

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Communities Policy Overview Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 12 November 2008.

PRESENT: Mrs S V Hohler (Chairman), Mr A R Chell, Mr G Cowan, Mr D A Hirst, Mrs J Law (Substitute for Mr R E King), Mr M J Northey, Mrs E D Rowbotham, Mr G Rowe, Dr M R Eddy (Substitute for Mr T J Birkett) and Ms B J Simpson (Substitute for Mr R H C Bliss)

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr C Bainbridge (Director Of Community Safety & Regulatory Services), Mr S Bligh (Archive And Local History Services Manager), Mr D Crilley (Director of Libraries, Culture, Youth Services and Sport), Ms J Edwards (Director of Policy and Resources), Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Service Manager (Policy Overview)), Mr I Forward (Head of Adult Education), Ms A Honey (Managing Director Communities), Mr D Shipton (Head of Finance and Asset Management), Ms A Slaven (Director Youth Offending & Substance Misuse) and Mrs S Sparks (Strategic Manager)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

101. Minutes - 22 September 2008

(Item A3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2008 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

102. Portfolio Holder and Managing Director's Update

(Item B1)

(1) Mr Hill gave an update based on the list of topics that he had circulated with the papers for the meeting this included :-

- Turner Contemporary
- Kent History Centre
- Olympics – Key dates
- The Dover Torch Campaign
- Libraries
- Youth and Communities
- Emergency Planning
- Registration
- Museum of Kent Life

(2) Mr Hill confirmed the breakdown of the funding for Turner Contemporary and explained that the appointment of Trustees had not yet been finalised but that, when it was, Members would be informed.

(3) Mr Hill identified a potential issue for the emergency planning team in the next few weeks as proposed strike action made the implementation of Operation Stack likely.

(4) Ms Honey gave an update based on the list of topics that she had circulated with the papers for the meeting this included updates on :-

- KDAAT
- Kent Action on Alcohol
- Education, Training and Employment
- Migration
- Health & Safety Week
- Sports Leisure & Olympics

(5) In response to a question Ms Edwards/Ms Slaven undertook to confirm to Dr Eddy whether the KDAAT contract award to CRI was included in their business plan.

(6) In relation to the training and support of young people Ms Honey confirmed that two Kent Apprentices had been trained in her team and both had now gone on to full time permanent posts in KCC.

(7) RESOLVED that the updates be noted and that a detailed report be submitted to the March meeting of the POC on drugs and alcohol, including the work of the trading standards unit and the statistics for all age groups, .

103. Financial Monitoring Report : Community Services 2008/09

(Item B2)

(1) Mr Shipton presented his regular report to the Committee on the forecast outturn against budget for the Communities portfolio based on the first quarterly monitoring report and subsequent exception report to Cabinet.

(2) A Member expressed concern about the impact the budget for the Coroners Service, which KCC had no control over, had on the overall budget. Mr Bainbridge assured Members that there was support from all Kent MPs to look at this issue. Also Mr Hill added that the Local Government Association was lobbying the government on this matter.

(3) The matter of the importance of the sale of redundant Adult Education centres was raised. Mr Shipton explained that this related to one small property in Maidstone.

(4) In relation to the Youth Offending Service and the management of vacancies, officers were asked what impact vacancies had on the service. Ms Slaven replied that there were 8 posts across the service at various levels, but these were not having an immediate impact on the service. It was proposed that a review of the whole service would be carried out to make sure resources were where they were

needed. It was confirmed that this review was identified in the current years Business Plan.

(5) RESOLVED that Members of the POC are asked to note the projected outturn figures for the directorate for 2008/09 based on the first quarterly monitoring report, and subsequent exception report to Cabinet.

104. Medium Term Financial Plan - 2009-10 to 2011-12

(Item B3)

(1) The Committee received a report which updated them on the Autumn Budget Statement to Cabinet on 15th September 2008 and any later announcements by Government departments. It looked in more detail at specific elements in the medium term plan, and invited Members to comment on the key issues for the services provided by the Communities Directorate.

(2) Mr Hill outlined the issues and challenges facing the Directorate in the coming year from his perspective. He stated that his main priorities were to keep all the current services going and to continue with the cultural strategy.

(3) Ms Honey set out the key budget issues for the Directorate. She stated that the Cabinet Members' priorities were aligned through the Medium Term Plan. She stated that they had made efficiencies from current services and there would soon be a need for hard policy decisions.

(4) Members were invited to identify and express their relative priorities for services in Communities giving broad indications of areas of types of savings and efficiencies that they consider could be realistically achieved.

(5) The following areas were identified by Members as priority areas for services in the Communities Directorate:-

- Adult Education
- Cultural Strategy/Olympics
- Working with the voluntary sector regarding the provision of services for young people
- Olympics
- Kent Youth Games

(6) It was suggested that further savings could be found in the "Levies and Other Expenses" budget

(7) In response to a question on borrowing to fund Capital expenditure Mr Hill stated that in the current market it was unwise to dispose of certain property due the low return that was likely to be realised. Money would be borrowed from the Property Enterprise Fund to fill the funding gap or projects would be re-scoped to fit existing funding parameters.

(8) RESOLVED that the comments and indications of priorities as set out above be noted.

105. Community Safety Framework

(Item B4)

(1) Mr Bainbridge referred the Committee to the final version of the Community Safety Framework 2008-11, which was circulated with the agenda. This version took into account comments made by Members at their last meeting

(2) RESOLVED the Community Safety Framework 2008-11 be approved.

106. Kent Archive and History Service

(Item B5)

(1) Mr Crilley presented a report which explained that a consultation process to develop a new vision for the Archives Service was getting underway. During this process it was planned to raise awareness of the potential contribution of this Service to Kent County Council's objectives, to agree a vision for the future shape of the service and then to work with stakeholders to develop a strategy to deliver it.

(2) Mrs Sparks said that with the development of plans for the Kent History Centre it was timely to take a strategic view of the service. The consultation was the start of a dialogue on the vision for the Archives service.

(3) Mr Bligh emphasised Kent's rich and diverse history and the importance of using archive material to engage with people.

(4) Members were invited to comment on the vision document and to suggest possible channels to ensure the widest possible engagement in the consultation process.

(5) Members welcomed the vision document and made the following suggestions in relation to ensuring the widest possible engagement in the consultations:-

- Schools
- Libraries
- Shopping Centres
- Railway Stations
- Local bookshops
- Churches
- District Councils
- Parish/Town Council
- All County Councillors
- Local History Societies
- Local Boards
- Museum of Kent Life
- Cultural Olympiad

(6) RESOLVED that the content of the document and the suggestions made by Members on the channels the service should use to ensure widest possible engagement in the consultation process be noted.

107. Kent Adult Education Service – enrolments and trends
(Item B6)

(1) Mr Forward presented the report which provided a snapshot with analysis of enrolments for Kent Adult Education Service (KAES) courses; it also highlighted new service developments and outlined challenges and opportunities for the medium term.

(2) Members asked a number of questions and made comments which included the following:-

- In response to a question it was explained that Adult Education had traditionally not been involved with construction training as this had been delivered by Further Education establishments.
- Regarding the delivery of courses for those with learning difficulties, Members were informed that courses on life skills were fundable via the Learning and Skills Council. Other types of training/courses were provided in consultation with colleagues in Social Services and the Voluntary sector.
- It was clarified that the “new adult education unit “referred to in paragraph 3.7 (Page 119) was an internal unit in Adult Education.
- Regarding the reference to Market Research, this was to be conducted in house by two professionally qualified officers.
- In response to a question on the reasons for enrolments being under target this year, Mr Forward stated that the targets were similar to last year but the current economic climate was having an impact. However, the adjustments made were beginning to show an improvement in enrolments.
- The issue of providing courses, including fitness courses, for the 50+ age range was raised. Mr Forward undertook to provide a briefing paper on the new report on opportunity for fitness for the over 50.
- Also mentioned was the possibility of charging per lesson rather than per course.
- It was confirmed that Adult Education Hard of Hearing services were free in Kent.

(3) RESOLVED that the current indication of KAES performance, service improvements that have been achieved and those under development, be noted and that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the POC on KAES provision for the over 50

108. Select Committees - update

(Item C1)

(1) The Committee received an update report on the work of the Select Committee on Provision of Activities for Young People.

(2) RESOLVED that the update on the work of the Select Committee on the Provision of Activities for Young People be noted.