

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 21 June 2017.

PRESENT: Mr M Whiting (Chairman), Mrs R Binks, Mr R H Bird (Substitute for Mr I S Chittenden), Mr A Booth, Mr D Butler, Mr D Farrell, Mr S Holden, Mr A J Hook, Mr J A Kite, MBE, Mr G Lymer, Mr R A Marsh (Substitute for Mr A H T Bowles), Mr J P McInroy (Substitute for Mr A Cook), Mr P J Messenger, Mr A M Ridgers and Mr J Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance and Mrs S V Hohler

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr D Smith (Director of Economic Development), Mrs K Stewart (Director of Environment Planning and Enforcement) and Miss T A Grayell (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

2. Chairman's Introduction

(Item 2)

The Chairman welcomed new Members who had recently joined the County Council and welcomed all Members to the first meeting of the new Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee.

He welcomed the Deputy Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, Mrs S V Hohler, to the meeting in place of Mr P M Hill, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, and welcomed Mr M C Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

3. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 3)

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr A H T Bowles, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr A Cook and Mr H Rayner.

Mr R H Bird was present as a substitute for Mr Chittenden, Mr J McInroy for Mr Cook and Mr R A Marsh for Mr Bowles.

4. Election of Vice-Chairman

(Item 4)

Mr J A Kite proposed and Mr G Lymer seconded that Mr S Holden be elected Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet Committee.

There being no other nominations, this was agreed without a vote.

5. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda

(Item 5)

Mr D Farrell declared a general interest as an Ashford Borough Councillor, although he had had no involvement in the Ashford District Deal (Agenda item 7).

6. Minutes of the meetings held on 22 March and 25 May 2017

(Item 6)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings which took place on 22 March and 25 May 2017 are correctly recorded and they be signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

7. Verbal Updates by Cabinet Members

(Item 7)

1. Mrs S V Hohler, Deputy Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, gave a verbal update on the following issues:-

Turner Prize 2019 – It had recently been announced that the Turner Contemporary in Margate would be the host venue for the Turner Prize in 2019.

Turner Contemporary – Visitor numbers for this excellent cultural venue had now reached 370,000 per year, three times as many as had been predicted at the project's inception in 2001. A good range of exhibitions had been hosted there since its opening in 2011. Members who had not already visited the venue were encouraged to do so. The County Council had always supported the development of the gallery, both financially and by Mrs Hohler being a Trustee of its management board.

Kent County Youth Orchestra – 2017 marked the 70th anniversary of the founding of Kent Music and the Kent County Youth Orchestra, which had done much to promote the enjoyment of music in schools.

2. Mr M C Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, gave a verbal update on the following issue:-

Paramount – The London Resort Holding Co Ltd had recently announced its intention to discontinue licensing for the London Paramount Theme Park planned for Swanscombe. Alternative support was being sought via an open forum.

3. RESOLVED that the verbal updates be noted.

8. Presentation by Canterbury Christ Church University - Kent businesses and Brexit transition

(Item 8)

Professor Mark Hammond, Visiting Professor of Politics and International Relations, and Professor Amelia Hadfield, Director of the Centre for European Studies,

Canterbury Christ Church University, were in attendance for this item at the invitation of the committee.

- 1) Mark Hammond, visiting Professor of Politics and International Relations, CCCU and Professor Amelia Hadfield, Director of the Centre for European Studies, CCCU introduced the report which focused primarily on small and medium-sized enterprises and the uncertainty around Brexit, Agriculture, Data compliance through external organisations and Policing, security and Law Enforcement. Mr Hammond concluded that Helen Whately, Member of Parliament for Faversham and Mid-Kent, would be sponsoring the launch of the report at Westminster on 13th July 2017. Mark Hammond said that the report was a compilation of views from different business and organisations across Kent and Medway that focus on making a success of Brexit. The report did not contain personal or substantive views on the referendum of Brexit and no judgemental value had been taken from the exercise. Amelia Hadfield informed Members that due to limited financial provisions, the surveys carried out were all that were permitted within the budgetary constraints, thereby allowing a limited view of the possible economic issues that could arise.
 - a) Amelia Hadfield assured Members that whilst the report did not contain responses regarding holdings selling land to non-British nationals, there was wide spread uncertainty as to the ability on how to care for the land under what may be increasingly wide legislative requirements. CCCU had worked hard to maintain the national perspective and Local Kent Imperative. The report would be submitted to the Brexit Department and Brexit Committee.
 - b) Amelia Hadfield informed Members that there was no conclusion regarding the British Governments decisions around the Common Agriculture Policy and the repatriation to farmers themselves. Possible removal of subsidies has caused holdings to find new innovative solutions such as digital farming to reduce manual labour. Although mechanical farming was in its infancy, pilot projects could be used throughout Kent and Medway to identify ways in which this could be rolled out.
 - c) Amelia Hadfield agreed that the report needed to provide a clearer distinction on the weight given to small and large holdings as there were two separate arguments that needed to be addressed. The conflict of dates around the CAP may be subject to negotiation as the multilateral financial framework ran out in 2010.
 - d) Amelia Hadfield confirmed that the current value of subsidies into Kent was £45m.
 - e) The report identified that there had been a 50% drop in agriculture recruitment agencies, Amelia Hadfield confirmed that this was due to a 50% drop in applicants.
 - f) Amelia Hadfield, informed the Committee that CCCU were unable to quantify the effects on the average family's house-hold food bill following the decisions of CAP.

- g) A Member said that in order to hold an open and national debate; the correct data must be fed into and looked at objectively without prejudice. Following the decision to leave the European Union, the Local Government needed all areas of expertise and opposing sides to produce objective data.
- 2) Mr Smith concluded that the report submitted by CCCU in December 2016 was of great interest to Kent. The MP for Faversham and Mid-Kent who was a Member of the Brexit Committee found the report to be useful to inform discussions in the Parliamentary Committee. The next report would be published in July and would return to the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee following its submission to Parliament in the early summer.

9. Ashford District Deal - Review and Refresh

(Item 9)

- 1) Mr Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, said he had recently attended the Ashford Strategic Board and mentioned the high growth in Ashford and the successful work that had been undertaken with Damian Green, the Member of Parliament for Ashford and all tiers of the Local Government.
- 2) Katie Stewart, Director of Environment Planning and Enforcement, introduced the report and commented on the progress that had been made and said that teams had worked together to attract funding and propose two new delivery priorities for the refresh deal around co-ordinating the commissioning of Health and Social Care Infrastructure, joint commitment to promoting Wellbeing, work between the Trading Standards team and the Environmental Health team.
- 3) RESOLVED that the Ashford District Deal Review and Refresh be considered and endorsed.

10. Update on Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 - 2021

(Item 10)

Mr J Pearson, Interim Head of Service, was in attendance for this item.

- 1) Mrs S V Hohler emphasised the importance of libraries to communities. The Vision for Libraries was a national document and the County Council had now to make it relevant to Kent. Mrs Hohler said how proud she was of Kent's libraries service, especially the development of the digital playground. Mr Pearson introduced the report and highlighted the key threads of Kent's work to implement the national vision.
- 2) RESOLVED that the information set out in the report be noted, the progress made in implementing the vision be welcomed, and further details of plans be reported to a future meeting of the Growth Economic Development & Communities Cabinet Committee.

11. European Funding

(Item 11)

- 1) Mr Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development introduced the report and said that bids would include East Sussex and Essex.
- 2) Ron Moyes, Head of International Affairs, said that the Government had confirmed that any projects signed before Britain leaves the EU would be funded. One of the main aims was to provide considerable opportunities for European funding that were open to Kent County Council and other Kent organisations. He discussed the main European programmes that were still accessible, under ESIF (European Structural and Investment Funds), there was around £35m available for projects and under the Interreg 2 Seas programme there was £100m available for applicants. There were 35 projects that had been secured across the country worth around £65m in European grants and that was towards the overall target of £100m for the current programmes. There were concerns around whether the target set was achievable so promoting the programmes was a priority. He also said that opportunities to influence potential UK Domestic Funding for co-operation across the Channel, and an opportunity to devise a more focused and effective domestic co-operation programme under the European interreg programme would be considered.
 - a) Mr Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, asked how the criteria had made certain jobs challenging. Mr Moyes said that Kent was the first county in Britain to secure funding under the Interreg Cross Border programme because of the impacts of the future channel tunnel which was a programme between Kent and partners in Calais. The area had ever widened in the fifth programme, therefore the Interreg programme had stretched from Norfolk to Cornwall and this had reduced the focus/effectiveness of the current programmes.
 - b) A Member said that officers should try to maintain a consistent and jargon-free approach to report writing.
- 3) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

12. Update on Apprenticeships Reforms

(Item 12)

- 1) Sue Dunn, Head of Skills and Employability, introduced the report and said that the Apprenticeship Reforms had been put in place to allow Employers to be in control of money and have direct access to money. All apprenticeship standards were developed directly with Employers and any new standards used within the Council had been generated and developed by other public sector bodies. School leavers were able to complete a Level 2 qualification and were given the opportunity to complete higher level apprenticeships if desired. Apprenticeship opportunities in Teaching were in development which would create a new career pathway for young people. Ms Dunn said it was important to recognise the County's success in promoting apprenticeships and maintaining a high place nationally in terms of the work and the number of people engaged in the debate. Prior to the apprenticeship reforms, there was a service available which allowed Employers to keep up to speed with the apprenticeship reforms and any updates.

The Skills and Employability team were launching a new campaign working with colleges, training providers and Employers with the intention to interview 1,000 people between by January 2018 and aim to get at least 500 of the 1,000 people into apprenticeships. The main objective was to double the number of apprenticeships in Kent without diminishing the quality of the apprenticeships and to make sure that the apprenticeship opportunities' were in the right locations and offered at appropriate levels.

- a) A Member commented on the current levels of success and said that keeping schools, apprentices and employers informed was a priority.
- b) A Member asked how the Apprenticeships Reform would affect Kent County Council. Ms Dunn said that the Made in Kent campaign had been very successful and that a new website had been made for apprenticeships, social media had had a large impact on promoting the Made In Kent campaign effectively. 2,000 young people had applied for foundation level and higher level apprenticeships through the Made In Kent campaign and 750 apprenticeships were advertised in total.
- c) A Member asked how staff within Kent County Council, schools and employers could help to influence young people to become an apprentice in sectors that were in need of apprentices. Ms Dunn encouraged promoting the apprenticeships that were available to young people. She also said that there was a particular profile of work for KCC employers and a focused piece of work in schools to see how schools as employers could contribute to the apprenticeship agenda. Ms Dunn said that the main focus was to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities within the Council at all levels.

2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

13. Performance Dashboard

(Item 13)

- 1) Richard Fitzgerald, Business Intelligence Manager – Performance, introduced the Performance Dashboard and discussed the good progress that had been made. Richard Fitzgerald advised the Committee that he would be attending the Growth, Economic Development and Communities meetings regularly to provide an update on the Performance Dashboard.

2) RESOLVED that the Performance Dashboard be noted.

14. Libraries, Registration and Archives performance against the service specification 2016-2017

(Item 14)

Mr J Pearson, Interim Head of Service, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Cooper introduced the report and explained that the Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA) service was an internally-commissioned, completely integrated service which included the registration and home office passport services, which could not be outsourced to any external provider. A decision had been taken in 2015 to keep the services together, and Kent was currently the only

county in the UK to have a totally integrated LRA service. The report set out performance against the service specification during 2016/17 and the specification for 2017/18.

2. Mr Pearson added that the specification included two methods of measuring performance, as key performance indicators (KPIs) recorded figures but could not assess quality. He highlighted key areas of performance, such as customer satisfaction (which was at 95 – 97 % across various parts of the service), and the home library service, which, although receiving good feedback from customers, had not been used by as many people as had been expected and so had not met its target for the year. The registration and wedding services had also both received excellent customer feedback.
3. Mrs Cooper and Mr Pearson responded to comments and questions from Members, including the following:-
 - a) Visitor numbers for the Kent History and Libraries Centre had been lower than those for the former Centre for Kentish Studies at Sessions House, and satisfaction rating was only 86%, as the space at the Kent History and Libraries Centre was smaller than at the Centre for Kentish Studies and work was still going on to develop and improve the new archive service;
 - b) in response to a question, Mr Pearson undertook to look into the level of investment in new books at Faversham library;
 - c) responding to a comment about how libraries could support an improvement in reading attainment at primary schools, Mr Pearson explained that the School Summer Reading Challenge had been established to counteract the dip in reading over the long school holidays, and Members were encouraged to support this scheme in their local libraries. Schools could be encouraged to visit their local libraries and explore the opportunities there, particularly in the digital area. Mrs Cooper added that work was ongoing to seek to link libraries with children's centres and combine services to give a 'cradle to grave' service. This could signpost new parents registering a birth to other children's services and projects to encourage early reading. She added that libraries could identify and support local students' needs, for example by offering a homework club, as in some other EU countries;
 - d) in response to a question about digitalisation of collections, Mr Pearson explained that Kent needed to secure the permission and agreement of any other party depositing an item before digitalising it to add to Kent's collection, and would charge the other party for the cost of the process;
 - e) in response to a question about how older people in sheltered accommodation could be helped to access a library service within their premises, Mr Pearson explained that a range of services were being developed to support such communities, such as supplying a box of books to a residential or nursing home, with the contents of the box being refreshed regularly, and the Home Library Service. However, such services would need to be sufficiently used if they were to be retained and continued. The SELMS scheme allowed libraries to borrow books from each other, to keep their local supply fresh, and could also serve readers requiring books in other languages. Borrowing such books

from a larger library already serving a wider and more established cultural diversity could save smaller libraries from having to source and fund their own collections from scratch;

- f) asked what input library staff had been able to have into the development or delivery of the specification, Mr Pearson explained that staff workshops and feedback had been a priority in delivering the national ambition and developing the LRA specification;
- g) in response to a comment about front-line staff not knowing about the availability of, or how to operate, a hearing loop, and a concern about general awareness of disability and social inclusion issues, Mr Pearson emphasised that a key point of the LRA service specification was that services should be available to all. The challenge of delivering this was that data for library users, and their satisfaction with the service, was only recorded where there was engagement with the lending service; people who had attended a library to use a computer, for example, would not generate data about their visit. Satisfaction surveys were a key part of developing the service, and work was in hand to improve the wording of these. However, people would need to feel comfortable about registering their disability and discussing their needs before they could be encouraged to do so. Disabled service users had recorded very positive comments about how they had been treated and supported when using their local library;
- h) although undertaking an EQIA was a vital part of identifying needs and shaping a service to meet them, the County Council should be proactive and strive to exceed the requirements of the EQIA;
- i) library premises were much used by community groups, but such groups could make more use of other civic buildings if opening times could be more flexible around evenings and weekends. Asked if a 'trusted key holder' scheme could help with this, Mr Pearson explained that some buildings were currently being accessed using such arrangements. He undertook to look into the feasibility of opening parts of larger buildings while sealing off access to other, staff-only areas; and
- j) asked how the Summer Reading Challenge could be continued through the rest of the year, Mr Pearson explained that schools were being encouraged to see how they could sustain children's reading habits, perhaps by establishing a yearly themed reading scheme, in partnership with local libraries. Such schemes could be kept going if there were sufficient local support and demand for them. In addition, the Kent Digital Playground would focus on children and young people from disadvantaged communities.

4. The Deputy Cabinet Member, Mrs Hohler, thanked Members for their thoughtful contributions and a good debate. She recommended a scheme run by libraries in New York, in which displays at the library were tied in with course work at local schools, and parties of school children would be taken to the library as part of their course work.

5. RESOLVED that the progress made by the Libraries, Registration and Archives service in 2016-17 be noted and welcomed, with Members'

comments above being noted, and the proposed service specification for 2017-18 be endorsed.

15. Regional Growth Fund Programmes and Framework for Monitoring Report *(Item 13)*

- 1) Mr Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, introduced the report and welcomed questions. He advised that due to the quantity of information within the report, a separate briefing would be required to look at this issue solely. The briefing would include what had happened in the past, the lessons learned and the current position of the recycle fund.
- 2) Jacqui Ward, Strategic Programme Manager (Business Investment), discussed the report and the following comments were made:
 - i. Members were advised that they were able to meet outside of the Committee to discuss the report further if they had any concerns.
 - ii. All though the creating of jobs and safeguarded jobs was amber on the Performance Dashboard, Ms Ward reassured the Committee that the report provided by RGF presented the two issues as green.
 - iii. The report provided a summary of all three programs monitored by BIS (Business, Innovation and Skills), focusing on; Jobs Creation, Safeguarding, monitoring of targets with regards to defrayment of funds out the door to customers and businesses of Kent and the private sector leverage because all funds through the RGF program require match funding.
 - iv. The format of the report was created in conjunction with Members of the Committee and the Business Investment Team to ensure that the statistics provided were those requested allowing an overview of how the program was performing.
 - v. The recycled funds had moved into a new phase of putting the three programs together. This was now within the public domain as the 'Kent and Medway Business Fund.' Jacqui Ward welcomed feedback on the format and ways of reporting on the performance of the new fund. Reasons for maintaining the current format had allowed comparative through previous reports and from the start of the program in 2012.
- 3) Members discussed the report and the following comments were made:
 - i. The Chairman advised Members that there would be a separate briefing relating to the format of the report. Following this, Members would be able to identify what was imperative and must be included within the report if the format were to change.
 - ii. A Member wished it be noted that if a company was relaxed in its process with returns or making a re-payment, there must be a face-to-face consultation and not an email. Jacqui Ward advised that there was a process in place

whereby she and a member of the team would do a site visit to the company in question and this was outlined within the report.

- iii. A Member commented on the informative site visits and hoped that these continue to be organised.

16. Work Programme 2017/18

(Item 14)

- 1) The Chairman welcomed suggestions and comments from the Committee and asked for Members views on which items should be brought to future meetings of the Growth Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee.
- 2) Members suggested holding a Members Briefing for the new Members and to have an update on Infrastructure issues within Kent County Council.
- 3) Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport welcomed Infrastructure items to future Growth Economic Development and Communities meetings.
- 4) RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2017-2018 be noted.