

By: Overview Scrutiny and Localism Manager
To: Policy Overview Co-Ordinating Committee – 14 February 2008
Subject: **Building Capacity for Policy Overview Committees**
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The Committee's view is sought on the options for building capacity for the Policy Overview Committees.

Introduction

1. (1) The Committee will recall that the effectiveness of Policy Overview Committees was the subject of a report to the County Council on 18 October 2007. This report followed a questionnaire inviting Members of the Policy Overview Committee to complete which the Leader of the Council had commissioned.

(2) Recent meetings of Policy Overview Committees have continued to develop in their role of Policy Development, Performance Monitoring, preparing suggested responses to consultations, etc.

(3) The Committee are reminded that the Constitution provides for meetings of a Policy Overview Committee to meet between 10 am and 4 pm if business needs dictate.

(4) Members will be aware that this has started to cause problems in terms of commitment, particularly for Members of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided last September to prioritise the items in its work programme and through a structured programme increase the knowledge deficit of members so that they have the knowledge and are equipped to perform the role of serving on the Committee effectively. This in turn should help build capacity make more effective use of the time and reduce the length of meetings.

(5) For those Committees that cover the larger Directorates, such as Children, Families and Education POC, the workload is enormous and capacity to deal with all the business in five meetings a year is difficult.

(6) As an illustration, the last three meetings of the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee have been all day meetings, running from 9.00 am or 10.00am until approximately 3.30 pm with up to 17 items on the agenda. Members have rightly raised the issue as to whether this is the most effective way to deal with these important items of business.

Options for Building Capacity

Background

2. (1) Before considering the options for building capacity, the Committee are asked to look at the issues addressed by the Policy Overview Committees and consider whether they were appropriate for the agenda or could they have been dealt with in another way (see Appendix 1). Have Policy Overview Committees got the balance of business for their agendas right? Could the business have been dealt with in another way? How many of the items considered by the Policy Overview Committees contribute to policy development, influence decisions? Do the views of the Policy Overview Committees add value to the outcomes for the County Council and the decision-making process?

Member Information

(2) The Committee are reminded that an Informal Member Group has recently been established to look at how and what information Members require to discharge their role. This piece of work is about building capacity for Members.

Informal Member Steering Group: Member Development

(3) There is also an Informal Member Steering Group: Member Development taking forward an action plan to achieve the South East Employers' Member Development Charter. The Leaders of the political groups signed a commitment on 6 September 2007 to achieving the Charter by March 2009.

(4) This piece of work is also partly about building Member capacity.

Options

(5) Set out below are some possible options to build capacity and enhance the effectiveness of the Policy Overview Committee.

Increase the number of programmed meetings of the Policy Overview Committee

(6) It would of course be possible to programme extra meetings of the Policy Overview Committees in addition to the 5 a year that are currently held for each Policy Overview Committee where they are struggling to conduct their business effectively in one day.

Advantages:-

- This would enable the whole Committee Membership to build on their growing knowledge of their POC area.
- It would be possible to allocate more time for each item as required and/or for the meetings to be shorter and focused on fewer items.

Disadvantages:-

- These dates would need to be fitted into an already busy County Council Committee calendar.

Informal Member Groups or Sub-Committees

(7) As an alternative, Policy Overview Committees could set up either Informal Member Groups (which are not open to the public) or Sub-Committees (which would conduct their business in public) to deal with specific parts of the Committee's business.

Advantages:-

- This would enable there to be more time at the main POC meeting to discuss items that the POC decides to keep on its agenda in more detail.
- It will enable small group of Members to gain expertise in certain areas of the directorate's work;

Disadvantages:-

- It will reduce knowledge base of the whole membership of the Committee, as there is a tendency for Minutes of the IMG or Sub-Committee do not tend to discuss these in detail when submitted to the Policy Overview Committee.
- It will require a greater time commitment from Members who sit on the IMG or Sub-Committee as well as the Policy Overview Committee.

Lead Members on specific topics

(8) The Policy Overview Committee could ask a Member to lead on a specific issue and report back to the Committee or all Members through the Member Information Bulletin.

Resources

3. (1) All of the options set out in paragraph 2 above have resource implications for officers in the Democratic Services Unit and from the Directorate who would be required to service the additional meetings.

(2) Before any changes are made it is suggested that a report is prepared for consideration by the Cabinet and the Chief Officers' Group.

Recommendation:-

4. The Committee's views are sought which will be presented to the Cabinet and Chief Officers' Group.

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Background Information: *None*

ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES POC

List of standard items that are considered at every meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting
 Director's update (oral)
 Update on Select Committee Work Programme

Ad-hoc items considered by POC

| Meeting Date | Item | *Type of item, eg – Consultation/Performance Monitoring/Policy Development/Other |
|--------------------|---|--|
| 1 Feb 07 | Who Pays for Care? | Presentation |
| | Budget 2007/2008 | Consultation |
| | The Future Regulation of Health and Adult Social Care in England – Draft Response to the Department of Health Consultation Document | Consultation/Policy Development |
| | Mental Capacity Act Implementation | Policy Development |
| 24 April 07 | Learning Disability Day Centres - Modernisation | Presentation – Policy Development |
| | Active Lives | Consultation /Policy Development |
| | Kent Adult Social Services Annual Plan 2007/08 | Consultation |
| | Risk Management – Revised Directorate Risk Register | Policy Development |
| | Consultation on Changes to Charging for Home Care and Other Non-residential Services (Domiciliary Care) | Consultation/Policy Development |
| | The Supporting People Programme | Consultation/Policy Development |
| 4 July 07 | Whole System Demonstrator | Presentation – Policy Development |

| Meeting Date | Item | *Type of item, eg – Consultation/Performance Monitoring/Policy Development/Other |
|---------------------|---|---|
| | Kent Adult Social Services Performance – Year Ending March 2007 | Performance Monitoring/Consultation |
| | Equality Strategy | Consultation/Policy Development |
| | CPA – Corporate Assessment briefing | Other |
| 25 Sept 07 | Towards 2010 | Performance Monitoring/Consultation/Policy Development |
| | Response to the Questionnaire on Overview Committees | Consultation/Policy Development |
| 16 Nov 07 | Developments and Progress in Mental Health Services in Kent | Presentation – Policy Development |
| | Kent Adult Social Services - Public Involvement Report | Policy Development/Consultation |
| | Adult Services Annual Complaints Report | Performance Monitoring /Policy Development |
| | Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults | Performance Monitoring /Policy Development |
| | Domiciliary Charging Policy: Response to the Resolutions made by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee | Consultation/Policy Development |
| | The Supporting People Programme | Performance Monitoring /Policy Development |
| | Kent Adult Social Services Budget Monitoring 2007/08 | Performance Monitoring |
| | Medium Term Plan 2008/09 to 2010/11 | Consultation |
| 29 Jan 08 | Description of Budget Setting Process | Presentation |

| Meeting Date | Item | *Type of item, eg – Consultation/Performance Monitoring/Policy Development/Other |
|--------------|--|--|
| | Adult Social Services Budget Monitoring 2007/08 | Performance Monitoring |
| | Budget 2008/09, and Medium Term Plan 2008/09 to 2010/11 | Consultation |
| | Six-monthly Performance Update and Annual Performance Review Report for Adult Social Care | Performance Monitoring |
| | Active Lives | Policy Development |
| | Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Adults) | Policy Development |
| | Day Services for Adults with a Learning Disability: Value for Money Review | Performance Monitoring/Policy Development |
| | Valuing People Now – from Progress to Transformation | Policy Development |
| | “What Makes a Good Day?”: A Plan to Improve Days for People with a Learning Disability in Kent – Consultation Update | Consultation/Policy Development |
| | Re-Provision of NHS Accommodation in Kent | Consultation |

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

List of standard items that are considered at every meeting

Minutes of CF&E POC
 Minutes Children's Champions Board
 Managing Directors (oral)
 Select Committees – update

Ad-hoc items considered by POC

| Meeting Date | Item | *Type of item, eg – Consultation/Performance Monitoring/Policy Development/Other |
|--------------------|--|--|
| 6 Feb 07 | Budget 2007/08 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2007/10 | Consultation |
| | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Joint Commissioning Strategy | Consultation |
| | New Arrangements for the Provision of School Meals | Policy Development |
| | Anti-bullying Strategy to Support Schools | Consultation/Policy Development |
| 19 April 07 | The Value for Money Review of School Clusters | Performance Monitoring |
| | DfES Consultation on Schools, Early Years and 14-16 Funding Proposals | Consultation |
| | The SACRE Annual Report (2005-2006) | Monitoring |
| | Accessibility Strategy | Consultation |
| | Equalities and diversity across CF&E and links with directorate and corporate priorities and the role of Race Equality Forum | Performance Monitoring |
| 5 July 07 | Annual Plan 2007/08 | Performance Monitoring |
| | Children, Families And Education Annual Review 2006-7 | Performance Monitoring |

| Meeting Date | Item | *Type of item, eg – Consultation/Performance Monitoring/Policy Development/Other |
|-------------------|---|--|
| | CPA Corporate Assessment | Other |
| | Kent Children’s Trust Parent Support Strategy | Consultation |
| | Publication of information on meeting Special Educational Needs at all stages of the SEN Code of Practice | Consultation |
| | Equality Strategy | Consultation |
| | Department For Education And Skills 14-19 Gateway Process | Update |
| | Report to Policy Overview Committee regarding consultation | Performance Monitoring |
| 28 Sept 07 | “Towards 2010” | Performance Monitoring/Consultation/Policy Development |
| | Joint Area Review | Other |
| | Response to the Questionnaire on Overview Committees | Consultation |
| 15 Nov 07 | CFE Budget Monitoring 2007/08 | Monitoring |
| | Medium Term Financial Plan - 2008-11 for the CF&E Directorate | Monitoring |
| | Kent Children’s Trust Arrangements | Update |
| | Looked After Children Review | Consultation |
| | Integrated Youth Support Strategy | Consultation |
| | Unit Review (Including Designated and Specialist Provision and Very Severe and Complex Need Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Need at Mainstream Schools | Consultation |

| Meeting Date | Item | *Type of item, eg – Consultation/Performance Monitoring/Policy Development/Other |
|------------------|--|--|
| | Statutory Guidance on the Early Years Outcomes Duty | Consultation |
| | Standards and Achievements - 2007 | |
| | Participation Post 16, Performance at 19, September Guarantee and the 14-19 County Wide Prospectus | Consultation |
| | Select Committees: PSHE/Children's Health – action plan | Monitoring |
| 30 Jan 08 | CF&E Budget monitoring | Performance Monitoring |
| | Budget 2008/09, and Medium Term Plan 2008/09 to 2010/11 | Consultation |
| | Half Year monitoring 2007/08 | Performance Monitoring |
| | The SACRE Annual Report (2006-2007) | Monitoring |
| | Kent Children's Trust Draft Parent Support Strategy | Consultation |
| | Draft Strategy for Early Education and Childcare | Consultation |
| | Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Children and Young People 's health in Kent | Consultation |

COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

List of standard items that are considered at every meeting

Minutes

Portfolio Holder and Managing Director's Update – (oral)

Select Committee – update

Ad-hoc items considered by POC

| Meeting Date | Item | *Type of item, eg – Consultation/Performance Monitoring/Policy Development/Other |
|-------------------|--|--|
| 26 Jan 07 | Draft Budget 2007/08 and Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2007/08 to 2009/10 | Consultation |
| | Update on Kent 2012 Campaign | Performance Monitoring |
| | Draft Vision for the Communities Directorate | Consultation |
| 9 May 07 | Turner Contemporary-Presentation | Consultation |
| | Equality Strategy | Consultation |
| | Positive about our future – Kent Children's and Young People's Plan | Consultation and Policy Development |
| 13 July 07 | Presentation on the work of the Youth Service and Youth Offending Service | Monitoring |
| | Service Performance Report 2006/07 | Monitoring |
| | CPA Corporate Assessment | Monitoring |
| | Communities Risk Register | Monitoring |
| 27 Sept 07 | Towards 2010 Annual Report | Performance Monitoring/Consultation/Policy Development |
| | Response to the Questionnaire on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee | Consultation |

| Meeting Date | Item | *Type of item, eg – Consultation/Performance Monitoring/Policy Development/Other |
|--------------|---|--|
| 7 Nov 07 | Financial Monitoring Report 2007/08 | Monitoring |
| | Medium Term Plan – 2008-11 | Consultation |
| | Emergency Planning – Report and Presentation | Policy Development |
| 24 Jan 08 | Communities Budget Monitoring 2007/08 | Performance monitoring |
| | Performance update 2007-08 | Performance monitoring |
| | Budget 2008/09, and Medium Term Plan 2008/09 to 2010/11 | Consultation |

CORPORATE POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

List of standard items that are considered at every meeting

Minutes

Select Committees – update

Ad-hoc items considered by POC

| Meeting Date | Item | *Type of item, eg – Consultation/Performance Monitoring/Policy Development/Other |
|-------------------|--|--|
| 30 Jan 07 | Budget 2007/08 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2008/10 | Consultation |
| | Kent Film Office Promoting Kent | Performance monitoring |
| | CPA Corporate Assessment | Other |
| | Half yearly monitoring report for the Annual Plan 2006/07 | Monitoring |
| 26 Apr 07 | Gateways | |
| | Consultation in KCC: Revised Consultation Strategy | Consultation |
| | International Agenda – European Affairs | |
| | Strategy for Public Health in Kent | Policy Development |
| 12 July 07 | KCC Annual Plan 2007/08 | Consultation |
| | Briefing on preparing for the CPA Corporate Assessment – progress update | Monitoring |
| | KCC International Activities Annual Report 2006/7 | Monitoring |
| | Public Health Strategy | Consultation |
| 27 Sept 07 | “Towards 2010” | Performance Monitoring/ Consultation/Policy Development |

| Meeting Date | Item | *Type of item, eg – Consultation/Performance Monitoring/Policy Development/Other |
|------------------|---|--|
| | Response to the Questionnaire on Overview Committees | Consultation |
| 8 Nov 07 | Financial Monitoring Report: Corporate Services 2007/08 | Monitoring |
| | Medium Term Plan 2008-09 to 2010-11 | Monitoring |
| | CED Risk Register | |
| | European Affairs update | |
| | Equality Strategy | Policy Development |
| | Strategy for Staff - update | Monitoring |
| | Local Involvement Network in Kent | |
| | KCC Health Inequalities Action Plan | Performance Monitoring |
| 25 Jan 08 | Notes of IMG on Property Disposal | Performance Monitoring |
| | Financial monitoring report – corporate service 2007/08 | Performance Monitoring |
| | Half Yearly monitoring – 2007-08 | Performance Monitoring |
| | ICT Infrastructure Investment | Performance Monitoring |
| | The Future of Democratic Service | Other |
| | Local Petitions and call for action | Consultation |

ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

List of standard items that are considered at every meeting

Minutes

Select Committees - Update

Ad-hoc items considered by POC

| Meeting Date | Item | *Type of item, eg – Consultation/Performance Monitoring/Policy Development/Other |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 29 Jan 07 | Draft Budget 2007/08 and Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2007/10 | Consultation |
| | Rail Issues | Consultation |
| | Future Agenda | Consultation |
| 20 April 07 | Recycling Rates | Consultation |
| | Kent Thameside Delivery Board – Briefing Paper | Monitoring |
| 3 July 07 | KCC's Equality Strategy | Policy Development |
| | KCC's Annual Plan 2007/2008 | Monitoring |
| | Directorate Annual Report 2006/07 | Monitoring |
| | Highways Restructuring Consultation | Consultation |
| | Kent Highways Services Alliance Board - Measuring Success Report | Monitoring |
| | Thanet Regeneration Initiatives - Progress | Monitoring |
| 27 Sept 07 | Towards 2010 | Performance Monitoring/ Consultation/Policy Development |
| | Response to the questionnaire on Overview and Scrutiny | Consultation |

| Meeting Date | Item | *Type of item, eg – Consultation/Performance Monitoring/Policy Development/Other |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 20 Nov 07 | Financial Monitoring Report 2007/08 - Update | Performance Monitoring |
| | Medium Term Plan 2008-09 to 2010-11 | Consultation |
| | Kent Regeneration Fund Progress Update | Performance Monitoring |
| | Bus Transport Policy | Policy Development |
| | Post Office Closure | Consultation |
| 31 Jan 08 | Medium Term Plan 2008/09 – 2010/11 and Financial Monitoring Update 2007/08 | Performance monitoring |
| | Environment and Regeneration Performance Update | Performance monitoring |
| | Ashford Growth Area – Progress and Issues | Performance Monitoring |
| | Borough Green and Platt Bypass (Decision 07/01078) – Oral report | Other |
| | Waste Strategy Issues | Performance Monitoring |
| | Endorsement of the Kent Countryside Access Improvement Plan | Consultation |
| | A Summary of Progress Towards Implementation of the Select Committee on Climate Change Recommendations, as drawn together in Kent County Council's Climate Change Action Plan | Performance Monitoring |
| | Joint Select Committee on A21 at Flimwell | Other |

Note

* Type of item - there is often an overlap between these areas.