

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, 19 September 2023

PRESENT: Mr R J Thomas, Mr P V Barrington-King, Mr D L Brazier, Ms M Dawkins, Mr M Dendor (Vice-Chairman), Mr A J Hook, Rich Lehmann, Mr H Rayner, Dr L Sullivan, Mr M Whiting and Mr B J Sweetland

ALSO PRESENT: Mr R Gough, Mr P Oakford, and Mr D Jeffrey

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Deputy Chief Executive), Mrs R Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mr B Watts (General Counsel), Mr D Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance), Miss K Reynolds (Democratic Services Officer), Mr Easthope, Ms L McPherson, Miss K Phillips (Strategic Business Adviser - GET), Wagner (Interim Chief Analyst) and Ms Z Cooke (Corporate Director of Finance)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

162. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Bond, Mr McInroy, Mr Stepto, Mr Bartlett, Mr Cannon and Mr Chard. Mr Sweetland was present as substitute for Mr Chard.

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

(Item 3)

In relation to agenda item 9, Mr Rayner declared an interest as a Life Member of the RLI.

164. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023

(Item 4)

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023 are correctly recorded and they be signed by the Vice Chair. There were no matters arising.

165. Election of Chair

(Item 5)

1. Mr Dendor proposed, and Mr Thomas seconded that Mr Brazier be elected Chairman of the Cabinet Committee.
2. It was agreed unanimously that Mr Brazier be elected Chairman of the Cabinet Committee.

3. RESOLVED that Mr Brazier be elected Chairman of the Cabinet Committee

166. Performance Dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department

(Item 6)

1. Mr Roger Gough, Mr David Whittle and Mr Matt Wagner introduced the report which showed performance for the Chief Executive's Department (CED) and Deputy Chief Executive's Department (DCED) against targets set for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). 21 of the 27 KPIs achieved target for the latest month and were RAG (Red/Amber/Green) rated Green, two were below target but did achieve the floor standard (Amber) and four did not achieve the floor standard (Red). A brief overview of the Red rated KPIs was provided to the Committee.
2. In response to questions and comments from Members it was said that:
 - a) The calculation of the Red rated 'GL02: Freedom of Information Act (FOI) requests completed within 20 working days' KPI was based on the responses provided for the relevant period. It was said that an overview of the FOIs received during this period could be provided to Members in the Information Governance Briefing. This would include information on the relationship between the subjects of the FOI requests and complaints received.
 - b) In relation to 'CS07: Complaints responded to in timescale', it was said that different action plans had been put in place to reduce backlogs within the different directorates. Significant improvement had been made in Growth, Environment and Transportation since the introduction of these additional measures. This was likely to be reflected in the next set of results.
 - c) Further information could be provided to the Committee regarding the number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) included in the Red rated 'FN07: Invoices received by Accounts Payable within 15 days of KCC received date' KPI.
 - d) The trend in 'FN06: Percentage of sundry debt due to KCC outstanding over 6 months old' was not unusual. Members expressed an interest in an informal briefing on this KPI.
3. RESOLVED to note the performance position for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department.

167. Information Governance Update

(Item 7)

1. Mr Ben Watts introduced the paper. Members were asked to provide the clerk with any further areas of interest for the briefing by no later than 4pm on 29 September 2023.
2. It was requested that the 'Use of AI in decision making' be added to the agenda for the briefing.
3. RESOLVED to note the update and agree that an update paper be brought to the next meeting.

168. Artificial Intelligence Interim Policy

(Item 8)

1. Mr Roger Gough and Mr David Whittle introduced the paper which summarised the reasons for developing a policy about KCC's use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). It was confirmed following consultation with the Corporate Management Team that this was not an interim policy. Instead, it would be introduced as a permanent policy to be reviewed regularly; to evolve as necessary in response to national and legislative developments. It was said that the policy aimed to consider both the risks and opportunities presented by AI. It was highlighted that there would be further work required to establish assurance where third party providers made use of AI. This was not a KCC-specific risk.
2. In response to questions and comments from Members it was said that:
 - a) In relation to accountability, it was highlighted that the outputs of AI are heavily impacted by the human decisions made in its design. Therefore, the policy emphasised that all staff would have a responsibility to maintain transparency in its use. There was a need to consider how this would be done in a proportionate and effective way.
 - b) The use of AI would rely on a management decision, with specific consideration of the restrictions outlined in the policy. Mr Watts reminded the Committee that it remained the responsibility of the Information Asset Owners to put in place the appropriate arrangements to ensure that data management was carried out correctly in their service areas. However, it was agreed that internal communication was necessary to ensure that staff at all levels were aware of their responsibilities in relation to AI.
 - c) It was reiterated that further opportunities for the use of AI would be explored as part of the regular review of the policy.
 - d) The Committee expressed interest in an all-Member training session on the Artificial Intelligence Policy.
3. RESOLVED to note KCC's Artificial Intelligence Policy.

169. 23/00063 - Granting of Lease to Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) for Lifeboat Station in Margate

(Item 9)

1. Mrs Rebecca Spore introduced the report which outlined the proposal to grant a Lease for over 20 years to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) for its Lifeboat Station at The Rendezvous in Margate. It was said that figure in paragraph 8.2 of the report should be '20 years' instead of '200 years'.
2. RESOLVED to consider and endorse the proposed decision to:
 - a) grant the RNLI a new lease of its Lifeboat Station in Margate on terms as outlined in exempt Appendix A; and
 - b) delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise terms for the lease and any related agreements including licences for alterations.

170. Work Programme
(Item 10)

RESOLVED to consider and note the planned work programme for 2023.