

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Board held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 2 November 2011.

PRESENT: Mr E E C Hotson (Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, Mr C J Capon, Mr N J D Chard, Mr M C Dance, Mr R F Manning, Mr L B Ridings, MBE, Mr M J Vye (Substitute for Mrs T Dean) and Mrs E M Tweed

ALSO PRESENT: Mr R J Lees, Mr G Cowan and Mr K Smith

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S Beaumont (County Manager, Community Safety), Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Policy Overview)) and Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

67. Minutes - 13 July 2011

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2011 are correctly recorded and that they be signed as a correct record subject to the amendment of typographical errors (Page 3, Minute number 63 (2) second bullet point last sentence being amended to read "The issue of allowing the public to speak at Overview and Scrutiny meetings was one that needed to be considered and a decision made." Page 3, Minute number 64 (2) end of first sentence being amended to read "...the HOSC did not fall within the remit of any Directorate.")

68. Date of next meeting

(1) The Chairman informed the Board that he had agreed to cancel the meeting due to be held on 1 December 2011, to enable a meeting of the Selection and Member Services Committee to be held to discuss the new governance arrangements. The next diarised meeting of the Board would be held on 2 February 2012.

69. Select Committee update

(Item 5)

(1) Mr Sass introduced an update on the current Topic review Programme and the resources available to deliver the programme.

Select Committee – Attainment at Key Stage 2

(2) Mr Vye gave an update on the work of the Select Committee on Attainment on Key Stage 2. The Committee were currently carrying out visits to schools and it was anticipated that recommendations from the Select Committee would be formulated in

the New Year. Mr Ridings expressed disappointment that the Select Committee had only been able to visit 7 schools.

Select Committee – Dementia

(3) It was noted that this Select Committee would be presenting its report to Cabinet and County Council in December 2011.

Select Committee – the Student Journey

(4) Mr Smith introduced an update from the Select Committee on the Student Journey which included possible areas of recommendation. He emphasised the importance of the recommendations achieving outcomes. The review had looked at the journey into work taken by young people from age 11 to 22/24 from their perspective. Most of the work that had previously been carried out in this area had focused on institutions and employers rather than the young people themselves.

(5) Mr Smith took the opportunity to thank the young people who had been involved for the contribution that they had made to the work that of the Select Committee.

(6) Mr Smith explained that the Select Committee had made recommendations all the way through the process and had discussed these with key stakeholders to ensure that the suggestions were implementable and would have the co-operation of those who would be implementing them.

(7) Mr Smith stated that the Select Committee would like to arrange for one District to take up the recommendations and to test them.

(8) Mr Smith confirmed that the Select Committee were talking to the Wolf Implementation Committee who wanted to see the Select Committee's recommendations and it was hoped that there would be the opportunity to have an influence at the national level.

(9) Members asked questions and made comments which included the following:-

- The importance of helping young people to understand what the workplace was about was emphasised.
- Members commended Denne for their proposal and hoped that this would inspire other companies.
- It was suggested that businesses would take on more young people if they were convinced of the contribution that they could make to their business.
- Regarding the post 16 transport policy, the importance of having adequate public transport links to enable young people from rural areas to access work was mentioned.
- It was suggested that there was a need to find more business mentors for young people who could go into schools and engage with young people and teaching staff.
- The importance of young people being able to present themselves well to employers was emphasised.
- The Select Committee had been impressed by the bright young people that they had met and their desire to get into the world of work and training.

Proposed Select Committee – Domestic Abuse

(10) The Board considered a request from Mrs Tweed, on behalf of the Crime and Disorder Committee, to establish a Select Committee topic review on Domestic Abuse. Mrs Tweed gave further information in support of the proposal and emphasised the effect that this issue had on for example child protection, police resources in addition to the impact that it had individuals and families as well as the cost to the Kent economy.

(11) Mr Hill spoke in support of the proposed review both as Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership and as Vice-Chairman of the Police Authority. He said that the police had seen an upsurge in cases of domestic abuse in recent years, this was partly caused by the success in getting people to come forward to report cases. Mr Hill referred to the potentially fatal consequences of domestic abuse with there being four serious reviews of domestic homicides in Kent this year.

(12) Mr Beaumont spoke in support of the proposed review in his role as Community Safety Manager and Chairman of the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Board. He emphasised the potentially wide scope of this review and suggested that the focus of the review where it could have the most impact was in the areas of providing support to victims of domestic abuse and multi-agency working. The main providers of support services for victims of domestic abuse were voluntary and charitable organisation. In relation to this there were a large number of funding streams. The outcomes from this review could be of benefit not only to the County Council but all other agencies involved in this work. He hoped that the review would galvanise the partnership approach and raise the profile of this topic.

(13) Members made the following comments:-

- It was important to include preventative services in the work of this review.
- The emphasis on abuse and not just violence was important.
- It was noted that men were also victims of domestic abuse.
- Domestic abuse was also an intergenerational issue.

(14) Mr Sass informed the Board that subject to the outcome of the restructuring of the Business Strategy team, resources could be made available once the Dementia Select Committee review was completed so work could start on a new review early in 2012. Once the Committee was established it could then consider whether it wished to include any co-optees.

(15) RESOLVED that the update on the current Select Committee topic reviews be noted and a Select Committee on Domestic Abuse be established which will start its work in the early 2012 subject to appropriate resources being identified.

70. Sharing of good practice - discussion

(Item 6)

(1) Mr Dance informed Members that when the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee had visited farms in September one of the issues raised had been the Seasonal Agricultural Workers

Scheme. Mr Hotson undertook to discuss with Mr Dance the most effective way for Members to discuss this issue.

(2) RESOLVED that the matter raised by Mr Dance be noted.