

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 10 September 2015

PRESENT: Mr A J King, MBE (Chairman), Miss S J Carey, Mr N J D Chard, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr J Elenor, Mr C P D Hoare, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr R A Marsh, Mr S C Manion, Mr M J Northey, Mrs P A V Stockell and Mr D Smyth and Mrs P A V Stockell

ALSO PRESENT: Mr G Cooke, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr J D Simmonds, MBE and Mr B J Sweetland

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director Strategic & Corporate Services), Mr D Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance), Mr G Wild (Director of Governance and Law) and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

155. Introduction/Webcast announcement
(Item A1)

156. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item A2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Davies and Mr Ridings. Mr Marsh and Mr Northey attended as substitutes for Mr Davies and Mr Ridings respectively.

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

Mr Smyth made a declaration of interest in item B2 – Final Draft of the VCS Policy and Consultation Feedback as both he and his wife were involved in a number of charities.

158. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2015
(Item A4)

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

159. Meeting Dates for 2016-17
(Item A5)

Resolved that meetings of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee will take place as follows:

Friday 15 January 2016
Tuesday 15 March 2016
Tuesday 24 May 2015
Friday 22 July 2016
Thursday 8 September 2016
Friday 2 December 2016

Friday 13 January 2017
Wednesday 8 March 2017

160. Final Draft of the VCS Policy and Consultation Feedback
(Item B2)

- (1) The Chairman said that this item would be considered first.
- (2) Mr Hill (Cabinet Member for Community Services) introduced the report and said the adoption of a voluntary and community sector policy was important and timely especially as the authority was moving towards being a commissioning council. He said the workshops held as part of the consultation had been invaluable shaping the policy and urged the Committee to support the adoption of the policy.
- (3) David Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) said that the community and voluntary sector welcomed the opportunity to engage with the Council through the consultation process and said it was essential to have a policy defining the relationship with the sector including the majority of organisations within it that did not provide services on behalf of the council or receive grant funding.
- (4) In response to comments and questions Mr Whittle said the following:
 - (a) A single downloadable application form for grants was being designed and would be available in a prominent position on the Council's website together with a grant prospectus providing further information about grants and funding;
 - (b) Consideration would be given to including anonymised case studies to assist with the understanding of grants and their use. He also said that those commissioning services had the opportunity to support charities but would need to demonstrate a clear link to the Council's strategic priorities;
 - (c) The definition of social value was very broad. The Commissioning Framework, which was closely related to the Voluntary and Community Sector Policy, was designed to encourage commissioners to think about social value and the new public contracts regulations made it easier to break contracts into smaller units which would enable smaller charitable and voluntary organisations to submit tenders.
- (5) Resolved that:

- (a) The proposed decision to adopt the Voluntary and Community Sector Policy be endorsed subject to clarification about the use of grants;
- (b) An update on the implementation of the policy be received by the Policy and Resources Committee in September 2016.

161. Customer Service Policy

(Item B1)

- (1) Mr Sweetland (Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services) introduced the report. He said the Committee had approved the draft policy prior to public consultation and that the results of the consultation that took place between March and May 2015 had influenced the policy.
- (2) David Whittle (Director of Policy, Strategy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) said it was important to have a simple statement of customer service standards that were applied across the organisation and to those providing services on behalf of the authority. He also paid tribute to Pascale Blackburn-Clarke (Quality and Assurance Manager) and other members of his team for their work in developing the policy.
- (3) In response to comments and questions Mr Whittle, Mrs Kendal (Head of Customer Relationship) and Mrs Pascale Blackburn-Clarke (Quality and Assurance Manager) gave the following information:
 - (a) Consideration would be given to developing a key performance indicator or other way of measuring the number of persistent callers who could not be helped by the authority and were , therefore, barred from any communication;
 - (b) The words “and before consultation begins” would be added to the first sentence of the Equality Analysis/ Impact Assessment so it read “You need to start your Equality Analysis and data collection when you start to create or change any policy, procedure, project or service and before consultation begins”.
 - (c) Consideration would be given to the most appropriate way of following up the requirement in the Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan that all commissioners consider the equalities implications of the customer service elements that would be delivered as part of any commissioning activity.
 - (d) Discussions about ways of increasing the number of people responding to consultations were underway however the value and statistical significance of responses weighted for ethnicity, geographical spread and other criteria should not be underestimated.
- (4) It was also confirmed that the Customer Complaints Policy was being reviewed with a view to ensuring proper recording and quality responses as well as tracking feedback and outcomes.

- (5) The Committee was also advised that there were strong links between the Customer Service Policy and the Commissioning Policy.
- (6) Resolved that:
 - (a) The proposed decision to formally adopt the Customer Service Policy and its principles within KCC including the recommendations arising from the consultation be endorsed subject to comments from Members of the Committee;
 - (b) The operation of the policy be reviewed by the Committee in September 2016.

162. Award of Insurance Programme Contracts

(Item B3)

- (1) Mr Simmonds (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement) introduced the report saying that the local authority insurance market was restricted with few private sector insurers willing to enter into it. He also said that the current contract (in place since 2009) was competitively priced, the tender for the new contract had followed the Open Procedure and that it was anticipated that a decision on the award of contract would be made by 6 November 2015.
- (2) In response to questions and comments, Mrs Mattingly (Insurance Manager) said that feedback on the cost benefit analysis of increasing self-insured levels referred to in paragraph 4.2.3 of the report could be provided in due course; and confirmed that tenders included quotes for various levels of self-insurance.
- (3) Resolved that the proposed decision to award the contracts for insurance, which commence in January 2016, and associated inspections in accordance with the terms and conditions of the tender exercise be endorsed.

163. Annual Business Planning Review

(Item C1)

- (1) David Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) introduced the report which reviewed the 2015/16 business planning round and sought comments on and endorsement of the proposed changes for 2016/17. He paid tribute to the members of his team who worked with directorates to develop annual business plans and said that the current year had been particularly challenging.
- (2) He referred in particular to the need to capture the priorities of Cabinet Members early in the process and to encourage directorates to take a three-year view rather than focussing only on the immediate year ahead.
- (3) Comments were made about the need for standardisation of directorate business plans, the importance of strong links between the templates at Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of the report and the proposal that achievements relating to social value be documented through the Strategic Statement annual

report to be considered by County Council from autumn 2016 rather than in business plans.

- (4) Mr Whittle said the final format of the business plans would be agreed following discussions with directorate management teams.
- (5) Resolved that the business planning arrangements for 2016/17 be endorsed subject to further consideration of comments of the Committee.

164. Legal Services' Evolution Efficiency Enterprise Final Report 2012/15
(Item C2)

- (1) Mr Sweetland (Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services) said the Evolution, Efficiency Enterprise project had been very successful and the Committee had received regular updates. Mr Wild (Director of Governance and Law) said the report drew together three years of work.
- (2) Mr Long, as an explanation of his background and experience said he practised as a solicitor and part-owned a firm of solicitors. He said he did not consider a declaration of interest necessary as his firm was not involved in providing the same services as Kent Legal Services.
- (3) In response to questions, Mr Wild confirmed that:
 - The information in Appendix A was entirely accurate;
 - The external market had changed since the project started and continued to change;
 - Efforts to generate income from external work had been largely put on hold in light of the Facing the Challenge Project;
 - Despite this, income from external work contributed 40% of the surplus generated over the past three years; and
 - In addition to the cashable savings, an estimate of non-cashable savings and efficiencies was also set out in Appendix A of the report
- (4) There was general view that the project had been a success and tributes were paid to Mr Wild and the Legal Services team.
- (5) Resolved that:
 - (a) The report be noted;
 - (b) Mr Wild and the Legal Services team be thanked for their efforts in ensuring the success of the project.

165. Work Programme 2015
(Item C3)

- (1) The report gave details of the proposed work programme for 2015.
- (2) The Chairman said an extraordinary meeting of the Committee would take place at 1pm on Friday 18 September 2015 to discuss the procurement of back office services.

(3) Resolved that the report be noted.