

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 Thursday, 17 January 2013.

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 T Gates, Mr J A Kite, MBE, Mr M J Northey and Mr A Sandhu, MBE

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms C Anley (Head of Libraries, Registration and Archives), Mr N Baker (Head of Integrated Youth Services), Mr M Burrows (Director of Communications & Engagement), Mr D Crilley (Director of Community Cultural Services), Mr C Finch (Senior Projects Officer - CAIP East Kent), Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Services Manager), Mr R Fitzgerald (Performance Manager), Mr C Hespe (Head of Culture and Sport Group), Ms A Honey (Corporate Director, Customer and Communities), Mr M Overbeke (Head of Regulatory Services), Ms E Sanderson (Strategic Business Advisor (Corporate & Communities)), Ms A Slaven (Director of Service Improvement), Mr C Smith (Operations Manager Contact Point) and Mr K Tilson (Finance Business Partner - Customer & Communities)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

42. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda (Item A3)

Members declared the following interests:

- Mr Angell declared an interest as the Chairman of his local Youth Advisory Group.
- Mr Burgess declared an interest as Chairman of the Thanet Youth Advisory Group and as a member of one of the youth projects that had been successful in the commissioning process for youth services in Thanet.
- Mr Chell declared an interest as Chairman of his local Youth Advisory Committee.

43. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 November 2012 (Item A4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2012 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

44. Portfolio Holder's and Corporate Director's verbal update (Item A5)

(1) Mr Hill and Ms Honey updated Members on the issues listed in their report and answered questions from Members:

Launch of Domestic Abuse Website: 28.11.12

(2) Mr Hill welcomed the launch of the Domestic Abuse Website, referring to the important role that this website would play in providing a confidential way for victims of this hidden crime to get information and be signposted to organisations who could support them.

(3) Members of the Select Committee on Domestic Abuse also welcomed the launch of this website. A Member referred to the recent statement made by the new Police & Crime Commissioner suggesting that domestic abuse victims call her office for advice. He did not consider this to be helpful as her office may not have the resources or knowledge to provide this advice.

Kent Sporting Legends: 30.11.12

(3) Mr Hill referred to the Kent Sporting Legends event which was the final celebration of the Olympic campaign. It had been a high quality event with a lot of young people attending and participating.

Kent Library & History Centre: Royal Opening: 11.12.12

(4) Mr Hill referred to the opening of the Kent Library and History Centre by the Duke of Kent.

Edenbridge Community Centre: Official Launch: 6.3.13

(5) Mr Hill informed the Committee that the Edenbridge Community Centre had opened its doors on 2 January 2013. The library was fully functional with other facilities due to come on line in the next few weeks. The formal opening would take place on 6 March 2013. He had met with partners, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and Social Care, who would be using the Centre and had got a positive response from them about the facilities being provided.

New Head of Commissioned Services

(6) Ms Honey informed the Committee that Ms Diane Wright had been appointed as Head of Commissioned Services. Ms Wright was very experienced in work relating to Drugs and Alcohol Misuse and Supporting People.

Troubled Families

(7) Ms Honey undertook to make sure that fuller report on Troubled Families would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee. The programme had been launched

in summer 2012 and was a very ambitious programme with Kent committing to working with 1082 families in the current year, the third highest number in the Country. The first six months' work had been focused on the validation and cross referencing of data on the families and work on the governance of this partnership programme. The next phase would be to work with these complex families to make a positive change to their lives. The family intervention programme was employing 21 family intervention officers and also identifying mentors to work with these families.

Young People

(8) Ms Honey reported that she had been to St James' Palace with Mr Hill to join 60 Kent young people who were receiving the Duke of Edinburgh gold certificate from the Duke of Wessex. This year there had been 5,000 Kent young people enrolled in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, which was a significant number. She stated that young people felt that the Duke of Edinburgh award was an excellent thing to have on their CV's. She expressed her gratitude to Mr Baker and his colleagues for their work to support young people in achieving this award. In relation to the Troubled Families programme it was important that all Kent young people had the opportunity to participate in and achieve this award.

Ash Dieback

(9) Ms Honey referred to the work that had been carried out by the Emergency Planning Team and Trading Standards with Defra to produce a good Ash Dieback plan for Kent.

(10) A Member referred to a County Council event that he had attended on Ash Dieback. At this event the Forestry Commission had been very complimentary about the County Council's response and had said that this was an exemplar for other authorities.

(11) Mr Burrows stated that as part of this information campaign, there were a number of pages on Ash Dieback on Kent.gov and there had been a briefing for the media. There had not been any hard copy printed information produced: all information had been provided via the County Council website.

(12) It was suggested that an item on the campaign on Ash Dieback be submitted to the March meeting of the Committee.

Young Consumer of the Year

(13) Ms Honey reported that the Kent Final of this competition would be held on 15 March 2013. If any Member would like to attend they should contact her office.

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

45. Business Planning 2013/14 - Substantive Draft Plans - Decision 12/01971 *(Item B1)*

(1) Mr Hill and Ms Sanderson introduced a report which set out the background to the business planning process for 2013/14. Following the development of business plan headline priorities in November 2012, Directors and Heads of Service had built on feedback from the Communities Cabinet Committee to develop substantive draft business plans for 2013/14.

(2) It was explained that the new process placed the emphasis on reducing the burden of business planning with a lighter touch process. It was important to increase the consistency and synergy between business planning and both the performance management dashboards and directorate and divisional risk registers which underpinned the business plan actions, and were reported to the Committee on a regular basis. The draft plans were still at an early stage of development, with further refinement over the coming weeks before approval in March 2013.

(3) It was noted that Members had the opportunity to submit comments on business plans to Ms Sanderson up until the end of February and were invited to do so outside of the meeting.

(4) Directors introduced the draft business plan for their services. Members were invited to consider the risk register and the following individual draft business plans.

Risk Register - Customer & Communities Directorate

(5) In response to a suggestion that the risk register for the directorate was a bit short as it only contained six risks, Mr Scrivener re-assured Members that the risk register was underpinned by divisional business plans, in addition to the corporate risk register which contained cross cutting issues.

Service Improvement Draft Business Plan 2013/14

(6) Ms Slaven introduced the business plan for her division.

Customer Services Draft Business Plan 2013/14

(7) Mr Crilley noted comments and answered questions from Members which included the following:

- A Member mentioned the high level of calls to the contact centre relating to the renewal of library books and suggested that an automated system of library book renewals should be introduced. Mr Crilley acknowledged that new systems were needed but this would be carried out as part of changes to the Information Technology platform for a variety of systems which would make improvements for all of the County Council's customers.
- Members referred to the amount of volunteer hours generated in Kent and congratulated officers on the work they carried out to facilitate volunteering.

Communications & Engagement Draft Business Plan 2013/14

(8) Mr Burrows noted comments and answered questions from Members which included the following:

- A Member requested that Local Members be given specific advance notice of press releases that related to their area in order to be able to respond to local residents.
- A Member referred to the challenge that Corporate Communications had when trying to convince the local media to report Council news in a positive way when appropriate. Mr Burrows confirmed that Corporate Communications were trying to establish a closer working relationship with the local media.
- A Member expressed the view that the County Council's website only required tweaking rather than a complete revamp as there were a lot of technically able residents who were able to use it in its current form. Mr Burrows referred to the County Council's Digital Services Team who regularly made amendments to the website. It was important to take what really worked and to achieve consistency throughout the website.
- In response to the successful work of the Kent Film Office, a Member suggested that local Members should be made aware of filming in their area.
- A Member referred to the "gritter twitter" which was proving popular.
- A Member mentioned the need to ensure that there was strong support for Members at Locality Boards.
- In relation to the role of the Consultation Team, Mr Burrows explained that the team was rolling out training to officers via their Management Teams. There would be a Red, Amber, Green assessment of all consultations and based on this the team would decide how much support was required from them for each consultation.
- Mr Burrows referred to the significant number of profit making units within the County Council, for example Country Parks and Adult Education, which required pro-active marketing from within corporate communications with, if necessary, additional specific resources to support these units.
- Mr Tilson confirmed that this fit-for-purpose review included the creation and centralisation of a campaign and design team, with some posts previously scattered across the organisation, so while it is correct that there is an increase in the number of staff in this specific unit, this would not necessarily mean growth across the County Council as a whole.

General comments

(9) Ms Sanderson noted the following comments from Members:

- A Member commended the clear way in which the business plans and the risk register had been set out. It was clear who was responsible for each of the actions which were set against the 3 aims of Bold Steps for Kent. He requested that this format be kept for another year.
- A Member welcomed the professional and ambitious targets in the business plans.
- It was suggested that there should be additional performance indicators for Communications and Engagement, as there were currently only three. These could be in areas such as Channel Shift, Community Engagement and Locality Boards. It was appreciated that these were not easy areas to measure, but attempts should nevertheless be made to do so. Conversely there were a lot of Performance Indicators for the Contact Centre and maybe consideration should be given to reducing the number.

(10) RESOLVED That the Customer and Communities Cabinet Committee's Risk Register as set out in Appendix A, the comments made by Members on the draft performance indicators in Section F and the draft business plans in Appendices B, C & D be noted.

46. Customer & Communities Performance Dashboard Exception Report and Deep Dive - Registration Services

(Item C1)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Fitzgerald introduced an exception report for the Customer & Communities performance dashboard which highlighted any changes from the report to the meeting in November 2012. Ms Anley presented more detailed information on the Registration Service in Kent

Performance Dashboard

(2) Ms Slaven and Mr Fitzgerald noted comments and answered questions from Members which included the following;

- In response to a comment on the potential drop in performance relating to young offenders in suitable accommodation, Ms Slaven confirmed that this issue had been taken up by the Youth Justice Board. She believed that the key was to look at what "suitable" meant in terms of accommodation for young offenders. This was a complex issue and there was joint working with colleagues within the County Council such as in Children's Social Services and external partners such as the District housing providers. She assured Members that this was being closely monitored.
- A Member asked about the level of custodial sentences which remained "good". Ms Slaven explained that the Youth Justice data was collected nationally and published on an annual basis. There had been good performance in relation to custodial sentences for young people across Kent, this referred to a low number of young people in Kent (about 40 young people across the year). There was a national target of 4% and Kent was achieving 3.5% which had been consistent for sometime. Achieving this was about change at the sentencing and remand stage and effective community penalties.
- In relation to the timing of performance dashboard reports to the Committee and the availability of data, Mr Fitzgerald explained that some data, such as data relating to the Contact Centre was available on a weekly basis whereas other data, such as that on Youth Justice was available on a quarterly basis, it depended upon when the meetings of the Committee were held as to the amount of new data that was available, but it was always possible to produce an exception report.

Registration

(3) Ms Anley noted comments and answered questions from Members which included the following;

- Members were pleased to see that all appointments for the registration of births and deaths were carried out in a confidential space and appointments typically available on the same day even over the peak Christmas period. Members reported positive feedback about the service from local residents.

- Ms Anley explained that the Performance Indicator (No. 116) on how long after death the registration takes place was a national indicator, and was reliant on how soon the members of the public contacted the service after the death. A much more relevant target was how quickly after contact an appointment was offered.

(4) RESOLVED that the comments made by Members on the Customer & Communities performance dashboard, including the Registration Service deep dive be noted.

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

(Item C2)

(1) Mr Tilson introduced the regular report on the forecast outturn for the Customer and Communities Directorate and Portfolio which included details of the forecast underspend of -£1.42m within this second quarter full monitoring report. Also contained within this full monitoring report was the +£0.357m movement in the capital programme which was fully funded so not a net pressure to the authority.

(2) In response to a question on the low number of referrals for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) funded Work Programme contract, Ms Slaven explained that there had been extensive discussions with the DWP. The main contractor for this was G4S, with ASE a small Kent organisation acting as a sub-contractor. ASE had staff in place but the programme was dependent on Job Centre Plus referrals which had not been forthcoming. G4S had been advised that ASE was withdrawing from the contract as it was not viable and the contract had been terminated at the end of last year.

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

48. 2013/14 Revenue Budget Consultation Responses

(Item D1)

(1) Mr Tilson and Mr Hill introduced a report which explained that due to the late announcement of the Local Government Finance arrangements for 2013/14 the final draft budget was not available in time for inclusion in this report. Mr Tilson stated that the net effect of the funding arrangements for 2013/14, including the rephrasing of the Big Society Fund, was a shortfall of £14m above the sum that the County Council went out to consultation on. The County Council's proposals in response to this would be published on 16 January 2013. There were no direct savings that impacted on this portfolio and there would be no effect on front line services.

(2) Mr Burrows referred to the impact of the £14m shortfall upon the consultation process for the budget. He confirmed that as there would not be any significant impact on front line services and direction of travel had been built into the consultation process, there was no need to carry out additional public consultation.

(3) RESOLVED that the late announcement of the provisional local government finance settlement, the update on the final budget proposals affecting the Communities portfolio in advance of County Council meeting on 14 February 2013 and the comments made by Members on the consultation be noted.

49. Youth Service Transformation - update (Item D2)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Baker introduced a report which summarises the progress made on the Youth Service Transformation Project in advance of implementation in January 2013

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

- In response to a question on how long the County Council would give an external provider to start operating the service that they had been contracted to provide, Mr Baker stated that a reasonable time period would be until the end of this month. If any outstanding issues with a new provider had not been resolved then a decision would need to be made about whether to re-tender for the service.
- Regarding capital receipts from the sale of former youth services buildings, Mr Baker explained that these would contribute to capital pressures, for example the building of a youth centre in Dover. Mr Hill reminded Members that the responsibility for all the Council's properties was now centrally located within the Property and Infrastructure division of the County Council. The challenge was being able to access the capital receipt in the short term as a number of community groups had been given short term leases of former youth services buildings.
- In relation to Health and Safety requirements etc for external youth service providers, Mr Baker explained that the service gave advice and guidance, but as long as providers had suitable practices in place they did not have to have exactly the same qualifications/certification as would be expected if the County Council was directly providing the service.
- Mr Baker confirmed that young people had been involved in the design of the new service and in the commissioning decision making process. They would also be trained to assist in evaluating the services from new providers. He agreed to look at the role of the Youth Advisory Groups in relation to the monitoring of commissioned work in their area.
- Mr Baker undertook to submit a monitoring report to the Committee in September on the Youth Service Transformation.

(3) RESOLVED that the progress of the Youth Service Transformation Programme and the comments made by Members be noted.

50. Revision of the Countryside Access Improvement Plan (Item D3)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Finch introduced a report and the revised Countryside Access Improvement Plan (CAIP) which was a statutory plan and was due to be taken to public consultation shortly. The report provided details about why the review was required, how it was undertaken and the contents of the Draft Plan.

(2) Officers undertook to speak with Mr Angell outside of the meeting about the issues relating to motorised vehicles and to respond directly to Mr Kite regarding his questions on addressing equalities issues.

(3) The Chairman commended the clear and thorough document which encouraged the responsible use of the Kent Countryside. It was noted that the issues raised by Members related to the use of the network rather than the document and therefore these issues need to be addressed separately.

(3) RESOLVED that the process for consultation and formal adoption of the draft Countryside Access Improvement Plan and the comments made by Members on the Plan, as part of the consultation process, be noted.

51. Review of Interactive Voice Recognition Pilot

(Item D4)

(1) Mr Smith introduced the report and gave a presentation on the successful Interactive Voice Recognition pilot that had been carried out in the Contact Centre.

(2) Mr Smith noted comments and answered questions from Members which included the following;

- Mr Smith informed Members that the two complaints, out of the feedback from 420,000 callers, were about a dislike of Interactive Voice Recognition systems per se rather than specific complaints about the actual system introduced by the County Council.
- It was suggested that as the calls were being paid for by the customer the repetition of “please” in the message could be removed to shorten the message.
- Mr Smith explained that officers were currently going through a process of assessing a possible move to 0300 numbers, which were charged as a local call, whereas the cost of the current 0845 number varied depending on the customer’s phone provider. 0845 numbers were originally chosen as they gave a greater choice of numbers coming into the contact centre.

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

52. New Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity in Kent

(Item D5)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Hespe introduced the new Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity in Kent entitled ‘Kent’s Golden Decade of Sport’ which had been produced by KCC’s Sport and Physical Activity Service. The owner of the Strategic Framework, the Kent & Medway Sports Board, was keen for all local authorities in the County to acknowledge this Framework.

(2) In response to a question from a Member, Mr Hespe explained that the Schools Sports Partnerships had been disbanded when the funding ceased. However, there were 14 part-time Schools Games co-ordinators which officers worked with in relation to the organisation of the Kent School Games. Mr Hespe also emphasised the importance of encouraging sports clubs to come together in order to

be more effective in their local community: This was happening, but slowly. He also referred to the important link between sport and Public Health.

(3) RESOLVED that the new Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity be acknowledged.