

CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Customer and Communities Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 21 March 2012.

PRESENT: Mrs E M Tweed (Chairman), Mr A R Chell (Vice-Chairman), Mr R B Burgess, Mr H J Craske, Mrs E Green, Ms A Hohler, Mr J M Ozog, Mr R Tolputt and Mr C P Smith (Substitute for Mr A T Willicombe)

ALSO PRESENT: Mr A Sandhu, MBE and Mr R J Lees

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Policy Overview)), Mr N Baker (Head of Kent Youth Service), Mr M Burrows (Director of Communications & Engagement), Mr C Hespe (Head of Sport, Leisure & Olympics), Ms A Honey (Corporate Director, Customer and Communities), Mr M Scrivener (Performance Manager), Ms A Slaven (Director of Service Improvement), Mr K Tilson (Finance Business Partner - Customer & Communities) and Weiss (Head of Public Private Partnerships and Property Team)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

55. Minutes - 20 January 2011

(Item A4)

(1) Officers under took to provide Members with a briefing note on the different types of apprenticeships available, whether they are national or local schemes and their funding source.

(2) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2012 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

56. Portfolio Holder and Corporate Directors update

(Item B1)

(1) Mr Hill and Ms Honey updated the Committee on the following issues and answered questions from Members.

Budget Day: 9 February 2012

(2) Mr Hill reminded Members of the County Council budget meeting where the Administration had produced a balanced budget. He referred to the launch on 30 March 2012 of the £3m Big Society Fund being administered by the Kent Community Foundation and on 19 April 2012 the launch of the £2m Big Society Fund for the

Youth Employment Scheme, which aimed to encourage Employers to take on young people.

Corporate Board: 5 March 2012

(3) Mr Hill referred to the first meeting of the Corporate Board on 5 March 2012 which replaced Cabinet Briefing and Corporate Management Team. This Board would take forward Cabinet Decisions and was a new means of governance of the whole authority.

Community Learning and Skills (CLS) Ofsted Inspection

(4) Mr Honey gave details of the positive informal feedback from the Ofsted Inspection of CLS in January 2012. CLS had moved forward swiftly and developed a wide range of support for employability to meet the needs of individuals. There were areas that needed improvement, these included collaboration with Job Centre Plus.

Restructure Update

(5) Ms Honey informed the Committee that following the appointment of Heads of Service the staff consultation for the sub structure for those services was due to close at the end of the week. They would then move to the interview stage and appoint to these posts in the next six weeks. It was a difficult time for staff but they were making sure that they engaged with them and she hoped that this would complete the bulk of the restructuring of the Customer and Communities Directorate.

Registration Service

(6) Mr Hill referred to the changes that had been put in place to the registration service by providing a registration service in some libraries in order to provide a better service in more venues. However, an abnormally high level of registrations in January 2012 had put pressure on the new facilities and meant that in certain cases they were not able to offer a timely service. He was pleased to report that this had been resolved and that it was now possible to offer registration timeslot within the appropriate timescale. Lessons had been learnt from the experience of changing this service which would inform future service changes. It was important to look at every possible scenario to make sure that every possible eventuality was covered. The new registration service would provide a better service to the people of Kent by providing the service with more staff at more venues.

(7) Members welcomed the comments on the Registration Service and supported the improvements which gave the public extra choice of venue and times. In response to concern expressed about the privacy of registration appointments, Mr Crilley stated that there were four venues that were not as private as he would like them to be but consideration was being given to how improvements could be made to improve this situation.

Opening of Turner & The Elements Exhibition: 28 January 2012

(8) Mr Hill updated the Committee on the visitor numbers for the Turner Contemporary, since its opening in April 2011 it has had 0.5m visitors. He encouraged Members to visit the current exhibition. Ms Honey stated that the Turner Contemporary had been nominated for Museum of the Year and encouraged Members to support this nomination.

Young Consumer of the Year: 2 March 2012

(9) Ms Honey referred to the Young Consumer of the Year competition, which provided an opportunity for Young People to get to grips with consumer issues and develop an understanding of them. Ninety nine teams had entered from across Kent, the final was held on 2 March 2012 with six team competing. The Kent Final was won by Chatham House & Clarendon House Grammar School, Thanet, who would go on to the South East heats and if successful on to the Final.

Kent History & Library Centre Celebration Event: 12 March 2012

(10) Ms Honey reported that the building had been handed over on 12 March 2012. It would open on 23 April 2012 with the formal opening later in the year. It had been a remarkably successful procurement which was a credit to Mr Crilley and his team. Mr Hill stated that the important factor in the success of this scheme was selecting the right partner at an early stage.

Sheerness Gateway Opening: 13 March 2012

(11) Ms Honey referred to the opening of the Sheerness Gateway on 13 March 2012, this facility was on the High Street and also contained the Library. It had increased footfall for the Library.

Customer and Communities POSC – Visits – 19 March 2012

(12) The Chairman referred to the visits on 19 March 2012 to the Gravesend Library, Dashwood Library, the Gurdwara Temple and the Cyclopark. She stated that it had been interesting to compare the new Gravesend Library which was busy even at 9.30am with the Dashwood Library. Mr Sandhu had invited Members to visit the Gurdwara Temple which was the largest Sikh temple in Europe, it was interesting to see the interaction with the community regardless of religion. Regarding the Cyclopark, she referred to the wide range of facilities on offer.

(13) Regarding the visit to the Gurdwara Temple, Mr Sandhu stated that it was open to every one in the community and that Directors and other officers were very welcome to visit.

Libraries

(14) In response to a question from a Member, Mr Hill confirmed that no library closures were proposed. Locality Boards would be looking at the library provision in their area, along with local people.

Safer Kent Awards

(15) Mr Sandhu referred to the Safer Kent Awards that he had attended, and he mentioned the outstanding work of the Community Wardens.

Princes Trust Awards

(16) Mr Sandhu stated that he had attended the Princes Trust Awards which had been very inspirational and he commended the work of the Trust in providing opportunities for individuals.

(17) RESOLVED that the update be noted and that the excellent informal feedback from OfSTED on the Community Learning and Skills (CLS) service be noted and thanks be recorded to Mr Forward and his colleagues.

57. Community Budgets - Gaining Traction

(Item B2)

(1) Ms Slaven and Mr Weiss presented a paper which provided an update on the development of Community Budgets and described the strategic direction agreed with partners in November 2011.

(2) Mr Hill, Ms Honey, Ms Slaven and Mr Weiss answered questions and noted comments from Members which included the following:

- Ms Slaven stated that financial modelling, including integration of services and costs, for any of the Community Budgets was work in progress. Ms Honey explained that in the short term the aim was to align budgets, and the challenge was being referred back to Government to encourage them to be joined up in their own funding which tended to be in departmental silos.
- Ms Slaven confirmed that work was being carried out on a local tool kit in relation to children social services.
- Ms Slaven stated that regarding the concept of a Troubled Family there was a broad spectrum of issues. The agenda needed to develop on early intervention and prevention as intervention at an early stage could stop bigger issues developing at a later stage. It was important to ensure that there was no double counting, if a family was involved with another initiative such as the Work Programme they would not count against the figures for Troubled Families.

- Mr Weiss explained that the programme was working with fewer families than had originally been envisaged as it had taken some time to identify the most appropriate families. The number of Family Intervention Programme Workers (FIP's) was growing slowly to support the numbers in the original plan.
- Mr Weiss stated that as far as he was aware there would not be a reduction in existing services, this programme was an injection of new funding on a payment by results basis.
- Mr Hill stated that while Locality Boards were evolving, groups of local Members in Districts that did not have a Locality Boards would be brought together to discuss issues from the Community Budget programme in their area.
- Officers undertook to supply Mr Ozog with a list of agencies that were involved with the programme and their remit and also to inform Mr Ozog of the outcomes from the Thanet programme.
- Ms Slaven explained that in relation to worklessness the biggest cost was to the Department, Work and Pensions and therefore support was given to help these families to manage their own circumstances, starting with what was achievable. As part of the intervention the expectation was that families would engage with work programmes.

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

58. Communications and Engagement - verbal update

(Item B3)

(1) Mr Hill introduced Mr Burrows who gave a verbal update on the new centralised service, what it was aiming to deliver, strategic targets for the year and what it was proposing to do to improve the way that the Council communicated and engaged.

(2) Mr Burrows stated that the unit was almost fully staffed and had established an external and internal communications service. The aim was to publicise what KCC did, how it added value and to have a proactive approach to engaging with residents. Mr Burrows acknowledged that in the past the Council had not been as strong on this as it could have been.

(3) Mr Burrows referred to the strategy that was being developed for consultation. It was important to be clear about what the County Council was telling residents about the quality of services and how to access them. The County Council needed to make sure that it was giving the right information to the right residents/groups through the right channels.

(4) Mr Burrows stated that over the next two months his unit would be carrying out a full review of each service area assessing their needs for the next 12 -18 months in terms of communications, consultation and marketing. By the end of June 2012 he would be in a position to come back to the new Cabinet Committee setting out what the County Council was proposing to say to the public over the next 12 – 18 months and have a forward plan. Also it would be possible to advise directorates on the most effective way of communicating with resident about their services.

(5) Mr Burrows referred to the Customer Satisfaction Survey work that would form the basis of quarterly reports to the Cabinet Committee and Cabinet. These reports would give Members information about resident's perception of the quality of services provided by the County Council. It would also inform Members about the views of the silent majority and their relative priorities.

(6) In relation to Consultation and Equalities, work was on going to ensure that processes were robust. Nationally, as Councils were having to make difficult decisions, a lot more challenges were coming from communities. There had been 13 Judicial Reviews across the country in the past 12 months relating to Local Authority decision, 12 of which had been lost due to the failure to adequately carry out consultation or equality impact assessments. This had a reputational impact on the authority concerned and also delayed implementation of the decision. The centralised Consultation team were able to provide a fully managed service which would identify consultations to be carried out over the next 12 – 18 months and provide varied level of support depending on the assessed level of risk.

(7) Mr Burrows gave examples of events supported by the Communications unit such as the formal opening of Sheerness Gateway, launch of the Big Society Fund and the launch of the Regional Growth Fund.

(8) Mr Burrows undertook to provide Mr Ozog with a bullet point list of the 13 Judicial Review cases that had been referred to by Mr Burrows in his update.

(9) RESOLVED That the update be noted.

59. Transforming the Business - Service Improvement - Customer and Communities

(Item B4)

(1) Ms Slaven and Mr Weiss gave a presentation on Transforming the Business – Service Improvement. Officers invited Members to tell them their concerns about Service delivery and undertook to respond quickly and robustly.

(2) Mr Weiss confirmed that he worked closely with colleagues in Economic Development and Regeneration, he was on the Regeneration Board, and recognised that this was a key priority for the County Council.

(3) RESOLVED that the presentation be noted

60. Youth Service Transformation - verbal update

(Item B5)

(1) Mr Baker gave a verbal update on Youth Service Transformation. He stated that following the meeting of this Committee on 20 January 2012, Mr Hill had taken the first decision which was to proceed with the overall model. Officers had been speaking to colleagues in the Districts and Boroughs about the design of the Youth

Services in each District area. There were now twelve local draft plans for service delivery. Mr Hill had been involved in a large number of meetings at the local level. The pace at which this had been developed and the amount of work would ensure that the final decision would be taken on the basis of local design and endorsement. There had also been an ongoing dialogue with young people, he had recently met with a group of young people from across the County to share the blue prints in more detail and seek their views. This had been a very useful session.

(2) Mr Baker explained that the commissioning budget had increased to £1.8m. There had been a number of changes to the proposals which had come out of consultation and engagement at a local level. Looking back at the process, consultation had led to real and genuine change and had influenced priorities.

(3) Mr Baker explained that, in relation to staffing, a Planning and Development Manager had been appointed; this role was critical to taking forward the commissioning model and would work closely with colleagues from KCC Procurement. It was important to find a model that would work for local providers and which would enable local providers to be involved in a flexible process.

(4) Mr Baker stated that the District/Borough blue prints had been endorsed by 5 Locality Boards to date, with one or two caveats or questions which he hoped would be addressed shortly. He was confident that this process would be completed by Easter with a decision being taken by Mr Hill in late April. There would be a conference with the voluntary and community sector to launch the commissioning process and a separate meeting would be held to brief all Youth Service staff. There would be work carried out to produce the 12 detailed specifications for the tender process. He confirmed that the implementation date was 1 January 2013.

(5) Mr Hill and Mr Baker answer questions from Members and noted comments which included the following:

- Mr Baker confirmed that the school-based Community Youth Tutors were funded as part of the KCC directly delivered service, and not through the local commissioning budget
- A Member questioned the outcome of the local level meeting with Members on the provision for Thanet. Mr Hill undertook to discuss this with the Member outside of the meeting.

(6) RESOLVED that the update and the comments made by Members be noted.

(Post meeting note: A meeting of the Communities Cabinet Committee would be held on 26 April 2012 to consider the Youth Service Transformation decision to taken by Mr Hill.)

61. Update on the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games including the Kent School Games

(Item B6)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Hespe introduced a report which updated the Committee on work carried out by the County Council on the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games to ensure legacy and prepare for Games. This report included reference to

the Kent School Games 2012, which was a key part of the County's work to secure the sports legacy.

(2) Mr Hespe answered questions and noted comments from Members which included the following:

- In response to a question Mr Hespe stated that the range of first tier businesses that had obtained first tier contracts with London 2012, included construction companies, media agencies and landscaping businesses. This would give a lot of Small and Medium Enterprises valuable experience. As a legacy the Olympics would provide a good foundation to grow the economy.
- Regarding whether there was money available to the local community for banners and bunting to celebrate the Olympic Torches Journey through Kent, Mr Hespe referred to the £180,000 available for dressing Kent and the contribution made by a number of Districts. There would be £300,000 spent on dressing in Kent, not funded by KCC.
- Mr Hespe referred to the enormous programme of events in Schools relating to the Olympic Torch. Two schools would be hosting the Torch for its lunch time stop.
- Regarding High Speed 1, Mr Hespe stated that during the period of the Olympics there would be two trains an hour from Ashford and one train an hour from Faversham. He acknowledged that there were resilience issues and challenges but officers were working on these and would get information out to the public as soon as confirmed information was available.
- Mr Hespe confirmed that he had circulated to all Members a list of Olympic related events countywide.
- Mr Hespe referred to the Kent School Games and encouraged Members to attend.
- Mr Hespe mentioned the new strategy being developed "Kent's Golden Decade of Sport" which would take Sport and physical development activities in Kent forward for 10 years.

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

62. Financial Monitoring 2011-12

(Item B7)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Tilson introduced the latest projected outturn figures for the Directorate for 2011/12 based on the monitoring report to Cabinet on 19 March 2012.

(2) A Member emphasised the importance of ensuring that the £5m not spent in 2011/12 on the Big Society fund was made available in 2012/13 especially the £2m for apprentices which was essential. Mr Tilson confirmed that approval to roll over these monies had been sought from Cabinet which Mr Hill confirmed had been approved.

(3) In relation to Supporting Independence and Supported Employment budgets, Mr Tilson confirmed that staff savings delivered through not appointing to vacant posts had not had a detrimental effect on Supported Employment.

(4) RESOLVED that the projected outturn figures for the directorate for 2011/12, based on the monitoring report to Cabinet on 19 March 2012 be noted.

63. Quarterly Performance Report, Quarter 3 - 2011/12

(Item B8)

(1) Mr Scrivener introduced a report which informed the Committee about key areas of performance and activity across KCC, with a particular focus on indicators within the Customer & Communities Directorate.

(2) RESOLVED that the Quarterly Performance Report extract be noted.

64. Select Committee - update

(1) The Committee received the Terms of Reference and scope of the Select Committee on Domestic Abuse, the minutes of the monitoring meeting of the Select Committee on Extended Services and an update on the Select Committee work programme

(2) RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference of the Select Committee on Domestic Abuse be endorsed and the minutes of the Select Committee on Extended Services be noted.

65. Chairman

(Item)

As this was the last meeting of the Customer and Communities Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Chairman thanked Members and officers for their support.

Mr Hill thanked the Committee for the constructive advice that they had given him and the robust discussions that had taken place and expressed particular thanks to Mrs Tweed for her Chairmanship.

Ms Honey on behalf of the Management Team thanked Mrs Tweed for being such a good champion for the Directorate.