

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of A meeting of the Communities Policy Overview Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 22 September 2008.

PRESENT: Mr T J Birkett (Vice-Chairman), Mr A R Chell, Mr R E King, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr M J Northey, Mrs E D Rowbotham, Mr G Rowe, Mrs E M Tweed and Mr C T Wells

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss A Cambray (Climate Change Project Manager), Mr D Crilley (Director of Libraries, Culture, Youth Services and Sport), Ms J Edwards (Director of Policy and Resources), Ms A Honey (Managing Director Communities), Ms A Slaven (Director Youth Offending & Substance Misuse) and Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Service Manager (Policy Overview))

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

88. Membership
(Item. A2)

RESOLVED that it be noted that Mr C T Wells has replaced the late Mr C J Law as a member of this Committee.

89. Minutes - 2 June 2008
(Item. A4)

(1) Mr Hill reported that in relation to Minute no 78 (6), the proposed debate between the County Council and the Youth County Council would be held after the YCC elections in November 2008.

(2) RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting held on 2 June 2008 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

90. Meetings in 2009
(Item. A5)

RESOLVED that the following dates for meetings in 2009 be noted:-

13 January
25 March
7 July
17 September
11 November

All meetings will commence at 10.00 am

91. Portfolio Holder and Managing Director's Update
(Item. B1)

(1) Mr Hill gave an update based on the list of topics that he had circulated with the papers for the meeting. This included updates on :-

- Turner Contemporary
- Kent School Games
- Kent History Centre
- Community Wardens' Football Tournament
- Youth Capital Fund
- Olympics – Key dates
- Mr Hespe's recent visit to Beijing
- The Dover Torch Campaign
- Libraries
- Youth

(2) In response to a question from Mr Birkett on whether the Kent History Centre development had been effected by the economic climate, Mr Hill replied that the developer was currently optimistic that the scheme was viable.

(3) Mrs Hohler referred Members to a LGA conference on maximising participation in the run up to the Olympics, to be held in December.

(4) In response to a question in relation to the DVD of the Kent School Games, Ms Honey confirmed that the Directorate did record some events and a copy of these was kept in the Directorate. Members could have access to these on request. It was suggested that the use of DVD recording could be helpful to Members when considering awarding grants.

(5) Members welcomed Mr Hill's bullet point update and confirmed that they were happy with the format.

(6) Ms Honey referred to the recent fire in the Channel Tunnel and commended the response of the Emergency Planning team. She stated an item on Emergency Planning was scheduled for the January meeting of the Committee.

(7) RESOLVED (a) Mr Hill's bullet point update, Ms Honey's update and the additional information that supplied at the meeting be noted.

(b) The Committee's congratulations be passed to the Emergency Planning team for their work during the recent channel tunnel fire.

92. 2007/08 Budget Outturn and Outturn Business Plans
(Item. B2)

(1) Ms Edwards presented a report which summarised the 2007/8 budget outturn, together with additional business plan outturn information, for each of the Service Units within the Communities Directorate. This was the first time that this report had been submitted to the POC. Ms Edwards invited comments on the evolving process of the reporting of delivery against unit plans.

(2) Ms Edwards agreed to send Mr Birkett the Directorate's Full Time Equivalent staffing figures for this year and the likely figures for next year.

(3) Mrs Hohler referred to the new National Indicator no 11 and stated that Kent was one of only four local authorities in the south east who had signed up to this which indicated how seriously this authority took the Arts.

(4) In response to a question on the Good Trader scheme, Mr Bainbridge explained that there had been a lot of interest in the scheme from traders. However, there had been delays in traders joining caused by the time taken for CRB checks and to agree with traders the standard terms and conditions in their contracts. He admitted that officers had underestimated the amount of time necessary to audit these companies before they were accepted to the scheme.

(5) RESOLVED that the financial outturn for 2007/08 and the performance outturn for 2007/08 be noted.

93. Financial Monitoring 2008/09

(Item. B3)

(1) Ms Edwards presented the regular report to this Committee on the forecast outturn against budget for the Communities portfolio. This contained the monitoring report for the first quarter of 2008/09 for the Communities Directorate. The table in the report showed the net variance as an amount and also as a percentage.

(2) Ms Edwards drew the Committee's attention to the funding issues in relation to the Coroners service. Mr Hill stated the Leader had written to the Minister about this matter and a response was awaited.

(3) Mr Crilley explained that the Adult Education service had responded to their financial challenges in an organised way. They were looking at ways of reducing fixed costs and to generate further income. They had a robust plan in place to bring about a balanced budget. A picture of the current trends and enrolment patterns will be submitted to the November meeting of the Committee.

(4) Mr Birkett asked whether the anticipated capital receipt from the redundant Adult Education Centre had been affected by the current economic climate. Mr Crilley stated that the final receipt figure may change but there was a contingency plan in place to manage this if necessary.

(5) Ms Slaven referred to the report and the forecasted small underspend in the Youth Offending Service. The latest budget figures showed that the service would come in with a balanced budget.

(6) In response to a question from Mr Birkett, Ms Slaven stated that 90% of the Youth Offending Service budget funds front line staff. It is a complex budget made up of a number of different grants.

(7) Mr Chell received a reassurance from Ms Slaven that the Connexions service would continue to work closely with the Youth Service and continue to offer Personal Advisors for young people.

(7) Mrs Rowbotham asked whether staff in the service had the relevant qualifications. Ms Slaven stated that there were qualified social workers and probation staff in each team along with staff who were trained, or in training for, a youth justice qualification.

(8) Ms Honey explained that this would be the last time the figures for the Contact Centre would be reported to this Committee as the Centre had been transferred to the Chief Executive's Directorate and therefore figures would in future be reported to the Corporate Policy Overview Committee.

(9) Mr Crilley referred to the new "Kent on Canvas" service which had recently been launched.

(10) RESOLVED that the projected outturn figures for the Communities Directorate for 2008/09 based on the first quarterly monitoring report to Cabinet be noted.

94. Towards 2010 – Second Annual Report (Item. B4)

(1) Ms Honey presented the report which set out the process for finalising the second Towards 2010 Annual Report prior to approval by County Council on 16 October 2008 and a latest draft of the report on progress on the 13 targets led by the Communities Directorate. Each of the Directors responsible for these targets gave a brief overview and invited comments from Members.

(2) Members comments included the following:-

- The Chairman remarked that the draft "Towards 2010 Annual Report" was full of information and very useful.
- There were still a number of schools that were not engaging with their communities as part of the extended schools programme. If Members were aware of these they could help to encourage them and maybe do some pump priming through their Member's Grant.
- In relation to Target 25 the lack of consistency in funding decisions made by the Arts Council was mentioned. This was partly caused by the tensions within the Arts Council caused by competing regional/national and local priorities. Mr Crilley stated that KCC officers were working with District Councils to help make best use of resources.
- The Olympic Volunteering website provided a great opportunity to develop the public's interest in volunteering generally.
- In relation to Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships attention was drawn to the different ways that large national garages and small independent garages view the drivers leaving forecourts without paying for their fuel. Mr Bainbridge undertook to bring this to the attention of his staff and the police liaison officer.
- In response to a question Ms Honey undertook to provide a briefing note for Members on the Sub-National Review.
- Regarding the opening of Turner Contemporary, the Chairman pointed out that although the building was likely to be complete by the end of 2010 the gallery would actually be opened in 2011 when the weather would be better.

(3) RESOLVED that:

(a) the report and the following comments made by Members be noted;

(b) at a future meeting there would be an item on progress with extended schools;

95. Enhanced Youth Inspection - Action Plan
(Item. B5)

(1) Ms Slaven introduced the report which summaries the inspection process following the Enhanced Youth Inspection in early 2008 and the action plan which addressed the areas for development raised in the inspection report. The action plan had been submitted to OfSTED, as required, by 9 September 2008. Members were invited to ask questions and make comments, which included the following :-

- It is important to ensure that the good practice that exists in the Youth Service was spread across the whole of the County.
- In the context of Youth Action Groups there was an apparent shortfall of accredited outcomes from young people. It was important to get recognition of informal outcomes.

(2) RESOLVED that the summary of inspection findings and the Action Plan set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.

96. Youth Offending Service Inspection Action Plan
(Item. B6)

(1) Ms Slaven presented a report which set out an improvement plan to address the recommendations and areas of improvement from the joint inspection of the Youth Offending Service in early 2008, The improvement plan had been approved by the County Youth Justice Board, the body accountable for the management of the service.

(2) RESOLVED that:

(a) the Youth Offending Service Improvement Plan as set out in appendix 1 to the report be noted;

(b) it be noted in relation to items B5 & B6 that the Committee expressed their thanks to Nigel Baker and his officers, and the officers from the Youth Offending Service..

97. Community Safety Framework
(Item. B7)

(1) Mr Bainbridge introduced the draft Kent County Council Framework for Community Safety 2008 – 2011 which set out the County Council's priorities and describes how they will be achieved. Comments from Members were invited, a revised version of the documents would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for approval prior to ratification by the County Council. Members made the following points:-

- The issue of keeping areas, which were under development and had not yet been adopted, was raised as this had a detrimental affect on the areas concerned. Page 186 of the report (Kent agreement – NI 195- improved street and environmental cleanliness) should be strengthened. If there is a PSA target related to this it should be included.
- Confirmation was sought that the final document should be available in different languages and formats.

(2) RESOLVED that the comments made by Members be noted.

98. A summary of progress towards delivering Kent County Council's Climate Change Action Plan (which implements Select Committee on Climate Change recommendations as adopted by Council in January 2007) and other environmental performance objectives. An overview of next steps for Communities.

(Item. B8)

(1) Miss Cambray reminded Members that the Select Committee on Climate Change had published its recommendations in October 2006. Kent County Council produced its first response in January 2007 and committed to a series of actions since drawn together in a Climate Change Action Plan, overseen by the Cabinet Working Group on Climate Change. She presented a report which summarised progress and outlined the next steps for Communities Directorate to contribute to the next phase of the programme. Members made the following points:-

- On page 189 – paragraph 4.2 – mention should also be made of home working and flexible working
- Grants should be made conditional on organisations demonstrating a reduction in their carbon footprint.
- Energy saving measures in Community Directorate buildings, such as using energy efficient light bulbs and reducing the amount of water used to flush toilets should be supported.
- Member should use their grants to support environmentally friendly campaigns.
- The importance of practical measures being taken to support these actions was emphasised.

(2) RESOLVED that :

(a) the progress made to date be noted;

(b) the proposed next steps for Communities Directorate (set out in paragraphs 4.3 and 5.5 of the report be agreed);

(c) Communities officers report back progress to the Committee at six-monthly intervals.

99. Feedback on Community POC visits and induction on 15 July 2008

(Item. B9)

(1) Mrs Hohler referred to the very successful visit and induction that had been held on 15 July 2008. A number of the Members that had attended commended the day and thank officers for organising such an interesting and informative event.

(2) RESOLVED that visits to see aspects of the Directorate's work be organised on a regular basis

100. Select Committees - update

(Item. C1)

(1) The Committee received a report which updated them on progress with the new Select Committee on Provision of Activities for Young People and also set out the outcomes from the meeting of the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee on 10 September 2008.

(2) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the terms of reference for the Select Committee: Provision of Activities for Young People be endorsed

(b) the update from the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee on 10 September 2008 be noted.