

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 Friday, 11 December 2015

PRESENT: Mr A J King, MBE (Chairman), Mr D L Brazier (Substitute for Mr N J D Chard), Miss S J Carey, Mr J A Davies, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr M Heale, Mr C P D Hoare, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr L B Ridings, MBE, Mr D Smyth, Mr N S Thandi and Mr J N Wedgbury (Substitute for Mrs P A V Stockell)

ALSO PRESENT: Mr G Cooke, Mr J D Simmonds, MBE and Mr B J Sweetland

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director Strategic & Corporate Services) and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

171. Introduction/Webcast announcement
(Item A1)

172. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item A2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Chard and Mrs Stockell. Mr Brazier and Mr Wedgbury attended as substitutes for Mr Chard and Mrs Stockell respectively.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

174. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 and 18 September 2015
(Item A4)

- (1) Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2015 and 18 September 2015 be approved subject to the following amendments to the minutes of 10 September:
- The deletion of the second reference to Mrs Stockell in the list of those present; and
 - The replacement of the word “changed” with the word “changes” in minute 163(1).

175. Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 23 September 2015
(Item A5)

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 23 September 2015 be noted subject to the addition of a bracket in front of the acronym “TFM” in paragraph 51(1).

176. Procurement of a New Contract for User Access

(Item B1)

- (1) Mr Cooke (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) introduced the report which outlined the requirement to put in place a contract for the renewal of the user access devices. He said that at present such devices were procured on a three-year rolling lease and the intention was to buy hardware as leases came to an end. Lease costs were £2.2 million for 2015 and it was anticipated that £3-£4 million would be spent over the next three years to purchase replacement devices.
- (2) During the discussion a Member commended the review of extended warranties and said it was important to balance the cost of purchasing extended warranties against the risk of not purchasing them.
- (3) In response to questions Mr Cooke and Michael Lloyd (Head of Technology Commissioning and Strategy) said that:
 - Mobile devices would be made available to any member of staff who needed them
 - The ICT offer to Members was being refreshed
 - The decision to purchase devices had not been made earlier as it could not be taken until after the decision relating to back office procurement had been taken.
- (4) Resolved that the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services, for the renewal of the User Access Devices Contract including the necessary contractual negotiations and to enter into any subsequent necessary legal agreements be delegated to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services be endorsed.

177. Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate Dashboard

(Item C1)

- (1) Mr Fitzgerald (Business Intelligence Manager – Performance) introduced the report which showed progress made against targets set for Key Performance Indicators to October 2015. He drew particular attention to: the new format of the appendix which now showed responsibility for delivering each target; the performance against targets for Customer Engagement which meant that Agilisys had inherited a high performing service; and the target for PI01 (Percentage of rent due to KCC outstanding at 60 days) which was now back on track following payment in November.
- (2) In response to questions about training and, in particular to HR02, (Manager Satisfaction with Learning Outcomes Rated Good or Above) Mrs Beer (Corporate Director Engagement, Organisation Design and Development) said that this indicator aimed to evaluate the impact of training from a manager's

point of view and managers were recording satisfaction with the training but not rating it good or excellent.

- (3) Mrs Beer also said that the corporate training programme was developed following an analysis of the needs of the organisation, the needs of individuals identified through the performance review process and the requirements of continuing professional development. All training was linked to the corporate training plan to ensure resources were allocated to meet identified needs.
- (4) Resolved that the report be noted.

178. Financial Monitoring 2015-16

(Item C2)

- (1) Mr Simmonds (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement) introduced the report, which set out the second quarter's full budget monitoring report for 2015-16, as reported to Cabinet on 30 November 2015.
- (2) He said that of the six budgets he had been involved in, this had been the most challenging. He said a £5-£6 million overspend was being forecast and financial difficulties were likely to be replicated in future years.
- (3) Jackie Hansen (Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate Finance Business Partner) said:
 - The Customer Relationships team was reporting £186,000 overspend primarily as a result of the delayed delivery of the 2015-16 saving but this overspend was offset by an underspend of £229,000 in Communications and Consultation as a result of not filling vacancies pending a re-structure of the Engagement, Organisation Design and Development Directorate;
 - The Information, Communications and Technology team was forecasting an overspend of £420,000 as a result of implementation costs relating to the Managed Print Service and increased maintenance charges for data storage. This overspend was, however, off-set by savings projected by the Business Services Centre as a result of staff vacancies and by savings of £252,000 projected by the Property Group.
- (4) In response to questions and concerns, Mr Cooke (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) said he would provide information to the Members of the committee about the cost to the authority of responding to Freedom of Information requests and that he would provide a link to the consultation that had been conducted by the Independent Commission on Freedom of Information on the Gov.UK website.
- (5) Resolved that the revenue and capital forecast variances from budget for 2015-16, based on the second quarter's full monitoring to Cabinet, be noted.

179. Annual Equality and Diversity Report 2014-15

(Item C3)

- (1) Mr Cooke (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) introduced the report which included the Annual Equality and Diversity Report 2014-15 and outlined the proposed approach to revising KCC's equality statements and objectives for 2016-2020.
- (2) Mr Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) said the authority had a statutory duty to publish an equality report annually and that each directorate also presented an equality report to the relevant cabinet committee. He said section 4 and appendix 2 of the report set out initial proposals for a revised equality statement and objectives for 2016-2020 and that further work was needed to refine the statement and objectives, including evidencing that the supporting outcomes covered the equalities needs of groups with protected characteristics. Draft revised equality objectives would be published as a key decision in 2016 and considered by the cabinet committee prior to a decision being taken.
- (3) In response to questions Mr Cooke said the authority aspired to pay the National Living Wage when it could be afforded. He also said that last year's pay award had benefitted the staff on the lowest pay and that it would be presumptuous to say anything about this year's award.
- (4) Mr Whittle confirmed that the Equalities team provided advice to directorates engaging in public consultations but responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Equality Policy rested with the directorates.
- (5) Mr Sweetland (Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services) said that more information about consultations, including a clear definition and statement of the principles of consultation, would be made available on the authority's website soon.
- (6) It was suggested that the role of the Corporate Equality Group be reviewed and the minutes of its meeting be made available to a wider audience.
- (7) In response to a question, Akua Agyepong (Corporate Lead – Equality and Diversity) said that the contractors supplying services to or on behalf of KCC had a duty to comply with the Equality Act and EqlAs were conducted early in the procurement process so that equalities issues could be taken into account where relevant.
- (8) In response to a question about how the views of children being placed with foster carers were considered, Mr Whittle undertook to respond in writing to the Member.
- (9) Resolved that:
 - (a) The Annual Equality and Diversity Report for 2014-15 be endorsed for publication on kent.gov.uk
 - (b) The approach taken to revise KCC's equality statement and objectives for 2016-20 be endorsed.

180. Work Programme
(Item C4)

- (1) The Principal Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which set out the proposed work programme for the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee.
- (2) In response to a question, Mr Cockburn (Corporate Director of Strategic and Corporate Services) said that at the agenda setting meeting for the next Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee it had been agreed that a general overview of the issues relating to Gateways would be included in the report to the committee on the Maidstone Gateway.
- (3) Resolved that the report be noted.

181. Spending Review And Autumn Budget Statement Announcements
(Item D1)

- (1) Dave Shipton (Head of Financial Strategy) introduced the report which set out the main elements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Budget Statement and the 2015 Spending Review that were announced on 25 November. The report focused on the elements of the announcements that affected local authority budgets and on how local government funding fitted within total government spending nationally.
- (2) Mr Shipton said the key messages were that government spending would continue to increase but at a slower rate than the economy and public spending would fall from 40% to 36% of the total economy over the Spending Review period. For local government the assumption was that spending would be the same in 2019/20 as it is now with a dip in 2016/17 making the 2016/17 the most difficult. The ability of local authorities with social care responsibilities to levy an additional 2% precept over and above the Council Tax referendum threshold to meet growing social care responsibilities was included in the "flat cash" and the conditions attached to it would be set out in the local government settlement. The grant to schools would also be frozen putting additional pressure on school budgets some of which were already experiencing deficits.
- (3) In response to questions Mr Shipton said that the apprenticeship levy would be a £1.5 million pressure on KCC's budget for 2017/18 and that it was not yet clear how the levy might be applied to schools with payrolls of £3 million or more.
- (4) Resolved that the relationship between central government and local authority decisions on the Council's budget plans and the main announcements within the Spending Review and the Autumn Budget Statement affecting local authorities be noted.

182. Corporate Assurance Analysis Report
(Item D2)

- (1) Mr Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) introduced the report and said the purpose of the corporate assurance function was to provide oversight, transparency and assurance that major change activity delivered agreed outcomes. He said the approach to

providing assurance was described in the first half of the report while the appendices gave more detail about current change activity and a summary of Tier 1 major change projects.

- (2) Officers were congratulated on simplifying a very complex issue.
- (3) In response to questions the role of Internal Audit was outlined and Mr Whittle said that the “5 Case Model” referred to in paragraph 4 of the report was a robust model used by the Treasury and ensured that business cases could stand up to significant scrutiny. He undertook to provide a briefing note to Members of the cabinet committee on the model and how it was being adapted in a proportionate way in KCC.
- (4) Given the rate of change it was suggested that the committee should receive future corporate assurance reports more frequently than every six months.
- (5) Resolved that:
 - (a) The Corporate Assurance Analysis report be noted;
 - (b) A further report on Corporate Assurance be received by the committee at its meeting on 15 March 2016.