

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Communities Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 14 November 2012.

PRESENT: Ms A Hohler (Chairman), Mr H J Craske (Vice-Chairman), Mr M J Angell, Mr R H Bird, Mr R B Burgess, Mr A R Chell, Mr A D Crowther, Mrs E Green, Mr M J Northey, Mr A Sandhu, MBE and Mrs C J Waters

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms P Blackburn-Clarke (Quality Assurance Manager), Mrs G Bromley (Community Cohesion and Heritage Manager, Libraries, Registration and Archives), Mr M Burrows (Director of Communications & Engagement), Mr D Crilley (Director of Community Cultural Services), Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Services Manager), Mr R Fitzgerald (Performance Manager), Grosskopf (Policy Manager), Mr C Hespe (Head of Culture and Sport Group), Ms A Honey (Corporate Director, Customer and Communities), Ms A Slaven (Director of Service Improvement), Mr K Tilson (Finance Business Partner - Customer & Communities), Ms J Tonkin (KDAAT Young Persons Manager) and Mr D Whittle (Head of Policy and Strategic Relationships)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

30. Membership

(Item A3)

RESOLVED that it be noted that Mr R H Bird has replaced Mr I S Chittenden as a Member of this Committee

31. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 September 2012

(Item A5)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2012 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

32. Portfolio Holder's and Corporate Director's update

(Item A6)

(1) Mr Hill and Ms Honey updated Members on the issues listed in the paper circulated with the agenda and answered questions from Members.

Police & Crime Panel and Commissioner

(2) Mr Hill reminded Members that the election for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent was being held tomorrow. A lot of hard work had been undertaken to set up the Police and Crime Panel for Kent and Medway which was being hosted by the County Council. A Shadow Panel had been producing the draft protocols for the Panel which would hold its first meeting on 29 November 2012. The

Panel consisted of 20 members, one from each of the 14 Councils in the County of Kent, plus 2 independent members and 4 other Councillors to provide a political balance. He expected the Panel to have an intensive early work programme as they had a remit to scrutinise the Police Budget and the Annual Police Plan. Although this Panel did not come under the remit of this Committee he undertook to keep the Committee informed of progress.

Visit by Nick Hurd MP, Minister for Civil Society

(3) Mr Hill informed the Committee that Mr Hurd had visited Kent during the previous week to see how Kent was administering the Big Society Fund. There had been a very constructive meeting with the Minister and representatives from the Voluntary Sector regarding working together.

Future Library Service

(4) Mr Hill stated that Parish Councils, District Councils and Locality Boards plus other organisations had been working together with the County Council to look at ways of having a more efficient and effective library service in their area. This would benefit local communities and save the County Council money. It was early days yet but the progress so far was encouraging.

(5) Members spoke positively about the work going on in their areas to look at the library service with local organisations.

Integrated Youth Service

(5) Mr Hill reported that 221 tenders for commissioned work from 50 organisations had been received. The tenders had been being evaluated by a team which included young people, officers and Locality Boards with the final decisions being signed by Ms Slaven. The organisations that had failed to be awarded a contract had been informed and there was a cooling off period which was due to end on 19 November 2012 after which the successful tenderers would be informed. He commended officers for the work they had carried out in relation to this difficult process.

Trading Standards

(6) Ms Honey referred to the 'deep dive' report at the previous meeting and a recent successful prosecution of a market trader in Sheerness who had been ordered to pay over £100,000 in relation to trading in counterfeit goods. It had been a team effort between Trading Standards and Legal Services, but it had taken a lot of time. The Chairman reminded Members of the option to sign up for email alerts from Trading Standards.

Contact Centre

(7) Ms Honey informed the Committee that the Contact Centre had come second in the most improved category in this year's Top 50 Contact Centres Awards. These awards compared both public and private sector organisations and the competition had been intense. She reported that for the week commencing 22 October 2012 the contact centre had achieved all service levels and answering rates.

(8) It was agreed that a letter of congratulations be sent on behalf of the Committee to Mr C Smith - Operations Manager Contact Point regarding the Contact Centres recent award.

Triangle Awards

(9) Ms Honey referred to the annual Triangle Awards which had been running for over 10 years in Kent. These awards were important as they provided an opportunity to recognise the important contribution made by young people and to put forward in the press a positive image of young people. This year's awards were held on 14 October 2012 at the Ashford International. These awards were now run by the young people themselves and it had been a great evening.

RESOLVED that the update, and any comments made by Members, be noted.

33. Social Fund Localisation - Decision 12/01939

(Item B1)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Whittle introduced a report which provided recommendations for a one year Kent-wide pilot scheme which would test out the demands on a local scheme to replace the national scheme of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans and the various mechanisms proposed for meeting needs. The recommendations for the pilot were that the front end (claim management and decision making) should take place in a specialist team within the KCC Contact Centre. With regard to the help provided to individuals it was proposed that KCC develop mechanisms, if feasible, to meet needs in ways that did not involve giving money to an individual unless this was absolutely necessary. Instead of money, goods and services should be provided and other help given to deal with the presenting problem and, if possible, any underlying issues affecting the individual and their family.

(2) During the pilot period key information would be collected on the nature of the demands on the scheme, claim and decision making systems would be tested and the various schemes for delivering the goods, services and cash (where necessary) would be evaluated. In addition, further public consultation would take place and the Equality Impact Assessment would be updated in light of experience during the pilot.

(3) Mr Whittle and Ms Grosskopf noted comments and answered questions from Members which included the following:

- Mr Whittle undertook to ensure that a copy of the Association of Chief Executives analysis of the progress made by County Councils with the Social Fund Localisation was circulated to Members of the Committee
- In response to a question on whether there would be a mixture of grants and loans, Ms Grosskopf explained that in the vast majority of cases assistance would be in the form of services or goods in kind and the intention was not to operate a loan scheme. The current national scheme had a loan element of which about 90% was paid back via a deduction from benefits. KCC would not be able to do this and therefore if a local system of loans was set up it would be very difficult and expensive to administer.
- Regarding the out of hours service, Ms Grosskopf confirmed that this would be via the Contact Centre which was 24/7. Although there would not be such a comprehensive service in the evening and weekends it would still be possible for the public to speak to someone and receive information about the scheme.
- A Member mentioned the gap in support for young people leaving care who were a vulnerable group. Ms Grosskopf confirmed that young people leaving care were one category which it was envisaged would receive support within the scheme.
- In relation to the issue of being able to obtain data on benefits from the Department of Work of Pensions, Ms Grosskopf stated that the regulations and processes for doing this had not yet been put in place by the DWP but it was hoped that this would be done by December. KCC were putting in place contingency arrangements in case this did not happen.
- Mr Whittle stated that cash payments would only be made in exceptional cases. This was something that would be reviewed during the pilot period.
- A Member emphasised the importance of having the option of face to face contact with applicants for assistance, particularly in relation to the verification of information from applicants. Ms Grosskopf explained that they hoped to use partners to carry out verification. For example if the referral came via a Domestic Abuse Unit consideration would be given to allowing the unit to verify any documentation from the applicant.
- Regarding the role of District Councils, Mr Whittle stated that there had been discussions with all Kent Districts, and that some were willing to be involved in the scheme but not all. It was important that there was universal application of the scheme across the County to avoid potential inequalities. He confirmed that during the pilot contact would be maintained with the Districts.
- Mr Hill undertook to get a briefing note to all Members prior to the system going live.
- Ms Grosskopf acknowledged that there were concerns around the impact that the wider welfare reforms may have on the scheme. She explained that this fund would not be able to assist with rent payments as this came under the Discretionary Housing Fund administered by the District Councils.

(4) RESOLVED that the Cabinet Committee endorse the decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member to agree that Customer & Communities Directorate will be responsible with effect from 1 April 2013 for a one-year Kent-wide pilot scheme to test the demands of a local discretionary social fund and the various mechanisms needed to deliver it so a Kent scheme can be developed to meet the needs of the area.

34. Customer & Communities Performance Dashboard

(Item C1)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Fitzgerald introduced the Customer & Communities performance dashboard which provided Members with progress against targets set in business plans for key performance and activity indicators. Ms Slaven and Ms Tonkin presented more detailed information on the performance of the Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team (KDAAT).

Performance Dashboard

(2) In response to a question regarding how the calls to the contact centre were prioritised, Mr Crilley explained that calls were prioritised either by options selection or by the person taking the call.

KDAAT

(3) Ms Slaven and Ms Tonkin noted comments and answered questions from Members which included the following:

- Ms Tonkin clarified that the “rate of representation within 6 months” statistic shown on page 54 meant that that 86% of adults exiting drug treatment did not come back into treatment in the next 6 months.
- Regarding the definition of “successful” in relation to adults exiting drug treatment, Ms Tonkin explained that this meant adults that had engaged with treatment over 12 weeks and had a reduction in use of substance and a positive movement in other parts of their life.
- In response to a question on the drug and alcohol service providers, Ms Tonkin listed the main providers, including KCA, Turning Point and CRI. There were a range of voluntary sector providers and NHS providers.
- Regarding the services provided previously in Dartford by the Kent and Medway Partnership Trust, Ms Slaven explained that there had been a review of the commissioning of Tier 4 services She pointed out that there was no criticism of the service provided by the Trust but as the utilisation of bed space had been less than 50% it was not cost effective.
- In relation to the provision of early intervention and treatment services for young people, Ms Tonkin stated that there were early interventions targeted at vulnerable young people including young offenders, children in care and children affected by their parents’ substance misuse. A programme called “Risk it” developed in Kent is used within schools. Where screening was undertaken by the school up to 10 young people were identified as most likely to benefit from support from specialist agencies providing them with an opportunity to explore their situation and the conflicts in their life.
- The specialist treatment service was a one-to-one service which was peripatetic - the young person was able to meet with a Drug and Alcohol

worker in a setting which they felt most comfortable in and could then get to know the worker and understand what they could expect from the service.

- A Member mentioned that the data for drug use only included those up to the age of 59. Ms Tonkin explained that the data provided was that required by the British Crime Survey. She acknowledged that there was an issue regarding older users, including an increasing number accessing alcohol services. In treatment there were groups of adults who had been heroin and crack cocaine users for some time who were coming into old age. There was a need for elements of health and social care to work more closely together to assist this new cohort.
- Ms Tonkin confirmed that the drug treatment system in the UK had one of the lowest number of HIV cases amongst injecting drug users in the world at 2%, which had implications for reducing cost to the Health Service.
- In relation to the figure of 54% of children living with an adult who regularly drank alcohol above the recommended level, Ms Tonkin explained that that this was a reflection of the high level of alcohol use normalised in society.
- Ms Tonkin undertook to provide Mrs Waters with the drink driving figures for Kent. This issue would be taken up in the new Alcohol Strategy that is being developed.
- Ms Tonkin explained Kent was more successful than the national evidence-based target in relation to success for adults exiting drug treatment. The reasons for this included a mix of investment in the right place, robust commissioning and clear governance, which together resulted in a good service. Ms Slaven stated that one of the strengths in Kent was the engagement of service users. Although service user groups were no longer funded by KDAAT, these groups had become self sustaining. Service users were actively involved in commissioning and the service user voice was very clear about their expectations for service provision.
- Ms Honey referred to the change in responsibility for Public Health in April next year, which would be coming to the County Council. Funding would no longer be ring-fenced and she was working with the Director of Public Health to make sure that treatment misuse was a priority and to build on the good work of the team including the link to the work of the troubled families programme.

(4) RESOLVED that the comments made by Members on the Customer & Communities performance dashboard, including the KDAAT deep dive, be noted and that there be a report to the next meeting of the Committee on the Contact Centre's three month pilot.

35. Customer & Communities Directorate & Portfolio Financial Monitoring 2012/13

(Item C2)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Tilson introduced the regular report on the forecast outturn for Customer & Communities Directorate & Portfolio which included details of the £94k underspend for revenue budgets and of no significant movements on the capital budgets.

(2) In response to a question on whether the revenue underspend was delayed expenditure or would not be spent at all e.g. does the liability remain. Mr Tilson explained that in some instances (e.g. Gateways) there was a delay to a number of

the capital projects which meant that the associated revenue expenditure would be delayed into the following year. There was a base budget allocated each year for such costs and therefore the money would be allocated from that year's budget. The in-year spend has been reduced as the projects had not yet been completed and so an underspend has been delivered.

The majority of savings however were in-year underspends in anticipation of the savings proposals contained within the budget consultation for next year, in that non business critical posts were not being appointed to pending the outcome of the consultation.

(3) RESOLVED that the revenue and capital forecast variances from budget for 2012/13 for the Customer & Communities Portfolio, based on the first quarter's full monitoring to Cabinet and the subsequent exception report, be noted.

36. Consultation on 2013/14 Revenue Budget *(Item D1)*

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Tilson introduced a report which provided Members with feedback on issues relating to the Customer & Communities portfolio raised in the recent consultation on proposals for the 2013/14 Budget. The Chairman reported that this Committee's Informal Member Group (IMG) on the Budget had considered the proposals for the 2013/14 Customer and Communities Budget as set out in the consultation and, after asking questions of the officers and Cabinet Member, had endorsed the proposals.

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

- A Member of the IMG emphasised how difficult it was to try to find any alternative savings without risking diluting services. Also the Directorate carried out such a wide range of services, a lot of which were non statutory but which added to the quality of life for Kent residents. There was a duty on Members to make sure that value for money was achieved in their own areas.
- A Member asked whether staff were aware of the proposals contained within the Cabinet Committee paper. Mr Tilson stated that staff were aware that there was a budget gap that needed to be addressed and that, at the time of the consultation being released, the budget proposals were in the public domain.
- Mr Tilson confirmed that the budget managers were part of the discussions on how the budget deficit could be mitigated but until the budget consultation ended and the proposals were approved it was not possible to enter into any formal consultations which may be necessary with staff.

(3) RESOLVED that the budget consultation process be noted and the recommendations made by the Informal Member Group (IMG) on the savings proposals within the budget consultation document be endorsed.

37. Customer Services - Presentation

(Item D2)

(1) Mr Crilley and Mr Burrows gave a presentation on the digital roadmap to better customer journeys. They noted comments and answered questions from Members which included the following:

- Mr Burrows confirmed that it would be possible to access the web-based facility using a smart phone. There would be a more condensed version of the website available to smart phone users to make it more user friendly.
- Mr Crilley stated that 76% of Kent residents had online access and 91% had a mobile phone, and so including the ability to access services via mobile phone would provide greater opportunities for people.
- Regarding the use of auto responses to submissions via the website, Mr Burrows confirmed that it was possible to do this and that these would be built into the new online processes so that, for example clicking on “submit” could trigger an automatic email.
- A Member advocated the use of volunteers to help people who were not computer literate to access these facilities and to increase their knowledge. Mr Crilley stated that some Councils had volunteer e-champions. In Kent there was a broad offer in libraries to help people get online. He acknowledged that working with the community was fundamental to the success of this proposal.
- Mr Burrows stated that this was a major shift for the organisation and it must be remembered that there will always be a significant number of Kent residents without online access.
- Mr Burrows confirmed that the system would be fully tested using residents to ensure that it had the right impact on customers. This would be done in a test environment for 2 months and the system would not go live until it had been fully tested.
- Mr Crilley confirmed that there would still be face to face engagement with the public via, for example, Gateways.

(2) RESOLVED that the presentation and comments made by Members be noted.

38. Folkestone Museum Collections

(Item D3)

(1) Mr Hill and Mrs Bromley introduced a report which set out the intention of Folkestone Town Council to submit a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable the refurbishment of the Old Town Hall and relocation of the museum collections, including the Master Collection, to more accessible premises. This collection was currently held by the County Council and whilst KCC supported this bid, it had consistently advised Folkestone Town Council of the need for a sustainable plan for the setting up and running of a museum facility in Folkestone. One of the factors in a successful bid for Grant funding was the need to own the heritage items which were

the subject of the application. Therefore an assurance had been sought from KCC that it would make the collection available to Folkestone Town Council if the bid was successful.

(2) RESOLVED that the Committee support the proposed Cabinet Member decision to gift the Folkestone Museum Collections, including the Master Collection, to Folkestone Town Council on condition that it can evidence a sustainable funding model and provide premises to the required standard for a museum including environmental conditions and security.

39. Business Planning 2013/14

(Item D4)

(1) Mr Hill and Ms Sanderson introduced a report which set out the detailed provisional headline priorities for Business Plans (2013/14) for each division within the Customer & Communities Directorate. Cabinet Committee Members were invited to consider and comment on the priorities in order to influence the development of the draft business plans to be discussed in January 2013. The report also outlined progress by exception against the current 2012/13 business plan as part of the mid-year outturn monitoring process.

(2) Ms Sanderson noted the suggestion to emphasis the importance of ensuring that Members were involved in the work of the Directorate as they were advocates for the Directorate in their areas.

(3) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

40. Customer & Communities Annual Complaints, Comments & Compliments Report 2011 - 2012

(Item D5)

(1) Mr Crilley and Ms Blackburn-Clarke introduced a report which provided details of complaints, comments and compliments dealt with by the Customer & Communities Directorate between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012.

(2) Mr Crilley and Ms Blackburn-Clarke noted comments and answered questions from Members which included the following:

- The importance of acknowledging a complaint immediately to ensure that non acknowledgement did not lead to a secondary grievance was emphasised.
- Ms Blackburn-Clarke explained that each complaint was individually counted. If there was a series of complaints from one person, then these were also counted separately.

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

41. Olympics and Paralympics 2012 - DVD

(Item D6)

The Committee viewed the "Kent Inspired" DVD