

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 21 January 2020

PRESENT: Mr B J Sweetland (Chairman), Mr R A Marsh (Vice-Chairman), Mr P V Barrington-King, Mr R H Bird, Mr T Bond, Mr N J D Chard, Mr G Cooke, Mrs M E Crabtree, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr D Farrell, Mr P W A Lake, Mr H Rayner and Mr I Thomas

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M A C Balfour and Mrs S Prendergast

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr V Bhatia (FM Commissioning Lead), Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director Strategic & Corporate Services), Ms Z Cooke (Corporate Director of Finance), Ms R Kennard (Chief Analyst, Strategic Commissioning Analytics), Ms E Sanderson (Strategic Business Adviser), Mr D Shipton (Head of Finance - Planning, Policy & Strategy), Mrs R Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mr B Watts (General Counsel), Mr D Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) and Miss E West (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

207. Membership

(Item 2)

Mr M Payne had formally resigned as a Member of the Committee.

208. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 3)

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr P Oakford and Mr D Murphy. Mr M Balfour attended as a representative for Mr P Oakford.

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

(Item 4)

No declarations of interest had been received.

210. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2019

(Item 5)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee meeting held on 8 November 2019 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

211. Minutes of the Property-Sub Committee meeting held on 17 December 2019

(Item 6)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Property-Sub Committee meeting held on 17 December 2019 be noted.

212. Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee Meeting Dates for 2020/21 - For Information Only
(Item 7)

RESOLVED that the 2020/2021 meeting dates for the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee be noted.

213. Draft Capital Programme 2020-23 and Revenue Budget 2020-21
(Item 8)

Ms Cooke (Corporate Director of Finance) and Mr Shipton (Head of Finance (Policy, Planning & Strategy)) were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Balfour (Deputy Cabinet Member for Corporate and Traded Services), Mrs Prendergast (Cabinet Member for Communications, Engagement and People) and Mr Shipton introduced the report which provided Members with the opportunity to comment on the Draft Budget proposals for 2020-21 and make recommendations prior to presentation at Cabinet on 27 January 2020 and full Council on 13 February 2020.

Officers then responded to comments and questions from Members, including the following: -

- (a) Mr Shipton stated that Kent were awaiting announcements for departmental grants and for capital allocations for future years and therefore had estimated how much would be received. The estimated figures were those in italics within the budget book.
- (b) Ms Cooke referred to the awaited announcement from Public Health England in relation to the funding for 2020 and stated that there was no clarity as to when the announcement would be received. She added that Kent County Council continued to lobby both directly and through the Directors of Public Health and the Society of County Treasurers in relation to the funding.

- (2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

214. Updating the Strategy and Policy Control Framework
(Item 9)

Ms Sanderson (Strategic Business Adviser (Corporate)) and Mr Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Whittle and Ms Sanderson introduced the report which set out the changes to the Strategy and Policy Control Framework and the review which had been undertaken.

Officers then responded to comments and questions from Members, including the following: -

- (a) Ms Sanderson confirmed that archived documents were not held on the Council's external website to minimise the risk of individuals accessing and quoting out of date documents. Mr Watts added that a project would be carried out in the near future in relation to ensuring that the Council's historic data was accessible and clear.
- (b) Mr Watts emphasised the importance of equality considerations in relation to decision making and suggested that a proposal be submitted to the Selection and Members Services Committee for Members to debate.
- (c) Mr Whittle referred to point 7g within Appendix A and confirmed that 'equality considerations' related to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). He added that the completion of EqIA's was a local policy choice and stated that there were different ways in which services could demonstrate equality considerations.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

215. Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate Performance Dashboard (Item 10)

Ms Kennard (Chief Analyst, Strategic Commissioning Analytics) was in attendance for this item

- (1) Ms Kennard introduced the report which set out progress made against targets set for Key Performance Indicators.

Officers then responded to comments and questions from Members, including the following: -

- (a) Mr Watts referred to the significant amount of activity expected of the Council in relation to Freedom of Information Governance since the implementation of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), and the prioritisation of various activities to deliver performance targets within the financial year.
- (b) Mr Watts referred to the Council's Technology project which aimed to change the way in which both information and responses were provided. He added that Kent County Council would be working alongside the Council's technology partner, Microsoft, to create a mechanism that published responses onto the Council's website at the same time as sending out information to the individual requester, which in turn would provide Members with the opportunity to access information that had been responded to in relation to any other query on the Council's website.
- (c) Mr Watts said that two Information Governance graduates had been appointed to look at ways in which Strategic and Corporate Services use and work with data. He added that part of their activity for the next year would involve conversations with Members to understand the types of data

that Members were interested to see to aid in the design of the future technology platform.

- (d) Mr Watts referred to the ever-increasing number of Freedom of Information requests that the Council received and confirmed that he would circulate further information to Members of the Committee outside of the meeting in relation to the matter. He emphasised the importance and value of discussions relating to GDPR and thanked officers and Members for their engagement in discussions and for continuing to meet statutory GDPR duties. He confirmed that regular update reports on the matter would be submitted to future meetings of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, Members generally supported this.
 - (e) Mrs Spore referred to the increase in the number of calls to the ICT Helpdesk and confirmed that she would circulate a detailed breakdown of the ICT Helpdesk's call trends outside of the meeting. She specifically referred to the implementation of a number of key change programmes during the last year, for example, the Windows 10 upgrade and roll out, which had significantly impacted the number of calls received by the ICT Helpdesk. Mr Watts confirmed that he would be attending a meeting with Microsoft on 24th January 2020 to devise an action plan which would be circulated to Committee Members once completed.
 - (f) Mr Watts confirmed that he would liaise with the Council's Corporate Management Team in relation to the information projected onto the Council's website.
 - (g) Mr Watts emphasised the importance of ensuring that data contained within the Council's website was easily accessible.
 - (h) Mr Watts referred to the variation in FOI requests and said that many of the requests received over the last year had been driven by specific, local issues. He added that a Monitoring Officer group had been established between Kent County Council and like-sized authorities to share best practice and expertise in relation to Freedom of Information Governance.
 - (i) Mrs Prendergast (Cabinet Member for Communications, Engagement and People) referred to the nature and complexity of some of the FOI requests received which contributed to response delays and reiterated comments made by Mr Watts in relation to next steps.
 - (j) Mrs Spore referred to the 'Percentage of rent due to KCC outstanding over 60 days' indicator within the performance dashboard and confirmed that she could provide a trend breakdown to Committee Members outside of the meeting.
- (2) A Member commended the ICT Helpdesk for the excellent, seamless service that they provided to Members.
- (3) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

216. Work Programme 2020/21

(Item 11)

RESOLVED that the work programme for 2020/21 be noted, subject to the inclusion of the following: -

- Freedom of Information Governance (Increased ICT demand)

217. Exclusion of the Press and Public

(Item)

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Exempt Items

(open access to minutes)

218. Total Facilities Management

(Item 12)

Mrs Spore (Director of Infrastructure) and Mr Bhatia (FM Commissioning Lead) were in attendance for this item

- (3) Mrs Spore and Mr Bhatia introduced the report which set out the future options for the Facilities Management Service and the latest performance position for the current service performance.
- (4) Mrs Spore briefly referred to the financial aspects of the contract, expectations, engagement and partnership working, building maintenance and sustainability.
- (5) Mrs Spore responded to a question which related to security and the different elements that the security was made up of.
- (6) Mrs Spore confirmed that further information would be provided to Committee Members outside of the meeting in relation to uncapped deductions and a procurement timeline.
- (7) Mrs Spore and Mr Balfour (Deputy Cabinet Member for Corporate and Traded Services) responded to a question which related to the delivery of value for money for Kent and meeting statutory responsibilities.
- (8) Mr Balfour suggested that a discussion take place at the agenda setting meeting in relation to voluntary sector involvement.
- (9) Mr Rayner proposed, and Mr Bond seconded the following recommendation:

“The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee recommends to Mr Oakford, as the Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, that he looks carefully at the proposed level of complexity of the proposed new contracts from October 2021 currently under consideration, in particular, the potential impact

upon the ease of administration of these contracts where hard and soft service provision is split.”

(10) The amended recommendation was agreed without a vote.

(11) RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services looks carefully at the proposed level of complexity of the proposed new contracts from October 2021 currently under consideration, in particular, the potential impact upon the ease of administration of these contracts where hard and soft service provision is split.