

The decisions set out in these minutes will come into force, and may then be implemented at 12 noon on the fourth working day after the publication of the decision, unless the decision is subject to call-in.

Date of publication: 26 January 2010

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

EAST KENT (JOINT ARRANGEMENTS) COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday, 20th January, 2010
at 10.00 am in The Guildhall, Westgate, Canterbury**

Present: Councillor P Watkins, Dover District Council (Chairman)

Councillor R Bliss, Shepway District Council
Councillor J Gilbey, Canterbury City Council
Councillor A King, Kent County Council
Councillor R Latchford, Thanet District Council
Councillor J Law, Canterbury City Council
Councillor D Monk, Shepway District Council
Councillor F Scales, Dover District Council
Councillor G Cowan, Dover District Council

Officers:	Chief Executive	Canterbury City Council
	Chief Executive	Dover District Council
	Chief Executive	Shepway District Council
	Chief Executive	Thanet District Council
	Director of Corporate Services	Canterbury City Council
	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Canterbury City Council
	Head of Policy and Improvement	Canterbury City Council
	Assistant Head of Democratic Services	Canterbury City Council
	Head of Finance and ICT	Dover District Council
	Public Policy	Kent County Council
	Director of Customer Services and Business Transformation	Thanet District Council
	Press and Media Manager	Thanet District Council

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Councillors Ezekiel and Carter.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

30. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

No Substitute Members were present.

31. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

32. MINUTES OF THE EAST KENT (JOINT SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

The Chairman invited Councillor Cowan, as chairman of the East Kent (Joint Scrutiny) Committee, to present the minutes. Councillor Cowan said that it was the second time the Joint Scrutiny Committee had considered the report. The first time they had rejected the recommendations on the basis of a lack of information. The committee was advised that the second meeting had been attended by the four east Kent district Chief Executives, who each offered their view on the strategic case. He said the committee also considered the supplementary report, which set out the concerns of Shepway District Council and the project team response. He said the committee had drawn attention to a number of specific concerns, which were summarised in a proposal put to the joint scrutiny committee at the end of the debate. They were: a lack of detail on actual costs; lack of detail on how savings would be achieved, concern over democratic accountability, the potential cost to exit a shared service arrangement and a concern that other options had not been considered. He said if the services included in the first tranche of the strategic case were managed in the same fashion as the existing joint projects such as housing, waste and HR, then in his view there would have been broad support. He stated that when the proposal was put to the committee, there was a 6-6 vote and that as Chair he was not afforded the opportunity of a casting vote. He said he supported the principle of joint working but also supported the concerns as set out in the proposal.

The Chairman asked Councillor Cowan whether, if the concerns were addressed during the implementation phase, with the exception of the costs of exiting the arrangements, was his view that the Joint Scrutiny Committee would have accepted the recommendations? Councillor Cowan responded that there was general support for the principle of joint working and if the questions had been addressed then the feeling of the Committee may have been different. He confirmed that he would be happy for the project to continue if the concerns were addressed as part of ongoing work.

The committee received the minutes and thanked Councillor Cowan for his contribution.

33. EAST KENT JOINT SERVICES STRATEGIC CASE AND SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

It was explained to the committee by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Canterbury) that the strategic case was the same paper as that endorsed on 18 December, subject to the concerns of Shepway District Council being considered. He drew attention to the supplementary report, in which the project team had responded to the points raised by Shepway, insofar as they were able to do so. He said the nature of the report was that it was a strategic case and therefore there was a degree of detail to be worked up. He said it provided a framework within which

decisions could be taken and offered a different approach to that used on the previous East Kent projects. The committee was asked to consider whether there was anything in the supplementary report or the Joint Scrutiny minutes that caused it to reconsider its recommendations.

In response, Councillor Bliss said that Shepway's position was as stated in the supplementary report and they had not ruled out joining the process at a later date. Councillor Gilbey said Canterbury had looked at the process and taken a view that it was part of the financial savings needed for future years. He said in his view, the process needed to be accelerated and therefore he was content to go ahead with the approach as proposed, with the safeguards described in the report. Councillor Latchford said Thanet was in a similar position to Canterbury. He said he supported the strategic case as drafted, and looked forward to moving ahead with the project. Councillor Scales said that Dover recognised that the strategic case was an ongoing piece of work and given the anticipated financial pressures in future years, he was supportive of the need to move forward with the strategic case. Councillor King said that although Kent County Council was not party to this particular agreement, he commended the principle of joint working and said that he hoped this particular proposal would reveal what could be achieved by working together. He said he was supportive of joint working across Kent, including the involvement of other public sector organisations where appropriate.

It was then proposed and duly seconded that having considered the comments in response to minute 27 (j) of the East Kent Joint Arrangements Committee, and noted the comments set out in the East Kent Joint Scrutiny minutes of 14 January 2010, the Committee agreed that the report now go forward to each council as per the recommendations (a) to (i) made on 18 December 2009.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.17 am