

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND WASTE CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Environment, Highways and Waste Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 13 December 2013.

PRESENT: Mrs P A V Stockell (Chairman), Mr M J Angell (Substitute for Mr M J Harrison), Mr M Baldock, Mr M A C Balfour, Mr R H Bird (Substitute for Mr I S Chittenden), Mr L Burgess, Mr C W Caller, Dr M R Eddy, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr J M Ozog, Mr C Simkins, Mr M E Whybrow and Mr M A Wickham

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D L Brazier

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Austerberry (Corporate Director, Enterprise and Environment), Mr P Baldock (Finance & Performance Manager), Mr J Burr (Director of Highways and Transportation and Principal Director of Transformation), Mr S Charman (Head of Consultation and Engagement), Mr R Fitzgerald (Performance Manager), Mr A Kamps (Principal Accountant), Mr D Shipton (Head of Financial Strategy), Mrs S Thompson (Head of Planning Applications Group) and Mrs K Mannering (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

33. Meeting Dates 2014

(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the following dates for meetings of the Cabinet Committee in 2014, commencing at 10.00am, be agreed:-

Tuesday, 21 January
Thursday, 24 April
Tuesday, 22 July
Wednesday, 17 September
Friday, 5 December

34. Minutes of the meeting on 3 October 2013

(Item A5)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2013 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

35. Cabinet Member's and Corporate Director's Update (Oral report)

(Item A6)

(1) Mr Brazier and Mr Austerberry gave verbal reports on the following issues:-

Mr Brazier

Highways & Transportation – Lower Thames Crossing; Funded Major Schemes; Pipeline Schemes; and Feasibility Work

Waste – Waste transformation project; Contract procurements; and Joint waste projects

Mr Austerberry

Safe and Sensible Street Lighting policy; the Planning & Environment Division; the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership; Aviation; Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy; and the Planning Applications Group

36. Kent Freedom Pass including Post 16 Transport - Decision No 13/00095
(Item B1)

(1) Following an extensive analysis of current provision, it was proposed to introduce a revised Freedom Pass scheme from the academic year commencing September 2014/15. It would entail a stored value smartcard which provided a defined, pre-paid travel benefit per pupil. It was proposed to include 16-19 year olds in education or training at a lesser stored value. The new scheme would be reviewed within 6 months of commencement.

(2) The Kent Freedom Pass was introduced in 2007 and had become highly successful in enabling young people to access education and leisure activities by bus. The net budget for the Freedom Pass was around £13.5m, with an average benefit per pupil of £430 per annum, and future pressures on the demand for travel would increase the figure markedly at a time when the County Council needs to make unprecedented savings. The County Council considered a petition signed by around 16,000 people earlier in the year seeking a similar travel benefit for post 16 students to that provided through the Freedom scheme for 11-16 year olds. To provide an equitable way forward, a review of concessionary travel for all academic year groups had been considered which proposed to reduce the overall benefit value provided for 11-16 year olds and to extend the proposed stored value scheme to 16-19 year olds.

(3) Officers had considered a number of alternative schemes and the report set out the benefits of using Smartcard technology as the best mechanism for a revised scheme commencing in September 2014. It was considered that smartcards offered a very practical solution to implementing a stored value replacement for the Freedom Pass scheme. A report providing more detail on how the revised Freedom Pass scheme would work was planned to be presented to the April 2014 meeting of the Committee

(4) The proposal was that for 11-16 year olds, for an unchanged cost of £100, users would receive a card with £350 stored value (i.e. KCC contribution £250). For 16-19 year olds, for a pass cost of £100, users would receive a card with £250 stored value (i.e. KCC contribution £150). It was estimated that it would cost £7.5m for 11-16 year olds and £1.8m for 16-19 year olds. As now, a charge would not be made for Young Carers and Looked After Children. Passes would be granted only to those in education or training, including apprentices.

(5) It was proposed to introduce the schemes in September 2014 to coincide with the new academic year. A review would take place after 6 months as it was essential that savings were not negated by an unaffordable degree of take-up.

(6) During debate Members expressed concern with the effect on those parents who had already chosen a school with the Freedom Pass in mind; and the lack of an Equality Impact Assessment being carried out. Mr Burr stated that an Equality Impact Assessment was being carried out, though this was not mandatory given that the Freedom Pass was a discretionary service.

(7) Mr Caller moved, Dr Eddy seconded the following amendment to the wording of the recommendation in the report:-

- (a) that the proposal set out in 3.4 of the paper be sent to full Council on 13 February 2014 to enable an all member consideration, debate and decision;
- (b) that Members be provided with fuller details including costing of the options considered under “extensive analysis” that is referred to in paragraph 1.1 of the paper; and
- (c) that a further option be explored that restricts use of the revised Freedom Pass to school days only.

For – 6

Mr M Baldock, Mr R Bird, Mr L Burgess, Mr C Caller, Dr M Eddy and Mr M Whybrow

Against – 7

Mr M Angell, Mr M Balfour, Mrs S Hohler, Mr J Ozog, Mr C Simkins, Mrs P Stockell and Mr M Wickham

Lost

(8) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the proposal to introduce a stored value smartcard providing £350 value for 11-16 year olds and £250 for 16-19 year olds, with both at a cost of £100, be endorsed;
- (b) a review of the scheme after 6 months, be supported; and
- (c) a report updating Members on the more detailed operational issues of the scheme be submitted to the April 2014 meeting of the Committee

For – 7

Mr M Angell, Mr M Balfour, Mrs S Hohler, Mr J Ozog, Mr C Simkins, Mrs P Stockell and Mr M Wickham

Against – 6

37. New Combined Member Grant Scheme - Decision No 13/00088

(Item B2)

(1) In light of “Facing the Challenge” and the transformation agenda, there had been discussion between Cabinet Members with regards to a new combined Members Grant Scheme (MGS) for Kent. The proposal intended to ensure that demand was managed downward, that a more integrated approach was adopted; and that value for money was a primary focus given the current financial climate the authority found itself within. The paper set out a range of principles, financial implications, benefits, risks and the next steps for implementation, which was currently scheduled for April 2014.

(2) The proposal was to cease the four current grant schemes below, totalling £3.52m, and introduce one single Member Grant Scheme (MGS), consisting of £25k per member (£2.1m in total)

• Member Grants	-	£840k
• Local Schemes Grant	-	£400k
• Capital Scheme Grants	-	£500k
• Member Highway Fund	-	£1,780k (after top slicing)

(3) The new Member Grant Scheme’s budget would be £2,100,000, which was an annual saving to KCC of £1.42m. The new Member Grant Scheme would be managed and administered through the Community Engagement Officers (CEOs), who would work with local residents and continue to support Members. A refreshed single application process and performance management system would be implemented and it was intended that it would be predominantly based on the current online Member Highway Fund process, as well as incorporating some of the information required as part of the current Member Grants process.

(4) The current criteria for three of the grant schemes stipulated that projects where KCC had withdrawn funding in the past were not eligible for Member grants and given the future transformation, outsourcing and potential down-sizing of services, it was imperative that it remained for the new Member Grant Scheme. The criteria would be refreshed and distributed in advance of the implementation date. A menu of costed Highways project options would be developed in consultation with Members of the Cabinet Committee in early 2014.

(5) The most obvious benefit of the proposal was an annual saving to KCC of £1.42m. The proposed new Member Grant Scheme aimed to provide a more joined up and flexible scheme for Members, with the opportunity to use funds in a way that met local community needs without being restricted on specific funding stream criteria.

(6) The scheme would be operational from 1 April 2014. To aid the constrained timetable, it was proposed that all final applications for the existing four grant schemes were submitted before 1 March 2014, which would allow time for the old systems to be completed and ensure there was time to get new systems in place.

Once completed, a full set of criteria, a clear flow chart for the new Member Grant Scheme and a copy of the new application form would be circulated to Members and the intention was for user testing prior to implementation.

(7) Dr Eddy moved, Mr Caller seconded the following amendment to the wording of the recommendation in the report:-

- (a) that the proposal set out in paragraph 1.4 of the paper in relation to the reduction of the Members Grant Scheme be sent to full Council on 13 February 2014 to enable an all Member consideration, debate and decision; and
- (b) that members' ability to roll over money from one year to the following year is maintained, to fund major projects.

For – 6

Mr M Baldock, Mr R Bird, Mr L Burgess, Mr C Caller, Dr M Eddy and Mr M Whybrow

Against – 7

Mr M Angell, Mr M Balfour, Mrs S Hohler, Mr J Ozog, Mr C Simkins, Mrs P Stockell and Mr M Wickham

Lost

(8) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the new Member Grant Scheme as outlined in the report, be endorsed; and
- (b) any 2013/14 underspend being used to fund/part fund any adaptations that were required to the existing IT system within EHW, be supported.

For – 7

Mr M Angell, Mr M Balfour, Mrs S Hohler, Mr J Ozog, Mr C Simkins, Mrs P Stockell and Mr M Wickham

Against – 6

Mr M Baldock, Mr R Bird, Mr L Burgess, Mr C Caller, Dr M Eddy and Mr M Whybrow

Carried

(N.B. The annual saving to KCC was shown in the report as £1.32m which was incorrect and was amended in paragraphs (3) and (5) above)

38. Enterprise & Environment Mid-Year Business Plan Monitoring and Directorate Dashboard

(Item C1)

(1) The mid-year Business Plan monitoring provided highlights of achievements to date for the divisions within the Enterprise and Environment Directorate, and the

Directorate Dashboard showed progress made against targets set for Key Performance Indicators.

(2) The Enterprise and Environment Performance Dashboard included results up to the end of September 2013 for the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) included in the year's Divisional business plans. Key Performance Indicators were presented with RAG (Red/Amber/Green) alerts to show progress against business plan targets. All indicators were either ahead of target or were at acceptable levels above the floor standard for the year to date position.

(3) During debate Mr Fitzgerald and Mrs Thompson responded to questions from Members relating to:-

- Household Waste Recycling Centres – comparisons and positive feedback
- Aviation Strategy
- Resurfacing roads – level within highways maintenance
- Transport Improvements for East Kent
- Operation Stack/Lorry parking
- Growth development in Ashford – update on Park Farm and A28 between Ashford and Tenterden
- Sandwich Town Tidal Defence Scheme – effect of recent flooding
- Energy efficiency and Green Deal for Kent - update

(4) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

39. Enterprise & Environment Directorate Financial Monitoring 2013/14 *(Item C2)*

(1) Members were asked to note the second quarter's full budget monitoring report for 2013/14 reported to Cabinet on 2 December 2013. The relevant annex from the Cabinet report was attached to the paper and was presented in the pre-election portfolio structure. Given the inevitable changes that were coming from "Facing the Challenge", the Cabinet Member for Finance & Procurement had agreed that in terms of competing priorities, value added and risk, the work involved in mapping the pre-election portfolios to the post-election portfolio structure exceeded the benefits to be had, given the relatively short period that the new portfolios would be in existence before a further major change took effect. Therefore, reporting for the remainder of the financial year would continue in the pre-election portfolio structure.

(2) RESOLVED that the revenue and capital forecast variances from budget for 2013/14 for the Enterprise & Environment Directorate/Portfolio based on the second quarter's full monitoring to Cabinet, be noted.

40. Budget 2014/15 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/17 Consultation *(Item D1)*

(1) The report provided Members with more background to the current budget consultation and an opportunity to engage as part of the consultation prior to the finalisation of the draft budget proposals. Consultation on the forthcoming Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan was launched on 8 November. The aim of the consultation was to better inform Kent residents and businesses of the financial challenge the authority faced as a result of continued reductions in funding from

central government combined with additional spending demands and restrictions on the ability to raise Council Tax.

(2) Mr Shipton and Mr Charman gave a presentation about the consultation on the Budget 2014/15 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/17.

(3) The consultation closed on 13 December. The outcome from the main campaign together with the feedback from the more in depth responses on-line, the independent market research findings and discussions with key stake holder groups would be available for the January cycle of meetings. The final draft budget would be considered by Cabinet on 22 January before it was presented to County Council on 13 February for final approval.

(4) The overall cost of the consultation process had been kept within the same amount as last year (£50k budget). The overall financial equation presented in the consultation showed estimated government funding reductions of £142.6m over the next 3 years.

(5) KCC had a strong track record of delivering difficult budgets. Over the last 3 years the budget had included savings of £269m. The challenge of the next three years would be to deliver further savings of a similar magnitude to the previous three years. An Equality Impact Assessment of the overall budget consultation and setting process had been undertaken. In some instances managers had been given authority to start planning for implementation in advance in order to ensure savings could be delivered for the next financial year but that could not be completed until the budget had been approved and all necessary consultation and Equality Impact Assessment had been completed.

(6) RESOLVED that the consultation and engagement strategy/process be endorsed.

41. Joint Transportation Boards - Agreement & Governance Decision No 13/00038

(Item D2)

(Mr J Wilson, Chairman, KALC, was in attendance for this item)

(Various Members referred to their membership of the KALC, local Parish Councils, and Area Committees)

(1) At the January 2013 meeting, Members considered a revised report seeking authority to up-date the current JTB agreement and to provide flexibility for a JTB Chairman to vary the number of Parish representatives, but voting rights for Parishes was not included. Members of the Cabinet Committee endorsed the recommendations and a report covering the issues had been considered and endorsed by each JTB. Amendment to the existing JTB Agreement was now being considered internally by District Councils.

(2) KALC had formally requested that consideration be given to introducing voting rights for Parish representative/s attending the JTB. In principle it was a reasonable request, and Members were asked to consider each JTB having two Parish representatives with voting rights. It was important that KALC was responsible for

arranging the Parish representative's attendance at JTBs and notified the Chairman accordingly.

(3) If Members were minded to endorse the KALC proposal, it would be linked with the other proposed changes to the JTB Agreement and should then be individually ratified by each District Council through its own agreed constitution. A report would then be provided for each JTB confirming the revision to the Agreement and clarifying the Parish representation issue with the formal outcome. It was then anticipated that each District Council would enter into a revised Agreement with the County Council to reflect the changes approved. The matter would then be reported to the Committee to make a final recommendation to the Cabinet Member.

(4) During debate comments from Members included the following:-

- the proposal would enhance the opportunity for Parish Councils to submit views
- the effect on areas without Parish Councils and those Parish Councils not members of KALC
- Parish Councils receive an option of appointing 1 to 3 representatives to JTBs with voting rights

(5) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the request from KALC to extend voting rights to Parish Councils on JTBs, be endorsed; and
- (b) the procedure set out in paragraph (3) above be agreed.

42. Environment, Highways & Waste Cabinet Committee Draft Programme of Work
(Item D3)

RESOLVED that the draft programme of work for Environment, Highways and Waste, be noted.