

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CORPORATE POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 31 March 2011.

PRESENT: Mr E E C Hotson (Chairman), Mrs T Dean (Vice-Chairman), Mr R W Bayford, Mr D L Brazier, Mr J R Bullock, MBE, Mr R B Burgess, Mr B R Cope, Mr M J Harrison (Substitute for Mr S Manion), Mrs J P Law, Mr R J Parry, Mr J E Scholes Mr M V Snelling

ALSO PRESENT: Mr A H T Bowles, Miss S J Carey, Mr R W Gough, Mr P W A Lake, Mr K H Pugh Mr J D Simmonds

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Ballard (Project Manager), Mrs A Beer (Director of Personnel & Development), Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director of Business and Support), Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Policy Overview)), Mr R Fitzgerald (Performance Manager), Mrs S Garton (County Performance and Evaluation Manager), Ms K Kerswell (Managing Director), Mr M Lemon (Head of Policy), Mr T Molloy (Programme Manager - Office Transformation), Mrs T Oliver (Director of Strategic Development and Public Access), Ms M Peachey (Kent Director Of Public Health), Mr D Shipton (Finance Strategy Manager), Mr P D Wickenden (Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager) Mr A Wood (Acting Director of Finance)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

105. Membership

(Item A2)

It was noted that no changes had been made to the Membership of this Committee.

106. Minutes - 13 January 2011

(Item A5)

The Chairman informed the committee that, in relation to minute number 100 (Proposed Company Structures – rules applying to the provision of Legal Services) this matter was being re-considered and therefore no arrangements had been made for the proposed Informal Member Group to meet.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2011 are correctly recorded and that they be signed as a correct record.

107. Financial Monitoring Report : Corporate Services 2010/11

(Item B1)

(1) Mr Shipton introduced the third quarter's budget monitoring report for 2010/11 which would be reported to the Cabinet on 4 April 2011 and the latest exception report. He stated that the underspend was slightly larger than anticipated due to the moratorium that had been in place since December 2010.

(2) Mr Wood explained the process for managing the delivery of the £95m of efficiency, policy and one-off savings included in the 2011/12 budget approved by County Council. For any savings over £200k the responsible manager was required to complete a Project Initiation Document, which would be subject to detailed monitoring. Progress reports would be submitted to Cabinet alongside the normal budget monitoring report, and would also be presented to each Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee after they have been considered by Cabinet.

(3) The Cabinet Member and Officers answered questions from Members and noted comments which included the following:-

- Regarding the reduction in the Members IT budget (it had been reduced by 100K to 50K), 25K was for equipment renewal and 25K was the annual contribution towards new equipment following the next County Council election.
- It was confirmed that next years budget would see an increase in the income target for Personnel and Development. Ms Beer confirmed that a proportion of this income would come from external organisations, such as Kent Police and Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, buying management qualification courses from KCC.
- Mr Cockburn undertook to speak to Mr Parry outside of the meeting about the level of Blackberry allocated to Elected Members.
- It was confirmed that Members were able to have their Blackberry's phone enabled and payment was made via payment self service.
- Mr Shipton was asked to supply the Committee with background information on paragraph 1.1.3.1 – relating to the release of -£83k for annual IT support for Members.
- It was confirmed that surplus property was generally being retained until values improved. As long as asset values exceeded borrowing, officers were comfortable with this.

(4) RESOLVED that the projected outturn for the Chief Executive's Department and Financing Items for 2010/11 based on the third quarter's monitoring report to Cabinet be noted.

108. Treasury Adviser Appointment

(Item B2)

(1) Mr Vickers introduced a report which explained that the County Council had been out to competition in a European Union compliant tender process for the

appointment of a treasury adviser. The Council currently used both Arlingclose and Sector. The report provided a summary of the process and outcome.

(2) In response to a question Mr Vickers gave an assurance to the Committee that the criteria for the appointment of a treasury advisor met the recommendations made by the Audit Commission in their report.

(3) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

109. Access & Assessment and Workplace Transformation Progress

(Item B3)

(1) Mrs Oliver introduced a report which informed the Committee of the progress being made to identify savings from streamlining and improving access and assessment processes. She emphasised the importance of avoiding duplication within KCC and with other organisations in order to achieve savings and also the need to make sure that effective use was made of joined up IT systems.

(2) The Cabinet Members and Officers answered questions from Members and noted comments which included the following:-

- It was confirmed that where possible people attending Gateways would be shown how to access services on line so that they could use this method in future if they wished.
- It was explained that the difference between the Kent Contact Centre cost per contact during the day and out of hours was that there were not so many calls out of hours so the cost per contact was higher.
- An assurance was sought that Members would see the Channel Strategy before it was completed in July 2011, and that there should be a baseline set of targets. It was noted that this would come within the remit for the new Customer and Communities POSC from 6 April 2011.
- The importance of the Members Information Group was emphasised.
- The issues some Members experienced in using outlook web access were mentioned.
- It was requested that an update on the implementation of the issuing of concessionary bus passes by KCC from 1 April 2011 be provided for Members so that they could answer questions from their constituents.

(3) The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mrs Tanya Oliver for all her hard work and wished her every success in the future.

(4) RESOLVED that the actions being taken to improve access to services and to achieve the savings targets for access and assessment set over the next four years be noted.

110. Potential Impact and Response to the Localism and Devolution Bill

(Item B4)

(1) Mr King introduced a report which set out the potential impact of the legislation for the County Council and how the Council with its partners was planning to respond to this proposed legislation.

(2) The Cabinet Member and Officers answered questions from Members and noted comments which included the following:-

- Mr King explained that the development of the Locality Boards would be an evolutionary process, they would be non decision making but they needed to be as efficient as possible. There was a need to share and clarify responsibilities between District/ Borough Councils and the County Council. The decision making power would still rest with the Cabinets of the respective Councils.
- A Member mentioned that one District was opting not to have a Locality Board and therefore the County Councillors for that area would not have this opportunity to be more involved locally. It was pointed out that most areas still had Local Boards and this mechanism could be used to give County Councillors involvement in their local area.
- It was emphasised that Local Boards had a different role in Community Engagement to that of Locality Boards and that that there was not a “one size fits all” for either of these. It was acknowledged that Local Boards worked better in some areas than in others.
- The need for clarity around the function of the new Locality Boards was highlighted.
- A Member stated that as the proposal for Locality Boards had been forged at a time when all District Councils had a Conservative administration, if there were any changes of administration following the May elections this could raise issues.
- It was clarified that the Joint Kent Chiefs was made up of the Chief Executives of the Kent public sector bodies. The Ambition Boards were Member led and these were being developed.
- It was noted that the housing and planning issues in the bill were of major interest to District/Borough Councils.
- A Member expressed the view that local referendums needed to be more inclusive e.g. postal and proxy votes should be allowed, in order to get a larger percentage of the population taking part.

(3) RESOLVED that Members comments on the report and the emerging infrastructure for responding to the proposed legislative framework for localism and devolution be noted.

111. KCC progress on changes to health service organisation

(Item B5)

(1) Mr Gough, Ms Peachey and Mr Lemon introduced a report which referred to recent white papers and proposed legislation which were radically reforming the governance of the NHS, public health and social care. New arrangements to oversee

the commissioning of health and other services had to be in place over the next two years. Kent was an “Early Implementer” for some of these changes and significant progress had now been made. The report updated the Committee on the progress especially regarding the county Health and Wellbeing Board and GP Commissioning Consortia.

(2) The Cabinet Member and Officers answered questions from Members and noted comments which included the following:-

- Although this appeared to be going well in Kent, Members asked to be made aware if this changed.
- It was clarified that these proposals cut across a number of Cabinet Portfolios and Directorates. Mr Gough and Mr Gibbens were working on this together. There was a group of officers who were reviewing the developments on a weekly basis. Although it was a cross cutting matter there was clarity around who was leading various aspects.
- Disappointment was expressed that the proposed GP Consortiums would not be coterminous with Districts.

(3) RESOLVED that the progress on implementing the provisions of the health and social care bill especially those relating to the health and wellbeing board be noted.

112. Update on response to consultation on "Healthy Lives, Healthy People" white paper *(Item B6)*

(1) Mr Lake and Ms Peachey introduced a report which referred to the consultations on the Public Health White Paper – ‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People – Our strategy for public health in England’ and associated documents, the Consultation on the funding and commissioning routes for public health and proposals for a Public Health Outcomes Framework. The report brought together the draft of a KCC response to all three consultations that had been considered and amended by Corporate Management Team and Cabinet.

(2) The report also included the proposed three stage transition programme for integration of public health responsibilities and the Public Health function with some early transfers from 1 April 2011.

(2) The Cabinet Member and Officers answered questions from Members and noted comments which included the following:-

- It was suggested that information on the proposed three stage transition programme should be shared with the Local Children’s Trust Boards to inform the health related side of their work.
- An assurance was sought that the GP consortiums would hold their meetings in public. It was explained that the governance arrangements for GP consortiums was not a matter for KCC.
- In relation to the scrutiny of GP consortiums, it was clarified that in the proposed legislation there would be a body, like the current Health Overview

and Committee, which would have the ability to call in and question any provider of health services.

RESOLVED that the draft consultation response be noted and that recommendations 1 to 7 on page 87 of the report be endorsed.

113. Core Monitoring

(Item B7)

(1) Mr Gough, Mrs Garton and Mr Fitzgerald introduced an extract from the third Core Monitoring report for 2010/11 which provided information for the third quarter of the year up to the end of December 2010. The full Core Monitoring report would be presented to Cabinet on 4 April 2011. Each Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee was receiving the section of the report relevant to their remit.

(2) The Cabinet Member and Officers answered questions from Members and noted comments which included the following:-

- Members liked the new format and the clarity given by the Red/Amber/Green assessment.
- Information was sought on how it was planned to move from Red to Amber. It was explained that this process formed part of the report on Performance Monitoring later in the meeting. When the information went to Cabinet Members they selected three areas for a “deep dive” exercise.
- It was confirmed that the “Children with Child Protection plan” was one of the deep dive areas.

(3) RESOLVED that the reports and comments made by Members be noted.

114. KCC's Performance Management Framework

(Item B8)

(1) Ms Kerswell introduced a paper which provided details of work underway to develop a clear Performance Management Framework for the authority.

(2) It was suggested that Bold Steps for Kent could be monitored by one Committee in order to achieve consistency. Mr Gough stated that he believed that the Corporate Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee had responsibility to ensure that the process was carried out correctly but that the all Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee should have a role in monitor the performance of areas that fell within their remit.

(3) RESOLVED that the approach being taken to provide a clear performance management framework for the authority and the comments made by Members be noted.

115. Select Committees - update

(Item C1)

- (1) The Committee received an update report on progress with the current Select Committees.
- (2) Mrs Dean, Chairman of the Dementia Select Committee, explained that the Select Committee were considering making an interim recommendation requesting the Health and Wellbeing Board to put Dementia at the top of its agenda.
- (3) RESOLVED that the Select Committee topic review update be noted.

116. Exempt Item

(Item)

RESOLVED that in accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

117. Human Resources Restructuring

(Item B9)

- (1) Mr Gough and Ms Beer introduced a report on the proposals for the restructuring of Personnel and Development .
- (2) Ms Beer undertook to provide Members of the Committee with the consultation details reported to them verbally at the meeting.

RESOLVED that Members comments on the proposals be noted.