

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 Tuesday, 11 June 2013.

PRESENT: Mrs S V Hohler (Chairman), Mr M J Angell, Mrs P Brivio, Mr B E Clark, Mrs M E Crabtree, Mr T Gates, Mr T A Maddison, Mr B Neaves, Mr M J Northey, Mr C R Pearman, Mr C Simkins, Mr A Terry, Mr M A Wickham and Mrs Z Wiltshire

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms A Honey (Corporate Director, Customer and Communities), Mr M Burrows (Director of Communications & Engagement), Mr D Crilley (Director of Community Cultural Services), Mrs J Doherty (Policy Manager), Mr R Fitzgerald (Performance Manager), Mr A Garrett (Fund Manager, Kent Community Foundation), Ms A Slaven (Director of Service Improvement), Mr K Tilson (Finance Business Partner - Customer & Communities), Mr J White (Capital Project Officer) and Mrs K Mannering (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Vice-Chairman

(Item A3)

Mr M A Wickham proposed and Mrs M E Crabtree seconded that Mr M J Angell be elected Vice-Chairman.

Carried

2. Minutes of the Meetings held on 14 March 2013 and 23 May 2013

(Item A5)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meetings held on 14 March 2013 and 23 May 2013 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. Portfolio Holder's, Corporate Director's & Directors' brief introduction to Customer & Communities Directorate - Presentation

(Item A6)

(1) Mr Hill congratulated Mrs Hohler and Mr Angell on their election as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively, welcomed all Members to the Cabinet Committee, and outlined the background to the Community Services Portfolio. Ms Honey gave an overview of the work of the Customer & Communities Directorate which consisted of 3 divisions – Communications & Engagement; Customer Services; and Service Improvement. The 3 Division Directors each gave a brief overview of their work and responsibilities.

(2) RESOLVED that the presentations be welcomed and noted.

4. Temporary Relocation of Library Services from Herne Bay and Swanley Libraries during the refurbishment of the buildings to become Gateways - Decision Nos: 13/00040 & 13/00041

(Item B1)

(1) In partnership with public and third sector organisations plans were being drawn up to completely refurbish premises to deliver Gateways in Herne Bay and Swanley as agreed by Cabinet as part of the 2012-13 Customer Services divisional business plan. During the proposed redevelopment of the two sites, in accordance with the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act, a temporary location must be provided to ensure the continued provision of library services in those areas. The anticipated build timeline for both sites was anticipated to be 51 weeks.

(2) Funding for the projects would come from a number of sources including external partners. Work was underway to ensure agreements would be reached on the design, build costs, leases, capital and revenue investments prior to the Project Advisory Group meeting on 26 June 2013.

(3) An appraisal of various facilities was being undertaken for both locations and already some options had emerged:-

Herne Bay

Canterbury City Council had offered the use of land attached to the leisure centre directly behind the library and subject to a ground lease being agreed it was anticipated a prefabricated facility would provide the necessary temporary accommodation.

Swanley

Swanley Town Council had offered the use of land attached to their Civic Centre directly behind the library.

In order to minimise the inconvenience to customers, signage to temporary sites would be put up at the existing buildings and the library opening hours were expected to remain the same. Re-location would also include suitable registration facilities.

(4) The Home Library Delivery Service would be offered to local people if it was a more appropriate alternative library service for them.

(5) During the closure period costs for the provision of temporary facilities would be kept to a minimum and any revenue costs should be offset by a reduction in user costs for the individual facilities. The temporary facilities would be stocked from existing library resources and there were no implications for the current staffing establishment.

(6) During discussion Mr Maddison raised the issue of the provision of a private area/room at all Libraries, that could be used for the registration of deaths. Mr Crilley assured Members that such a provision would be included, and also added to those Libraries currently without such a facility.

(7) RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Community Services be recommended to relocate library services from the Herne Bay and Swanley

Libraries to temporary premises during the refurbishment of the buildings to become Gateways.

5. Dissolution of Kent Cultural Trading and Kent on Canvas - Decision No: 13/00042
(Item B2)

(1) The report set out the background to Kent On Canvas and Kent Cultural Trading Ltd and the steps taken to re-align the business following recent developments, including the rationale for the proposed dissolution of both companies.

(2) In late 2006 work was commissioned by the then Chief Executive to look at KCC's historical and cultural assets, including the potential development of short and long term income generation opportunities. As part of the work, 'Kent on Canvas' was launched in 2008 as an 'art on demand' service and the project initially met high levels of demand. Following a series of Freedom of Information requests and legal advice, the service offer was restricted to KCC employees only as 'Kent on Canvas' was deemed by Legal Services not to be trading in full accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2003.

(3) In order to regularise the situation, a Cabinet Member decision was taken to establish 'Kent on Canvas' as a limited company. Over the following years, it was felt that developing opportunities could best benefit from being under an umbrella company, and a business case was presented to the Governance & Audit Trading Activities Sub Group, following which Kent Cultural Trading Ltd (KCT) was established as a wholly-owned subsidiary of KCC.

(4) In 2012, Internal Audit examined KCT's activities and subsequently a decision was taken to temporarily cease trading and suspend a member of staff. Following the findings of the investigation, advice was sought from Legal Services to determine what course of action the council needed to consider. A full assessment of KCT's trading activities was undertaken in order to consider what viable business opportunities remained, especially in light of the ever more difficult economic climate. If dissolution was to be considered, it was essential that KCT assets and outstanding opportunities should be looked into to ensure that all possible value was extracted from the company.

(5) The report set out the key trading activities and opportunities that were being pursued by KCT, along with reasons why the activity was eventually discontinued. Based on those reasons, and with ongoing financial pressures to consider, along with little appetite for further investment, the directors with input from all key stakeholders had recommended the dissolution of Kent Cultural Trading Ltd and its subsidiaries. Operations had been wound down prior to the companies recommended dissolution. As part of the work, all remaining assets had been transferred to KCC for the sum of £1 in order to compensate KCC for any losses.

(6) The accounts were presented to the Governance & Audit Trading Activities Sub Group on 1 March 2013. Final accounts showed that KCT for the year ended 31 January 2013 made a loss of £191,815. Kent on Canvas for the year ended 31 August 2012 made a loss of £4,632. There were no outstanding creditors other than KCC.

- (7) RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Community Services be recommended to voluntarily dissolve Kent on Canvas and Kent Cultural Trading Ltd, so Legal Services could take the requisite action to have the companies dissolved, following which they would be removed from the Companies House register.

6. Customer & Communities 2012/13 end of year Business Plan Outturn Monitoring and Directorate Dashboard
(Item C1)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Fitzgerald introduced the Business Plan monitoring which provided highlights of the achievements against Business Plan priorities and actions during the financial year, and the Directorate Dashboard which showed progress made against targets set for Key Performance and Activity indicators.

(2) One of the roles of the Cabinet Committees was to review the performance of the services which came under the remit of the Committee. The Business Plan monitoring and Directorate Dashboard were provided to assist the Committee in its role in relation to reviewing performance.

(3) A full monitoring exercise of priorities and actions included in Divisional Business Plans was conducted at the end of the financial year, with the aim of identifying achievements and also where actions were not completed. A summary report of the findings of the Business Plan outturn monitoring for the Customer & Communities Directorate was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

(4) The Customer & Communities performance dashboard, attached as Appendix 2 to the report, included end of year results for the Key Performance and Activity Indicators included in the 2012/13 Business Plan. A Direction of Travel (DOT) was also provided for Key Performance Indicator to show whether performance had improved or not against the previous year result.

(5) During debate Officers responded to comments and questions from Members relating to the following:-

- (a) external funding brought into Kent facilitated by the Kent Film Office
- (b) number of church weddings compared to civil ceremonies
- (c) number of physical visits to Kent libraries, and books issued from libraries
- (d) percentage of apprentices successfully completing their training, in the academic year
- (e) Kent's Vulnerable Learners Apprenticeship Scheme supporting young people from Youth Justice

(6) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the report be noted; and

- (b) the September meeting of the Cabinet Committee receive an update on apprentices; and a report relating to Deep Dive: Drug and Alcohol Unit.

7. Kent Big Society Fund - Annual Report to Kent County Council from the Kent Community Foundation

(Item D1)

(1) The Kent Big Society Fund was established in January 2012 by charitable donation from Kent County Council (KCC) to Kent Community Foundation (KCF). The Key Decision (11/01755) was taken by the Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities on 16 December 2011. The Fund operated principally as a social finance loan scheme and its main aims were to support growth in the social enterprise sector and to create and sustain new employment opportunities. A second donation of £1 million had been made to the Fund in accordance with Key Decision 11/01755.

(2) The Annual Report proposed altering the parameters of the Fund to allow for a one-off donation to support the setting up of a micro-finance hub in Kent managed by the Fredericks Foundation. The proposal was considered and endorsed by the Cabinet Committee on 14 March 2013 and Key Decision 13/00019 was made on 25 March 2013.

(3) RESOLVED that the Kent Big Society Fund Annual Report be noted.