

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

---

### POCC IMG

MINUTES of A meeting of the POCC IMG held in Swale 3 - Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 25th June, 2008.

PRESENT: Mr E E C Hotson (Chairman), Ms A Harrison and Mr G Rowe

ALSO PRESENT: Mr C J Law and Mr D Smyth

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Service Manager (Policy Overview)), Mrs S Garton (Head of Corporate Performance), Ms L McMullan (Director of Finance), Mr P D Wickenden (Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager) and Mr A Wood (Head of Financial Management)

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### 1. Programming of Meetings 2009

*(Item 2)*

(1) At the meeting of the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee on 23 May 2008 it was agreed that an Informal Members Group (IMG) would be set up to look at the issue of programming of Policy Overview Committee meetings in 2009. The Members of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee IMG: Budget Issues had also been invited to attend to contribute to the discussion on the programming of the January Budget cycle which included Cabinet Scrutiny.

(2) Members were reminded that the Constitution stated that Policy Overview Committees should, if the business dictates, meet from 10.00am to 4.00pm.

(3) Each of the specific timetabling issues for each of the five cycles of meetings was discussed.

*January cycle*

(4) In relation to the January Budget cycle of meetings, Ms McMullan set out in her discussion paper a suggested timetable which would give Members longer between the launch of the Budget papers by the Cabinet and the respective meeting of the Policy Overview and Cabinet Scrutiny Committees. Members emphasised the importance of having an adequate gap between the last Policy Overview Committee Meeting and Cabinet Scrutiny Committee, so that key issues arising from the Policy Overview Committees could be reported and considered by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee. There was agreement that the meetings of the Policy Overview Committees should be held between 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009, it was noted that the budget timetable was subject to approval by Cabinet.

*March cycle*

(5) Regarding the March 2009 cycle of meetings there were no key issues that affected the programming of these meetings and Members were content to leave them as set out in the draft programme circulated with the agenda papers.

### *June cycle*

(6) Mrs Garton informed Members that although there would not be a need to produce an Annual Plan in 2009, which had affected the timetabling of the Policy Overview Committees in June 2008, guidance was awaited which would set out what would replace the Annual Plan and when it would need to be produced. She stated that she did not believe that it was likely that the replacement for the Annual Plan would need to be produced by the end of June 2009. However, if this did prove to be the case then there was the option in 2009 to revert to having this document considered by the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee. Ms McMullan and Mr Wood explained that in order to give Members the most up to date financial monitoring information they would like to see the meetings of the Policy Overview Committees held in early July 2009. This would also fit in with the County Council elections if they were moved to June 2009 to align them with the European Elections.

### *September cycle*

(7) Regarding the September Policy Overview Committees, Mrs Garton stated that these were specifically timetabled to enable Members to make comments on Towards 2010 before it was received by Cabinet and County Council. She pointed out that last year the contributions made by the Policy Overview Committees had been extremely valuable. Ms McMullan and her colleagues were content to leave these meetings in their current position in September 2009, for the purposes of Financial Monitoring.

### *November cycle*

(8) Members accepted the programming of meetings from 5<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November at the suggestion of Ms McMullan.

### *Financial Information*

(9) The meeting then considered how financial information could best be dealt with by Policy Overview Committees. There was general agreement that the Policy Overview Committees should, if they felt that it would be more conducive to the conduct of their business, establish an IMG to consider the financial monitoring reports. This would enable the reports to be considered at the most appropriate time and any key issues highlighted for more detailed consideration by the Committee. It was suggested that the IMG should be chaired by either the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Policy Overview Committee.

(10) RECOMMENDED that :-

- (a) the attached draft calendar of meeting for the Policy Overview Committees in 2009 be put forward for approval;
- (b) it be made clear to Members of Policy Overview Committees that when key financial matters such as the draft Budget or the Medium Term Plan are on the agenda it is very likely that the meeting will take the full day allocated.

- (c) Policy Overview Committees should, if they feel that it is conducive for the conduct of their business, form an IMG to consider financial reports. The Policy Overview Committees should be able to agree the size of the IMG based on the number of Members interested in being involved. The practice of ensuring that the Chairman of the Policy Overview Committee was a Member of the IMG was commended, and
- (d) on behalf of the IMG a formal request be made to the Leader to approve the proposed Budget timetable for the January 2009 in relation to the Policy Overview and Cabinet Scrutiny Committees.