questions.

(23) Acknowledges the Leader's acceptance that there are serious concerns about the effectiveness of safeguarding services and that Members and Officers are fully committed to tackling the shortcomings as a matter of urgency.

(24) Welcome the assurances given by the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education and the Managing Director, Children Families and Education that the points made during the discussion at Cabinet Scrutiny Committee will be included as part of the recovery plan

(25) Ask the Leader of the Council that the outcome of the meeting with the Minister to discuss safeguarding and looked after children services in Kent be reported back to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

(26) Ask the Cabinet Member to ensure that the outcomes of the review into the circumstances surrounding the judgement be reported back to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee, given the seriousness of the subject.

(27) Ask the Cabinet Member to provide a report on the actual number of social worker posts and historical data on the number of vacancies within the Children, Families and Education Directorate since April 2009.

(28) Ask the Cabinet Member to provide a report on the number of safeguarding referrals to the Children, Families and Education Directorate from different agencies since April 2009.

## **88. Bold Steps for Kent - The Medium Term Plan to 2014**

*(Item D2)*

*Mr P Carter, Leader of the Council, Ms K Kerswell, Group Managing Director, Mr D Whittle, Policy Manager, Mr D Shipton, Finance Strategy Manager, and Mr D Tonks, Head of Audit and Risk were present for this item.*

(1) The Leader introduced Bold Steps for Kent, the Medium Term Plan, explaining that it was in keeping with the localism agenda and the control shift from central to local government and from local government to communities and local boards. County Councillors and District Councillors would work together more closely as part of the local boards, and pilots would be taking place in a number of districts before it was rolled out more widely.

(2) The Leader explained that the Medium Term Plan should be read in conjunction with the regeneration framework, 'Unlocking Kent's Potential'. The Council needed to embed the activity in the framework in its change and transformation over the next four years, and to build on successes in education, and look to the changing health agenda for opportunities for locality based commissioning and the joining up of health and social care. He welcomed the performance monitoring framework that would be based on implementation and outcomes.

(3) On the aspiration for new City Region powers and responsibilities to be made available to Kent, it was explained that there was a desire for this to be utilised by all tiers of local government in Kent. There was a desire for greater progress in the 'control shift' from central Government to the Council, and from KCC to a more local level, in line with localism agenda. This would include changes to governance and more delegation of functions held by Government departments.



(4) Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and opening up the market to greater competition including voluntary organisations and social enterprises were referred to in several places in the report. A concern was raised about the setting up of arms length organisations by KCC and their effect on local businesses and it was explained that such measures would not stifle open competition if provided intelligently and with sufficient scrutiny. Responding to a query about whether a greater number of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) were accessing KCC contracts, it was explained that good examples had been set in education and the tender for the pothole repair work, but greater progress could be made, with transparency and Member scrutiny of the tender process embedded across the organisation.

(5) There was a discussion about the funding of schools in the most deprived wards in Kent. The Leader explained that funding would need to be used sensibly to ensure that the needs of all schools, not just those in the most deprived areas, were met. On the Council's commitment in the document to continue supporting the Kent Schools Games and whether this would be affected by the proposed withdrawal of School Sports Partnership funding by Government, the Leader confirmed that the money would be made available in the budget for them to continue.

(6) A concern was expressed about how the transfer of economic development functions to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) of Kent, East Sussex and Essex would be funded. The Leader made the point that Kent would need to make the case to Government about the atypical profile of the South East, with more people living in deprivation in Kent and East Sussex than in the North East, and that this should be reflected in any upcoming funding redistribution.

(7) Responding to a query on the funding of the major infrastructure projects referred to in Bold Steps for Kent, the Leader referred to Growth Without Gridlock, the recently launched integrated transport strategy. The strategy put the cost of the required infrastructure at over £1.7 billion, but additional annual revenue at over £615 million; roughly 20% of this additional revenue would allow Kent to deliver its highways objectives over the next 20 years.

(8) In relation to the Kent Schools Association and whether different types of school, such as academies, would be able to do work together, the Leader stated that he believed there would be willingness for this to happen. The appropriate mechanisms would be put in place to allow schools to build on previous progress, including a district focus and Children's Trust cooperation arrangements, while removing bureaucracy.

(9) A view was expressed that Members would have a role in developing the Big Society, particularly in terms of being a conduit between officers and the public in relation to the re-provision of services, and that Member grants would also play an important role in progressing the Big Society agenda and should be maintained within the budget if possible.

(10) A question was raised about the risk assessment in Change to Keep Succeeding, which Members had been encouraged to read in conjunction with Bold Steps for Kent, and the process involved in ensuring risk was accurately assessed. Mr Tonks explained that he had gone through the risk assessment with Mr Hawkins (Project Manager, Transformation) and that a few risks had been added and tweaked

and these had been re-reported through the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees (POSCs) and Cabinet.

(11) The Chairman expressed a view that the greatest risk associated with the restructure was the creation of a single Families, Health and Social Care Directorate which brought together the major risks to the Council of delivering care to children and vulnerable adults at the same time as absorbing Supporting People and the emerging Health agenda. Responding to a question about his role in assessing these risks, Mr Tonks explained that ownership of the risk register for the restructure sat with Ms Kerswell and Mr Hawkins, and he advised in a technical capacity. It was also explained that three risks related to Change to Keep Succeeding featured in the strategic risk register for the County Council, and these related to the financial framework, governance arrangements, and the timing of the restructure.

(12) Referring to the report and his earlier presentation, Mr Tonks explained that the risk cycle began with objectives set out by the organisation for the next four years, and these objectives would cascade into business plans and strategy documents. Bold Steps for Kent set out what the organisation wanted to achieve, and the next stage of the risk assessment process would involve Directorates identifying the risks associated with the delivery of these objectives.

(13) On promoting apprenticeships to SMEs, it was suggested that small companies needed advice and the confidence to grow, particularly in the current economic climate, and by offering advice and support to them, the Council could ensure that innovation was turned into employment and growth. It was also suggested that local businesses should be helped where possible through the Council's procurement strategy. Mr Whittle referred Members to the section in Bold Steps for Kent on liberalising the market and the 'Modernising Commissioning' Green Paper, which addressed some of these issues, including how community interest companies and social enterprises could better compete for KCC contracts. Kent was in a position to build on its existing progress on apprenticeships, but that there was an issue around the national provision and advice services not dealing with businesses with less than 200 employees. Under the Sustainable Communities Act, Kent could make a case for transfer of these responsibilities where it thought it could better serve the people of Kent.

(14) On the level of responses, including that five out of twelve district councils had replied, Mr Whittle explained it had been difficult to balance the length of the consultation period and the time required to amend the document as a result of responses. However, the councils that had responded were very positive and engaged.

(15) Referring to the New Homes bonus that had been announced by Government, the Chairman enquired about how the grant would be divided between County and District Councils, and whether there was an expectation that the Council would pass on its share to town and parish councils. Mr Shipton explained that in the New Homes consultation, the government was suggesting an 80/20 split between District and County Councils respectively, with mechanisms for local negotiation to vary the proportions and also to pass down some of the grant to lower tiers of government.

(16) Responding to a concern that environmental issues were not featured strongly enough in the document, particularly in relation to car use and pollution, Mr Whittle

explained that it was not possible to set out every issue and priority, but there was a clear strategy in relation to the environment in the form of the Kent Environment Strategy. Priorities and actions that arose from the documents in the regeneration framework would be built into the monitoring arrangements for Bold Steps for Kent.

(17) On the proposal that Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) might become locality boards the Chairman pointed out that they had different terms of reference and asked if they were being invited to make this change. Mr Whittle explained District Councils which gave strong consultation responses endorsed the locality board model, but there were ongoing discussions on how these were designed within each district and would depend on local appetite. On the possibility of commissioning through locality boards, it was explained that this would potentially go beyond what LSPs and locality boards currently do, but it was expected that appropriate legal advice would be sought on a case by case basis.

(18) Responding to a question about whether the breaking down of silos and the emphasis on one KCC brand would conflict with the Gateway model, Mr Whittle explained that there would need to be a balancing act between Gateways being a multi-agency route into accessing services as well as a central route to accessing KCC services. In relation to a query about how residents not involved in social enterprises or locality boards would interact with KCC, Mr Whittle hoped that a re-emphasis on meeting what the people of Kent want in relation to services rather was implicit in the document. Although it was accepted that Bold Steps for Kent should be read in conjunction with Change to Keep Succeeding, which covered this issue in greater depth, the Chairman expressed the view that the public would be less likely to read the restructuring document.

(19) A Member sought assurances that acronyms were spelled out in full to make the document more accessible to the public. In response to a request for a revised list of consultees, Mr Whittle explained that a more detailed analysis of the consultation responses would be going to County Council. Mr Manning asked what number of companies in Kent employed less than 250 people. Mr Whittle stated that he would find this out and Mr Shipton explained that approximately 97% of UK companies employed less than 200 people.

RESOLVED: that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee:

(20) Thank Mr Carter, Ms Kerswell, Mr Whittle, Mr Tonks and Mr Shipton for attending the meeting and answering Members' questions

(21) Ask the Leader to explore how there can be greater Member involvement and scrutiny of the award of KCC contracts to ensure anti-competitive behaviour does not stifle the opportunity of small businesses in Kent

(22) Ask the Leader to ensure that specific and measurable targets and milestones are set against each of the objectives in the Medium Term Plan, and that an appropriate performance management framework is put in place that ensures robust reporting of the performance of the Organisation against those targets and milestones

(23) Ask the Leader to ensure that the reporting of risk is embedded into the next steps of the development of the Medium Term Plan.

(24) Ask the Leader that any data on the increase in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) accessing KCC contracts be made available

(25) Ask that the Leader provide a report on the number of companies in Kent that employ less than 250 people

(26) Ask the Leader that any acronyms within the document be spelled out in full to ensure that it is understandable to the public.

(27) Ask the Leader that ways of engaging members of the public in the Big Society who are not members of Local Strategic Partnerships or other similar bodies be addressed in the Medium Term Plan.

(28) Welcome the assurance that the Kent School Games would continue with KCC funding, following the recent announcement from the Coalition Government to withdraw funding for school sports activity.

*(Post Meeting Note: Education Secretary, Michael Gove, announced that £112m would be available to provide continued funding for the School Sports Partnerships (SSPs)).*