

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Customer and Communities Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 20 January 2012.

PRESENT: Mrs E M Tweed (Chairman), Mr A R Chell (Vice-Chairman), Mr R B Burgess, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr H J Craske, Mrs E Green, Ms A Hohler, Mrs J P Law, Mr J M Ozog, Mr R Tolputt and Mr A T Willicombe

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE and Mr A Sandhu, MBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms A Agyepong (Equalities and Diversity Manager), Mr N Baker (Head of Kent Youth Service), Mr C Beaumont (Effective Practice & Performance Manager), Burrows (Director of Communications & Engagement), Mr D Crilley (Director of Customer Services), Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Policy Overview)), Mr W Gough (Interim County Manager (Supporting Independence Programme)), Ms A Honey (Corporate Director, Customer and Communities), Mr M Overbeke (Head of Regulatory Services), Mr M Scrivener (Business Information Manager), Ms A Slaven (Director of Service Improvement), Mr K Tilson (Finance Business Partner - Customer & Communities) and Mr D Whittle (Head of Policy and Strategic Relationships)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

42. Minutes - 18 November 2012

(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2012 are correctly recorded subject to the following amendments and that they be signed by the Chairman as a correct record:

- Minute number 33 (Budget 2012/13 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2012/13 to 2013/14) – paragraph (3) – the figure in the last sentence be amended to read £100m
- Minute number 41 (Margate Task Force progress report)
 - Reference be made to a request for the targets which the Task Force was working towards to be made available.
 - In bullet point 8 specific reference be made to the impact that the displacement of people with severe problems was having on Ramsgate.

43. Portfolio Holder's and Corporate Director's Update

(Item B1)

(1) Mr Hill and Ms Honey updated Members on the following issues and answered questions from Members

Olympics Resilience

(2) Ms Honey thanked officers across the County Council for the work that they were undertaking regarding the Olympics and its impact upon Kent. She referred to the Olympic Torch relay which raised security issues and required road closures, as did the Para Olympics cycling based at Brands Hatch. Also there was the issue of parking and additional traffic around Ebbsfleet and North West Kent. In addition there was the issue of security for the training camps in Kent. The biggest challenge would be keeping Kent moving. Mr Hespe (Head of Culture and Sports) and his team had produced a DVD and online material for organisations to give advice during this period. A sub group of the Kent Resilience Forum had been established to look at issues raised by the Olympics'.

(3) In response to a question on whether schools would be encouraged to give pupils time off to watch the Olympic Torch relay, Mr Crilley explained that officers had been successful in securing significant funding to celebrate this event. It was the intention to ask schools to let their pupils celebrate the Olympic Torch relay.

Locality Boards

(4) Mr Hill explained that the target was to try to have all Locality Boards set up by the end of the year. He reported that 9 Locality Boards had been established. He was in discussions with 2 other Districts/Boroughs regarding setting up a Locality Board and with the remaining Borough there had yet to be a meeting of minds. He had been to all Locality Boards to discuss the Youth Service. They had been supportive of the policy and concept and he welcomed the opportunity to engage locally both with District/Borough Council colleagues and the wider community. He emphasised that Locality Boards had a role to play in designing Youth Services for their area.

(5) In response to a question on what was being done to encourage all areas to establish Locality Boards, Mr Hill stated that moral pressure was being applied to encourage all District/Boroughs to be part of a Locality Board. In areas which did not currently have Locality Boards the fall back position for the discussion of issues such as the Youth Service was to engage with all the County Council Members for the area. A Member pointed out that this would not have the advantage of engaging with District Councillors and partner organisations.

Turner Contemporary Update

(6) Mr Hill reported that there had been 350,000 visitors to the Turner Contemporary up until the end of 2011, which exceeded the annual target of 156,000. There had already been significant improvements in the area and the old town of Margate had been transformed with a lively café culture developing. He referred to the new exhibition, Turner and the Elements, which would be opening on 28 January 2012.

(7) In response to a question on the amount of national coverage that Turner Contemporary was receiving, Mr Hill stated that he was doing all he could to ensure that Kent County Council was given full credit for building the gallery in Turner Contemporary publicity. Mr Burrows confirmed that there was a communications officer dedicated to publicity for the Turner Contemporary.

Joint visit with Chief Constable to Rotterdam: 11 & 12 October 2011

(8) Mr Hill referred to his visit to Rotterdam with the Chief Constable and informed Members of the technology that they had seen which could have implications for engaging with the public. Kent Police were hoping to obtain a grant from government to trial this technology and if successful the County Council could look at using it in the Gateways.

Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) Engagement Forum: 24 November 2011

(9) Ms Honey referred to the first meeting of the VCS Engagement Forum, it was hoped that the forum would meet quarterly (next meeting on 28 February 2012). It would enable information to be shared across the sector and would also focus on the big strategic issues for the sector.

Meeting with Medway Council to agree route for the Police and Crime Panel (PCP): 5 December 2011

(10) Mr Hill explained that a Police and Crime Panel needed to be established by Kent Local Authorities to scrutinise the actions of the Police Commissioner. Each of the 14 Kent Local Authorities were entitled to appoint one Member to the Panel and there could be additional co-optees up to a maximum of 6. A draft paper on the establishment of PCP had been agreed with Medway Council and would be considered by the Kent Forum in February 2012.

(11) In response to a question, Mr Hill confirmed that the PCP would not replace the Crime and Disorder Committee.

Ambassador's Briefing on Youth Justice: 8 December 2011

(12) Mr Hill stated that he had been part of a Panel at the Ambassador's Briefing on Youth Justice on 8 December 2011, along with the Chief Constable and a Judge. The session had been very useful and a consensus had been reached on the need to avoid young people coming into the Youth Justice System. He also reported that over 200,000 police officers had been trained in restorative justice.

(13) RESOLVED that the update and the comments made by Members be noted.

44. Financial Monitoring 2011/12

(Item B2)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Tilson presented a report which set out the latest projected outturn figures for the Directorate for 2011/12 based on the monitoring report to Cabinet on 5 December 2011. The Committee were informed that the Directorate were forecasting an underspend of £373k, with a view to increasing this – where possible – by the year end. This was a much improved position from that reported in previous meetings.

(2) Mr Hill and Mr Tilson answered questions and noted comments from Members which included the following:-

- In response to a question on Ramsgate Library, Mr Tilson explained that the majority of the rebuilding costs had been covered by the insurance settlement. However, as there was a possibility that this might not cover the whole cost,

this had been identified as a potential risk and an explanation given as to how this would be mitigated. For capital projects potential risks and the associated mitigations, had to be noted in the reports. Mr Tilson expressed the view that it was unlikely that mitigation measure would be necessary.

- Regarding the non achievement of the £1.5m of savings for Communications & Engagement, Mr Tilson stated that although £1m of savings had been achieved, it had not been possible to achieve all of the £0.5m savings on activity, as had been discussed at previous meetings of the Committee. This predicted overspend was first reported in the September meeting.
- Mr Tilson stated that it was not currently possible to provide the project outcome cost for the Beaney Library as there were still ongoing negotiations with Canterbury City Council (the lead on this project) and the Contractors, Faithful and Gould. Various issues at the beginning of the works had had a knock on effect on the cost and this was in the process of being quantified.
- Regarding the Kent History and Library Centre, a Member raised concerns about the level of risk if there was a problem in selling the remainder of the land which had approved plans including a community facility on the site. Mr Tilson explained that the developer of the Kent History and Library Centre had first option to purchase the land, it was not a firm contractual commitment, but they did not consider it feasible for them to purchase the land at this time given the current slowdown in the housing market. Negotiations were being carried out with Maidstone Borough Council regarding the planning conditions for the site, as well as with Buoygues (the developer) and other interested parties. Mr Crilley stated that the site was currently being marketed so that the level of risk could be mitigated and Mr Tilson confirmed that the sale of this site was not contingent on the completion of the Kent History and Library Centre.

(2) RESOLVED that the projected outturn figures for the Directorate for 2011/12 based on the monitoring report to Cabinet on 5 December 2011 be noted.

45. Quarterly Performance Report, Quarter 2, 2011/12 (including in-year performance update)

(Item B3)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Scrivener introduced a report which informed Members about key areas of performance and activity across Kent County Council (KCC) with a particular focus on indicators within the Customer and Communities Directorate. The covering report also included headlines from 2011/12 in-year monitoring.

(2) In relation to the Contact Centre, Mr Crilley explained the challenging situation that had been caused by an increase in the complexity of calls and an increase in volume, which had meant that more capacity had been required to drive up results.

(3) Concern was expressed that, whilst there was mention of successes such as attendance at the Turner Contemporary and Radio Frequency Identification in libraries there was no mention in the performance monitoring report of the monitoring to be carried out under the Improvement Plan for the Kent Youth Offending Service. Ms Honey confirmed that it was intended to bring balanced reports to this and future Committees. In this case the template used across the authority for this information had dictated what was included but in future she would ensure additional information was included as necessary to ensure a balanced report. She reminded Members

that there was a full report on the Kent Youth Offending Service Improvement Plan later on the agenda.

(4) RESOLVED that the comments made by Members on the Quarterly Performance Report and Customer and Communities in-year performance update be noted.

46. Budget 2012/13 Medium Term Plan (MTFP) 2012/15
(Item B4)

(1) Mr Hill and Mr Tilson presented a report which consulted the Committee on the budget proposals for the Customer and Communities portfolio, with reference to the draft KCC budget published on 20 December 2011. Mr Hill commended officers for achieving a balanced budget.

(2) Mr Hill and Officers answered questions and noted comments from Members which included the following:-

- In response to a question on business rates for Youth Centres and the sum identified for this in the Budget, Mr Tilson explained that as there was a potential change in the legislation which was not within the authority's ability to control, this sum had been set aside as a prudent measure in case the exemption currently afforded to Youth Centres was removed.
- Reference was made to an increase in the Youth Service's budget for 2012/13. The Budget Book actually showed a slight increase whereas the discussions about the Youth Service had talked about savings. Mr Tilson stated that the increase in expenditure was due to the Youth Opportunities Fund and how this allocation of the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) was now being shown within the base budget of the service. This expenditure had always been made by the Youth Service but in the past this budget, had been an in-year transfer from Education, Learning and Skills (previously Children's Families and Education) to Customer and Communities. This year the EIG had been split between Directorates and added to their base budgets which made it look as though the net budget had increased.
- Mr Tilson explained that the budget to carry out enhancement and maintenance work on youth centres (and property occupied by Customer and Community Services more generally) was still available to carry out necessary works but was now in one centralised budget within Corporate Landlord. The pressures had not been passported to another department as the funding went along with the demand.
- Mr Tilson confirmed that budget information on the Beaney and Kent History Centre projects would remain in the Medium Term Financial Plan until the projects were completed and would therefore continue to be monitored for the next year.
- Regarding the Stronger Safer Communities Fund, Mr Tilson explained that there was a reduction in funding from the Home Office over the past three years and that in 2010/11 and 2011/12 reductions had been shown in the MTFP presented to Cabinet. This funding was passed to District/Borough Councils, with the County Council acting as a conduit so no saving had actually been delivered by the authority.
- In relation to the saving of £7m to be achieved in the Supporting People budget, £4m of which would be delivered in 2012/13 with £3m already

delivered in 2011/12, Ms Honey confirmed that this was achievable. Ms Slaven explained that this saving would be achieved over two years by adjusting the value of contracts, modifying the levels of service and in one instance reducing the duration that the floating support service could be accessed from two years currently to one year. There would not be a reduction in the number of people able to access the service and this was to be achieved through better commissioning of services and working with providers in a different way. She confirmed that the service was on target to deliver the £7m saving.

(3) RESOLVED that the comments by Members and the revenue and capital budget proposals for the Customer and Communities portfolios be noted.

(Mr Tolputt declared a personal interest as a Governor of a Youth Centre)

47. Youth Services Transformation

(Item B5)

(1) The Chairman welcomed, Mrs Dean, Mr Manning, Mr Cowan and Mr Lees (the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee to the meeting.

(2) Mr Hill and Mr Baker introduced a paper which outlined the responses to the consultation and corresponding recommendations for the transformation of Kent Youth Service, also circulated were the supporting papers for the decision and the consultation responses from the Kent Youth County Council and District/Borough Councils.

(3) Mr Hill reminded Members of the proposed mixed economy for Youth Services and the consultation that had been carried out over the summer. The response received had been mixed and highlighted two main areas that needed to be addressed. These were the capacity of the voluntary sector and the concerns and confusion around the hub proposals. There were a lot of responses from people defending their own Youth Centre building and a lack of understanding of the proposals. Regarding the voluntary sector, Mr Hill did not agree with the concerns raised regarding capacity. There were examples across Kent of what the Voluntary Sector were capable of providing, he gave examples of voluntary sector youth facilities in Ashford and Canterbury which provided an excellent service for young people. The proposals would be taken to Locality Boards to discuss the shape of the services for that area. He stated that there had been strong support from Locality Boards so far for the direction of travel, but there were still details relating to the shape of services for area to be discussed with the Boards. He confirmed that he was confident that Locality Boards had the capacity to carry out this work. He stated that his aim was to save money and to leave the Youth Service as good if not better than it was now.

(4) Mr Baker highlighted the outcome of the consultation carried out last year. There had been 732 responses, two thirds of these had been via the on-line questionnaire and others were free responses in various forms, including rap songs and works of art. To ensure that there were representative responses focus groups were held via an external agency. What came through from the consultation was that young people were saying please keep our youth centre, which was expected as their connection was with the youth centre and not Kent County Council.

(5) In relation to the responses from Districts/Boroughs Mr Baker explained that these had been diverse, including two who responded via their Locality Board. Regarding the response from the Kent Youth County Council (KYCC), there was a statement from them as a group and also they completed the on line questionnaire, these gave different messages.

(6) Mr Baker stated that the key messages from the consultation were firstly that there was clear support for the commissioning process, and secondly there was support for retaining a strong professional youth work core. There was also a lot of correspondence about building based provision. He confirmed that there was flexibility around developing the model of provision at a local level.

(7) Mr Baker referred to the government strategy "Positive for Youth" and offered to circulate to Members a link to the executive summary. The strategy recognised the key role for youth workers in supporting a young person's personal development for example their role in reducing teenage pregnancy and substance abuse. The government had made it clear that this was a pan government strategy which involved nine government departments. The strategy reinforced Local Authorities' statutory duty to provide sufficient education and leisure activities. Guidance on the strategy was awaited.

(8) Mr Hill, Ms Honey, Ms Slaven and Mr Baker answered questions and noted comments from Members which included the following:-

- Reference was made to the positive and imaginative suggestions coming from Ashford Borough Council for youth service provision in their area.
- In response to a question on the difference between the two responses submitted by the KYCC, Mr Baker agreed that the contradictory responses were confusing. A Member had contacted the chair of the KYCC who had stated that the KYCC did not agree with the proposals as hubs were not centrally located and there were access issues for young people.
- Concern was expressed about monitoring of the voluntary sector providers to ensure that they provided good quality youth work on a day to day basis and that they undertook any improvements that were identified to services. Mr Hill stated that it was vital that the work commissioned was delivered to agreed outcomes, how the outcomes were achieved was up to the organisations carrying out the work. A robust in-house youth service delivery team would be retained to monitor the work. He confirmed that the ultimate responsibility for youth work either commissioned or delivered directly remained with him, responsibility was not being handed over to others outside KCC.
- Regarding concerns expressed about the low level of response to the consultation, Mr Baker stated that every effort was made to ensure that there was an awareness of the consultation and an accessible way of making views known via the online survey. He believed that the number of responses received were statistically viable. He did not believe that more could have been done to inform people about the consultation. The consultation had run for 90 days via a variety of mediums, and responses from District/Borough Councils submitted outside of the timeframe had been accepted.
- A Member referred to the questionnaire responses which appeared to indicate that 56% of respondents did not support hubs.

- Members mentioned a number of responses in the form of letters and petitions that they were aware of which did not appear on the list of responses received.
- In response to a question on what success there had been in attracting additional resources from other partners to contribute to the amount for commissioning, Mr Hill stated that the funding had been built up from £1.2m to £1.7m from other government grants and other possibilities were being explored, including resources in kind being provided by District/Borough Councils.
- Mr Baker confirmed that all of the Youth Advisory Groups had received a briefing from officers on the proposal.
- In relation to the timetable for the commissioning process, and whether it could be speeded up, Mr Baker explained the processes that needed to be carried out which would mean that the earliest that commissioning could be implemented was January 2013.
- A Member mentioned the need to ensure that KCC had a list of competent youth workers with a proven track record in the voluntary sector. Ms Honey reminded Members that the Directorate had experience of commissioning services, for example for the Kent Drugs and Alcohol Team, and Supporting People. She took on board Members points in relation to ensuring that officers used all their expertise and experience to ensure that they got the commissioning process right.
- Concern was expressed about the access to youth service provision for young people in areas of high deprivation, such as Ramsgate, which was not due to be the hub for the area. Mr Hill confirmed that no decision had been made on the shape of youth services for this area. Mr Baker explained that there would be comparatively more resources allocated to Thanet via the resource allocation model, the detail of how this funding would be used was up for further discussion. He understood the particular issues for Thanet and he welcomed the opportunity that the proposals gave to look at generational change in the provision of youth services.
- Disappointment was expressed at the loss of professional youth workers who made a difference to young peoples' lives by helping them with issues that they may not be able to address at home or school. Mr Hill stated that from what he had seen, youth workers in the voluntary sector were equally capable of supporting young people. He confirmed that youth services would be commissioned from professional organisations which would be required to deliver identified outcomes.
- Mr Baker undertook to circulate the amended version of Appendix B which had been placed on line.
- The opportunity for areas, via Locality Boards or other arrangements, to have an input into the design of youth services for their area was welcomed. It was hoped that these services would be flexible enough to respond to changing needs quickly.
- Mr Hill was thanked for listening and seeking local views on the proposals.
- Mr Baker highlighted the importance of mapping existing voluntary provision and engaging with small voluntary organisations to ensure that they have the opportunity to be part of the future of youth services. The challenge was to find a way to be as creative as possible in order to establish an open access provision for young people.
- Mrs Dean, chairman of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee was invited to speak and made the following points:

- This item was only placed on the agenda when it was considered as a possible item for Cabinet Scrutiny Committee. Rather than call-in the decision, preferred option was for it to be considered by the Policy Overview Committee. An issue for the new governance arrangements was ensuring that Key Decisions, such as this were considered by Members prior to the decision being taken.
 - She expressed concern about the level of paperwork available, including no reference to a number of petitions from youth centres which Members were aware of. Also three Districts had 13 or fewer responses, which could not be indicative of the views of young people in the area.
 - The quality of consultations was an issue that needed to be looked at further, not just in relation to this proposal. The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee had been aware of problems with consultation in other areas such as Highways.
 - The hub and spoke model was not in the decision notice but was a recommendation in the decision report. Three District Councils had said that they did not consider the model to be appropriate and wanted to talk about other models. Confirmation was sought that the discussions with District Councils and Locality Boards would not just be around the hub and spoke model, but that alternative models could be considered. Mr Hill explained that the hub and spoke model was what had been consulted upon, the decision did not refer to this model as account had been taken of the consultation response and he had taken a different view on how to proceed.
 - Regarding the timetable for implementation, if the contract was awarded in November 2012 and the services start in January 2013, this was a very short timescale especially for small voluntary groups who may have to take on members of staff and book rooms etc. Regarding the timescale for awarding the contract, Mr Baker explained that he was working closely with procurement colleagues. They were looking for a flexible process so that it would be possible to get a mixture of providers, although it is possible that some contracts may go to organisations that the County Council already worked with. Where the timescale would be more important was where an existing youth centre was taken over by a voluntary provider
 - Regarding Locality Boards, Mrs Dean was pleased to hear that Mr Hill was still working towards this in Tonbridge and Malling. Mr Hill confirmed that he was doing his best to establish Locality Boards in each District and acknowledged the challenge in Tonbridge and Malling. If agreement could not be reached then another method of engaging on this matter would take place,
- Mr Hill confirmed that he had been to all Locality Boards to discuss the consultation. The way that youth service provision would be delivered in each area had not been decided, further discussions would take place on what form the provision would take in each area.
 - In relation to the concerns expressed about the consultation process, Ms Honey stated that there was always scope for improvement. The officers involved with the youth service consultation had worked incredibly hard. If there were pieces of information and petitions that had not been captured officers would work to ensure that the information was as comprehensive as

possible. She referred to Mr Burrows, the new Director of Communications and Engagement, who would be looking at KCC's consultation process and ensuring that it was robust.

- Mr Cowan questioned the viability of the consultation response. He referred to the petition that triggered a debate at County Council in December 2011.
- Mr Cowan expressed concern regarding what would happen to other organisations who use the youth centre premises if the youth centre closed.
- Officers undertook to provide Mr Cowan with a briefing note to clarify the latest position with regards to zero rate exemption for youth centres
- Regarding the issues raised by Mr Cowan on the establishment of the Dover Locality Board. Ms Honey stated that there was a clear commitment on the part of Dover District Council to have a Locality Board.
- Mr Manning emphasised the importance of having a sound consultation to support the decision making process. As the Chairman of Tunbridge Wells Youth Advisory Group he was aware of the mixed messages that had come through the consultation process. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council was supportive of the hub model but 75% of respondents stated that they did not want a hub. As only 2 or 3 young people from Tunbridge Wells responded he questioned whether enough had been done to get the views of those directly affected.
- Mr Hill confirmed that there was adequate time for discussions with Locality Boards on the provision for their area. He believed that the timescale was achievable, but Locality Boards may need to be flexible about when they meet. It was necessary to move forward with the process and he hoped to have the new policy in place by January 2013.

(9) RESOLVED that the contents and the comments made by Members be noted.

48. Kent Big Society Fund

(Item B6)

(1) Ms Honey and Mr Whittle presented a report which informed Members of Key Decision number 11/01755 which was taken by the Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities on 16 December 2011. The decision was to agree to make a charitable donation of £3m with conditions (sequenced annually) to the Kent Community Foundation to establish and operate the Kent Big Society Fund, a loan finance scheme for social enterprises in Kent. The on-going relationship with the Kent Community Foundation (KCF) concerning the Kent Big Society Fund would be managed by Customer and Communities Directorate.

(2) Mr Whittle answered questions and noted comments from Members which included the following:-

- Mr Whittle explained that grants from the Fund would be in the form of unsecured loans, the organisation would have to enter into an agreement to pay the monies back. There would be a due diligence test to ensure that the applicants were able to repay the monies. The applicants would need to have a significant income stream.
- In response to a question on why the contract had been awarded to KCF and their relationship to Key Fund (KF), Mr Whittle stated that KCF had a significant track record in relation to Grant Making for example their work with the National Lottery and Comic Relief. The County Council did not have a

contract with KF, who were sub contracted to KCF. KCF were using KF's experience in due diligence to make sure that the applications were viable. He stated that KCF had always been clear that they would wish to use KF to carry out assessments until they were able to build capacity to do this in-house. Mr Whittle explained that national institutions had been unwilling to have a Kent focus, which was essential for the scheme. One of the key factors with using KCF was its ability to share the governance arrangements.

- Mr Whittle explained that the Kent Big Society Fund filled a gap in the market, as the applicants were often viewed as high risks by Banks etc there needed to be robust financial analysis. The default rate from KF was 10% which was relatively low across the sector. The default rate would be monitored and if it became a significant issue the County Council would consider what action should be taken. The benefit of the shared governance arrangements was the ability to feed back to Members.
- It was asked whether KF had any experience of co-operatives in order to cover the whole range of social enterprises.
- Regarding who paid for due diligence, Mr Whittle stated that this was met via a fee provided to KCF.

(3) RESOLVED that the comments made by Members and the report, especially the governance arrangements set out in Section 9 be noted.

49. Countryside Access Service

(Item B7)

(1) Mr Crilley and Mr Overbeke introduced a report which provided a brief overview of the work of the Countryside Access Service which transferred into the Customer and Communities Directorate from Environment, Highways and Waste in April 2011. The Countryside Access Service was made up of the Public Rights of Way Service, Common Land & Village Greens, Explore Kent and the Countryside Management Partnerships.

(2) In relation to the impact that a Planning Application for an area might have as a catalyst for an application for village green status Mr Overbeke explained that all applications were looked at on strict evidential merit to see if there was enough evidence to take them forward.

(3) Regarding attracting volunteers via Parish Councils to help with Public Rights of Way work. Mr Overbeke stated that he had written to all Parish Councils last year, and the response had been disappointing. A lot of the work required was vegetation clearance in semi urban areas, the bulk of the work was physical and unpleasant. It was therefore difficult and to get enough volunteers to make it cost effective.

(4) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

50. Kent Employment Programme

(Item B8)

(1) Ms Honey and Mr Gough presented a paper which highlighted the growing crisis in youth unemployment, and examined the potential for the County Council to develop a groundbreaking scheme to tackle this immediate problem.

(2) Mr Gough explained that the County Council's scheme which was being developed would be more flexible than the Future Job Fund. Members expressed the view that this scheme should allow posts with community groups to be fully funded. Although voluntary sector organisations may not have the ability to keep young people on at the end of the funding it would provide a stepping stone for young people and give them experience. Also the Future Job Fund required the supported jobs to be new jobs, in the voluntary sector this may not be appropriate and again this could be accommodated within the new scheme.

(3) RESOLVED that the report and the comments made by Members be noted.

51. YOS to report back on the progress of the audits of practice

(Item B9)

(1) Ms Slaven and Mr Beaumont presented a report which set out the processes designed to achieve the changes in the quality of practice and of management oversight required following the Inspection and set out in the Improvement Plan which was now well established and its influence and impact were being seen during audits. The audits indicated that there was still ongoing work to be done to ensure that the necessary standards were consistently achieved and were evident across the caseload of the Youth Offending Service

(2) RESOLVED that the findings to date from the case audits and the actions being taken to ensure the required levels of performance are achieved be noted.

52. Restructuring - Customer Services and Service Improvement - verbal update

(Item B10)

(1) Ms Honey circulated an updated structure chart for the Directorate which included the names of the newly appointed heads of service. Work was now being carried out with the Heads of Service to look at the sub-structure to make sure that it was designed to fit the needs of the business.

(2) RESOLVED that the update be noted

53. Annual Equalities compliance report

(Item B11)

(1) Ms Honey and Ms Agyepong introduced a report which provided the Committee with an update on equalities and diversity structure within Kent County Council and the statutory Equalities and Diversity Annual Report for 2010/11.

(2) RESOLVED that the covering report and the attached Annual Equalities & Diversity Report be noted.

54. Select Committee - update

(Item C1)

(1) The Committee received an update report on the progress of the current Select Committee topic reviews

(2) RESOLVED that the update be noted.