

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 on Thursday, 15 November 2018.

PRESENT: Mr A M Ridgers (Chairman), Mrs R Binks, Mr A Booth, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr A Cook, Mr D Farrell, Mr S Holden (Vice-Chairman), Mrs T Dean, MBE (Substitute) (Substitute for Mr A J Hook), Mr J A Kite, MBE, Mr G Lymer, Mr P J Messenger and Mr J Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance and Mr P M Hill, OBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport) and Mr D Smith (Director of Economic Development) and Miss G Little (Democratic Services Officer).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

105. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

Apologies were received from Mr S Manion, Mrs P Beresford, Mr A Bowles and Mr A Hook. Mrs T Dean attended as a substitute for Mr A Hook.

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

(Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest received

107. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2018

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 5 September 2018 are a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

108. Future Meeting Dates for 2019/20

(Item)

It was RESOLVED that the Committee noted that the following dates had been reserved for its meetings in 2019/20:

Thursday 9 May 2019

Wednesday 26 June 2019

Friday 13 September 2019

Thursday 28 November 2019

Friday 17 January 2020

Tuesday 10 March 2020

Friday 8 May 2020

All meetings would take place at County Hall, Maidstone, and would commence at 10.00 am

109. Verbal updates by Cabinet Members and Corporate Director

(Item 5)

1. Mr Hill, OBE (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services) announced the following:
 - (a) Tonbridge Library which had undergone a refurbishment was re-opened to the public on 1st October 2018;
 - (b) the Jasmin Vardiom Dance Company celebrated its 20th anniversary on 22nd October 2018. Mr Hill applauded the success of the of company and welcomed its permanent location in Ashford, Kent; and
 - (c) the Libraries, Registration and Archive (LRA) Service received the Customer Service Excellence Award. The new criteria that had been implemented and assessed by Compliance Plus demonstrated the LRA's ongoing improvement and the positive impact of its services on local communities.
2. Mr Mark Dance (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) announced the following:
 - (a) The Kent Property Market Review was unveiled at Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone, and was well attended by key figures from Kent's property sector. The Property Market Report identified that investment activity had increased in Kent as smaller businesses were becoming increasingly attracted to the affordability and connectivity that Kent offered. House prices within Thanet had also increased by 7% which was above the national average. Mr Dance agreed to circulate the Property Market Booklet to Members of the Committee;
 - (b) the 2018 edition of the MegaGrowth 50 award was attended by Kent County Council. The event showcased a variety of privately-owned industries which had successfully increased their turnover growth within the county and shared their experience and accomplishments of international exportation; and
 - (c) that the Kent Design and Developments Awards announced the University of Kent's Sibson Building as project of the year.

110. Libraries, Registration and Archives Draft Strategy including Proposal for a New Library Tiering Model

(Item 6)

James Pearson (Head of Libraries, Registration and Archives) and Jackie Taylor-Smith (Strategic Manager Business Development Libraries, Registration and Archives) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr M Hill, OBE (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services) introduced the report that outlined the key features of the draft Libraries, Registrations and Archives (LRA) Strategy which included the proposal for a new Library tiering model and revised opening hours. The report also provided details on the proposed public consultation process to gain feedback on the strategy and proposals. Mr Hill highlighted the importance of libraries, the impact they had on helping to tackle social isolation and the ambition to encourage greater responsibility on Kent's partner agencies and volunteers to manage the operation of library services outside of normal staffing hours. Mr Hill thanked the Members Working Group, chaired by Mrs Hohler (Deputy Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services) that helped to develop the ambitions and detail of the strategy.
2. Mrs S Hohler paid further tribute to the Members Working Group and commended the work of the LRA service and the pivotal role it played within the community.
3. Before the commencement of the discussion, Mr Pearson informed the committee that a revised version of the LRA Strategy was circulated as a supplementary appendix on the grounds that it contained inaccuracies regarding library opening hours. Mr Pearson assured the committee that the error was immediately rectified and that all public consultation material was corrected. Mr Pearson proceeded to the report and drew Members attention to the strategy overview which set out the priorities for the LRA Service. The key principles of the strategy were to retain and maximise the use of the LRA's community network of buildings, explore the potential for working with partners in the delivery of services and optimise library opening hours through a new library tiering model. The key highlights included New Marketing and promotional approach, digital strategy development, archive digitisation and a service that continues to innovate. The table in Appendix A provided a summary of the five agreed ambition statements and the associated proposals included within the strategy. Mr Pearson assured Members that whilst there would be an overall reduction in library opening hours across the county of 20%, the tiering model would optimise library performance and create a revenue saving of up to £1 million.
4. Mrs Taylor-Smith said that the consultation period would run for a 10-week period from Wednesday 21 November 2018 and would be will be promoted on the Kent County Council website and at all service points. During the consultation period, the LRA service would also facilitate a number of drop-in sessions at its library centres should the public or staff wish to discuss the proposals within the strategy.
 - (a) In response to concerns regarding the benefit and cost of public consultations, Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport) said that the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) commissioned a compulsory library toolkit for Councils; should the GET Directorate fail to complete each stage of the process the Council could face judiciary review. In addition, Mr Pearson said that that the LRA service had worked in conjunction with the Strategic Commissioning's Analytics team and the consultation team to carry out an intelligence led review, however, a

positive aspect of the consultation was the opportunity to engage directly with the people of Kent regarding the future direction of the whole service and ensuring that their views were incorporated in the final strategy.

- (b) Mr Pearson said that the LRA Service had briefed staff on the strategy a week ago and the possible implications that the strategy may have on them should the proposals be implemented. The LRA management team were in the process of speaking to staff and would continue to engage with staff should they have any concerns. Staff have also been involved in workshops to develop the ambition statements the strategy is built on.
- (c) With regards to whether a volunteer toolkit could be commissioned to further accommodate the public use of library centres outside of staffing hours, Mrs Taylor-Smith said that the Library Extra pilot scheme used technology assisted opening facilities which allowed members of the public to access library centres outside of staffed hours. The results of the Library Extra scheme would be evaluated in August 2019 and presented to the committee in due course. In addition, Mr Pearson assured the committee that volunteering was pivotal part of the LRA services succession planning and was a key feature within the strategy. The LRA service hoped to develop new opportunities for its volunteers and was looking at ways to equip both staff and volunteers with the necessary skills needed.
- (d) In response to members requests for the data regarding the library tiering model, Mrs Taylor-Smith said that the data was available for each site and this would be published online as part of the public consultation in due course.
- (e) Mrs Cooper informed the committee that the LRA Service was primarily responsible for evaluating library premises and therefore determined how these could be utilised more efficiently. Whilst the Property team would need to be involved, Mrs Cooper asked that Members direct all their inquiries regarding library property to Mr Pearson.
- (f) Members commended the work of the officers and the local authority for the value it places on its library services.

5. RESOLVED that the draft strategy and proposals for public consultation, be noted.

111. Turner Prize (Item 7)

Karen Eslea (Head of Learning and Visitor Experience, Turner Contemporary) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Eslea (Head of Learning and Visitor Experience, Turner Contemporary) presented a series of slides that exhibited the significance of the Turner prize award ceremony. The prize was best renowned for triggering public debate around new developments in contemporary British art and following its successful

bid, the Turner Contemporary in Thanet would host the Turner Prize awards ceremony in December 2019.

- (a) In response to Members request for additional information on the impact that the Tuner Contemporary has had on children visiting the gallery, Mrs Eslea said that the Tuner Contemporary offered a number of workshops to schools, all of which were delivered by the galleries trained Philosophers. Inspired by JMW Turner's spirit of enquiry, the Tuner offered a unique range of educational activities, events and projects that empowered children to take control of their own learning, whether this be through hand-on exploration or philosophical enquiries, the Tuner gallery tailored its school visits to be led by the children. The Turner had also taken a lead on international training, inspiring the Tate Modern and galleries in Oslo to adapt their way of working. Further to this, the E-programme funded by the Heritage Lottery fund and Arts Council enabled children in Ramsgate from disadvantaged wards to research the history of Ramsgate harbour and used their work to inspire and lead change within Kent.
- (b) Mr D Smith (Director of Economic Development) assured Members that work was being carried out in conjunction with Tuner Contemporary, Thanet District Council and Southeastern Railway to facilitate the increase of visitors and traffic to Thanet during the event.
- (c) In response to questions regarding the number of international visitors and the impact this had on Kent, Mrs Eslea said that the Turner Contemporary used an intelligence led approach to research and record data on all its visitors. Statistics revealed that 7% of the Tuner Contemporary's visitors were international, however, targets were in place to increase international visits. The Turner Contemporary worked in partnership with other facilitators across the country to ensure its exhibitions coincided with other events to increase visitor attraction and expenditure within Kent.
- (d) With regards to the provisions in place to assist with international visitors, Mrs Eslea said that research was being conducted in conjunction with Creative Coast to look at how Turner Contemporary could better facilitate international visitors. The Turner Contemporary was also consulting with its in-house Community Access Group to review ways in which the Turner Contemporary could improve its accessibility to both national and international visitors ahead of the Turner Prize exhibition in 2019.

- 2. RESOLVED that the information set out in the presentation and given in response to comments and questions be noted.

112. Kent Guilds: Presentation

(Item 8)

- 1. The Chairman informed the Committee that the item 'Kent Guilds Presentation' had been deferred.

2. Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport) confirmed that the item would be presented at the next Cabinet Committee on 17 January 2019.
3. RESOLVED that a report and presentation detailing the Kent Guilds, be presented to the Committee in January 2019.

113. Performance Dashboard

(Item 9)

Barbara Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs B Cooper introduced the Performance Dashboard which showed progress made against targets set for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and referred, in particular, to the summary on page 136.
2. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

114. Preparing the evidence to support a Kent and Medway Enterprise and Productivity strategy

(Item 10)

David Smith (Director of Economic Development) and Johanna Howarth (Deputy Director of Economic Development) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr S Holden (Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Development) introduced the report which provided the committee with an update on the proposed approach to engagement and evidence gathering that would support the development of the Kent and Medway Enterprise and Productivity Strategy.
2. Mrs J Howarth highlighted to Members that the main objective of the strategy was to evidence and address the underlying causes of Kent and Medway's comparatively low productivity levels compared to Kent's international competitors. Mrs Howarth directed Members to Appendix A of the report which outlined the work required to be undertaken by consultants and the expected timeframe for completion.
 - (a) Mrs Howarth confirmed that tenders for the consultants were due to be received on 19 November 2018 and appointments would be made by early December 2018.
 - (b) In response to queries regarding whether there would be additional financial implications, Mr Smith confirmed that the GET Directorate had identified a budget of £49,000 with the intent of procuring a high-quality service from the chosen consultancy company. However, should there be a necessity for additional funding, the decision to increase spend would be considered in due course.

- (c) Members queried the decision made to form a Leader's Working Group opposed to a cross-party working group to look at the Kent and Medway Enterprise and Productivity Strategy; and sought assurance from the General Counsel regarding the governance and membership of the groups. Mr Holden (Chairman of the Enterprise and Productivity Leader's Working Group) advised Members of the Committee that the group was not a sub-committee of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee, it was solely established for the purpose of providing assurance and administrative support to the Leader. Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport) agreed to seek advice from the General Counsel.
- (d) In response to concerns regarding the strategy's 2050-time horizon, Mr Smith informed the Committee that shorter timescales proved to be impractical for the necessary planning and implementation of large infrastructure. Therefore, Kent County Council and the Government agreed that the Kent and Medway Enterprise and Productivity Strategy coincide with the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission. The time horizon would be reviewed in 2020 and would continue to be reviewed on a five-year basis to ensure that Kent County Council met increased performance objectives and could afford its aspirations.

3. RESOLVED that:

- (a) the evidence gathering commission be noted; and
- (b) the General Counsels guidance be sought regarding the governance and membership of Working Groups.

115. Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) Update
(Item 11)

David Smith (Director of Economic Development and Sarah Nurden (KMEP Strategic Programme Manager) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr M Dance (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) introduced the report that provided Members with an update on the latest activity and response from Kent County Council to Government concerning the reforms to leadership, governance, accountability, financial reporting and geographical boundaries within the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).
2. Mrs S Nurden informed the Committee that the Government issued a report in July 2018 that set out a series of commitments and reforms to be implemented by LEPs before April 2019. In September 2018 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government held a workshop and announced that the governance work would form part of a three-strand policy by Government. The first strand would be reforming the governance of LEPs to ensure that the role of the LEP was appropriate; the second strand focused on the strategy whereby Government anticipated that LEPs would write local industrial strategies by March 2020; and the third strand looked at the UK shared prosperity fund, whereby Government

would expect to see the local industrial strategies, written by the LEPs, acting as key drivers in pulling down the UK shared prosperity funding. Mrs Nurden directed Members to the appendices within the report which contained the letter from the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership (KMEP) to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) regarding the retainment of geographical boundaries of the LEPs, the draft SELEP implementation plan, and the letter from the County Councils Network (CCN) to the Secretaries of State to retain local authority representation on the LEP. Mrs Nurden said that there had been no indication of Minister's reactions following the submission of the SELEP implementation plan, however, sought agreement from Members to report on the Government's response at a future Committee.

- (a) In response to Members request for clarity as to what the Government aimed to achieve through its series of reforms, Mr Smith said that this had been challenged by Council Leaders (as set out in appendix A) as there was no clear fault that the proposal aimed to remedy. The key concern was that the Government sought to achieve greater accountability in LEPs through local authority representation whilst at the same time, dilute the local authority's role in the development of the strategy. Mr Smith assured Members that the accountability of Kent County Council and the decisions it took fell within the terms of the County Council's procedures and rules. Kent County Council was not dictated to by SELEP, the SELEP was a vehicle where the views of a number of interests could be brought together to produce a strategy and form bids to Government for finance. Mr Smith said that the LEP did not obstruct the traditional reporting process to scrutiny committee, Full Council or Cabinet Committees and assured Members that the accountable body of the local authority continued to report in line with Council procedures.
- (b) Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport) said that both the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee and the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee were informed of all key decisions taken by Kent County Council. Whether the decision was a Kent County Council generated scheme, a SELEP scheme or Department for Transport Scheme, the GET directorate ensured that full governance was applied.
- (c) In response to questions about LEP transparency and accountability, Mrs Nurden offered Members the opportunity to liaise outside of the meeting regarding any questions or concerns they wished to address.

3. RESOLVED that the update report be noted.

116. Regional Growth Fund (RGF) Programmes Monitoring Report (Item 12)

David Smith (Director of Economic Development) and Martyn Riley (Programme Manager) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr D Smith introduced the report which provided a summary of Kent County Council's monitoring returns from companies that received loans from the three Regional Growth Fund programmes for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018.

- (a) Mr M Riley assured Members that efforts had been made to recover the maximum amount of loan value from companies that were in the process of going into administration. Advice had been sought from Kent Invicta Law and Kent County Council's Internal Audit team to ensure that all mechanisms of debt recovery were legally applied.

2. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

117. Work Programme 2018 - 2019

(Item 13)

1. RESOLVED that the work programme be noted subject to the inclusion of:
 - (a) A presentation on the performance of guilds; and
 - (b) Update on the preparedness to respond to Brexit – Transport, Borders and Emergency Planning