

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Communities Policy Overview Committee held on Wednesday, 7 November 2007 at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent.

PRESENT: Mr P W A Lake (Chairman), Mr L Christie, (Vice-Chairman), Mr A R Chell, Mrs C J Dagger, Mr D A Hirst, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr R E King, Mr S J G Koowarre (substitute for Mr G Rowe), Mr C J Law, Mr T A Maddison, Mr M J Northey, Mrs E M Tweed and Mr B P Wood.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ms A Honey, Managing Director accompanied by Mr D Shipton, Head of Finance and Asset Management, Mrs A Slaven, Director of Youth Offending and Substance Misuse, Mr N Baker, Head of Kent Youth Service, Mr C Bainbridge, Director of Community Safety and Regulatory Services, Mr R Ellwood, Principal Emergency Planning Officer, Mr T Cruttenden, Principal Emergency Planning Officer and Ms C A Singh, Democratic Services Officer (Overview and Scrutiny).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

48. Minutes – 13 July 2007
(Item A3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman, subject to the words “party political” in Minute 39(3) being replaced with “cross-party” and in Minute 40(1), the word “excellent” being deleted.

49. Minutes - 27 September 2007

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman subject to the word “sympathetic” being deleted and replaced with the word “concerned” in Target 26 and in the third paragraph of Target 58 a full stop be placed after the word “liver” and the remaining words being deleted.

50. Matters Arising

3 July 2007

Minute 39(5) the Managing Director agreed to give a response outside the meeting. The Democratic Services Officer agreed to forward copies of the PricewaterhouseCoopers report to each Member of this Committee. Mr Hill agreed to submit a report on the personnel issues surrounding the Library restructuring and a progress report of the CDRP to a future meeting of this Committee.

27 September 2007

Mr Bainbridge agreed to report back at a future meeting on the results and evaluation of the cold calling trial.

51. Future Meeting Dates
(Item A4)

(1) Members noted that efforts had been made before this meeting to change the Monday meeting dates for 2008 to allow Mr Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services to be present, in line with the Leader's response to the questionnaire to Members on the Policy Overview Committees considered at a meeting of this Committee on 27 September 2007. Agreement had been given to change Monday, 28 January 2008 meeting to Thursday, 24 January 2008, the other meeting dates would remain the same.

(2) RESOLVED that the following dates for meetings in 2008 be noted:-

Thursday, 24 January 2008
Wednesday, 2 April 2008
Monday, 2 June 2008
Monday, 22 September 2008
Wednesday, 12 November 2008.

All meetings would commence at 10.00 am.

52. Portfolio Holder and Managing Director's Update
(Item B1 – Oral report by Mr M Hill, Cabinet Member for Communities and Ms A Honey, Managing Director for Communities)

Turner Contemporary

(1) Mr Hill advised that the publicity surrounding David Chipperfield Architects winning the prestigious RIBA Stirling Prize for Architecture had given a boost to the public's confidence and had strengthened the fundraising position for the project. A public meeting was held on 16 October 2007 at the Margate Theatre Royal, which Mr Chipperfield attended to unveil the new design of the new Gallery which received unanimous support from those present. Pictures of the design were circulated to Members present.

(2) Mr Hill advised that the governance of the Turner Contemporary was still an ongoing issue that he was working hard to resolve.

(3) Mr Maddison suggested that there may be a way of receiving sponsorship through the connection of Tate and Lyle Sugar Company and the founder of the Tate Gallery. Kent County Council could look into receiving permission to advertise on the bags of sugar as he had already noted that the company currently had a voucher promotion on the bags. Mr Hill thanked Mr Maddison for his suggestion and agreed to look into this.

(4) Members raised the issue, regarding the £2m per annum revenue costs of running the Turner Contemporary and how this was going to be achieved [details of which were covered in the Medium Term Plan paper on the agenda]. Mr Hill advised that £500K per annum would be received from the Arts Council and £300k from trading, sponsorship and

fundraising. He concluded that it would be his responsibility to ensure that a robust funding stream was in place by the time the Gallery was completed.

(5) Mr Maddison suggested that if solar cladding was to be used in the construction of the building there maybe a Government grant available. Ms Honey thanked Mr Maddison for his suggestion and advised that they were working closely with Mr Chipperfield on all the options available.

Olympics 2012

(6) Mr Hill announced that the County Council had successfully submitted bids for pre-games training camp sites and Kent had received that largest list of sites in the country.

Youth Clubs

(7) Mr Hill advised that three new youth clubs were being established in Hythe, Herne Bay and Ashford North.

Capital Programme

(8) Mr Hill agreed to bring back a report on the progress of Ashford Library and the new Kent History Centre to future meeting of the Committee.

Inspection

(9) Ms Honey advised that January 2008 would be a very busy time for the Directorate with inspections of the Youth Offending Service, Enhanced Youth Service Inspection, JAR, which is being led by the Children, Families and Education Directorate and the CPA inspection.

Staff Conference

(10) The first Communities Directorate's Staff Annual Conference had been held with 100 staff in attendance. Communities POC invitees included Mr Lake, Mrs Tweed and Mr Christie.

Trading Standards

(11) Ms Honey acknowledged the work of the Trading Standards Department with the support of colleagues from Surrey County Council through the recent outbreaks of Foot and Mouth and Bluetongue diseases in the county.

(12) RESOLVED that the oral report by the Portfolio Holder and Managing Director be noted and the suggestions made by Members be noted.

53. Financial Monitoring Report 2007/08

(Item B2)

(Report by Mr M Hill, Cabinet Member for Communities and Ms A Honey, Managing Director for Communities)

(Mr Shipton was present for this item)

- (1) The Committee received the first of what will be a regular report to this Committee on the forecast outturn against the budget for the Community Services Portfolio.
- (2) Mr Shipton highlighted paragraph 3.1 of the report which detailed the main points of concern within the budget; Adult Education, Coroners Budget and the imminent restructuring of the Cultural Development Unit.
- (3) Members were advised that the figures within the report before them were from the quarterly monitoring report, which went to a Cabinet meeting in September and reflected the position at the end of June. Members of the Committee raised their concerns as they understood that the Cabinet would be receiving up to date figures later in November. Members requested that the scheduling be looked into so that the Committee Members received up to date information. It was suggested that it would be helpful to show the percentage of the variances within the tables of figures. Mr Shipton explained the timing of compiling figures for the report which took two months, but agreed to look into this issue. He also explained that the format had been agreed at Cabinet.
- (4) RESOLVED that the report be noted subject to the points raised in paragraph (3) above being taken into account by the drafting officer.

54. Medium Term Plan – 2008-11

(Item B3 – Report by Mr M Hill, Cabinet Member for Communities and Ms A Honey, Managing Director for Communities)

(Mr Shipton was present for this item)

- (1) The Committee received an update on the Autumn Budget Statement Report to Cabinet on 17 September 2007, which set out the national and local context for KCC Medium Term Plan for the period 2008/09 to 2010/11. The report also updated Members on the latest developments and announcements by government departments and sought Members' savings proposals for services provided by the Communities Directorate.
- (2) The Committee was reminded that the next three years Medium Term Plan (MTP) had been agreed at County Council on 22 February 2007 and discussed with Communities POC at its meeting on 26 January 2007. The MTP still included transfer of funds from other directorates within the County Council when the Communities Directorate was set up in 2006. The directorate would have a level-based budget from 2009. The existing MTP makes provision for unavoidable pay and price increases, meeting the "Towards 2010" targets and service developments and efficiency savings in accordance with directorate priorities.
- (3) Members of the Committee were advised that the budget proposals would be published on Monday, 21 January 2008 and this Committee would be meeting to discuss them on Thursday, 24 January 2008.
- (4) Mr Shipton drew Members' attention to the Local Government Finance Settlement being announced in late November or early December and advised that until that time,

Kent would not know its share of the government revenue support grant. One issue for Communities would be the transfer of specific grants into Revenue Support Grant. Referring to page B3.4, Members were advised that the Kent Schools Games, which was going to be a shared project with the Children, Families and Education and the Communities Directorates, was now solely with the Communities Directorate. Mr Shipton advised that some of the 2009/10 funding would need to be put in reserve to smooth the funding between the years when the games were taking place.

(5) Members noted that if Turner Contemporary was not successful in raising sponsorship towards the estimated £2m running costs for the gallery, there would have to be other ways found to raise the revenue, and the directorate had identified a possible additional £400k pressure in 2010/11 towards supporting the gallery.

(6) Referring to paragraph 4.6 on the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, Mr Shipton sought the Committee's opinions on its spending priorities bearing in mind the government requirement for efficiency savings of 3% per annum. Members agreed to Mr Shipton's request that questions on Appendix 4 accompanying the report should be dealt with outside the meeting.

(7) Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions on points of clarity on the figures before them. These were as follows:

- Members suggested that income could be generated in Kent Libraries through selling greeting cards and other items similar to those sold within the Kent Archives Shop in Sessions House, Maidstone. It was also suggested that catering, similar to that in many commercial bookshops could be investigated.
- There was concern raised by Members of the Committee with the continual 3% efficiency savings and where those savings would be found. Mr Hill advised that this was of concern to him. He stressed to the Committee that he would continue to defend each of the Directorate's services but with the continual need to find efficiency savings could not guarantee how long this could be sustained.
- Members were aware of the 3% efficiency savings target and the decision of how to divide up the remaining funding was a Member decision. The only option was to look at increasing the income and was not willing to identifying any cuts in services.
- There was a suggestion that as the government was no longer going to claw back funds held by schools, this could be an opportunity for the schools to be approached to give some of this money towards the school games. Mr Hill advised that it was complicated receiving money from schools for the school games.
- Members of the Committee sought assurance that the specific grants transferring into RSG would all be received. Mr Shipton advised that in the past it had proved difficult to identify the transfer of specific grants. However, there had been assurance given that specific grants would be identifiable in the RSG settlement.

(13) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the national and local context within which this Medium Term Plan would be set be noted;
- (b) the pressures attached to this report be noted; and
- (c) the Committee recommended that it could not express relative priorities for savings without more information on the overall context for the County Council budget settlement and the flexibility available within the overall settlement.

55. Emergency Planning – Report and Presentation

(Item B4- Report by Mr Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services and Ms A Honey, Managing Director for Communities)

(Mr C Bainbridge, Director of Community Safety and Regulatory Services, Mr R Ellwood, Principal Emergency Planning Officer and Mr T Cruttenden, Principal Emergency Planning Officer were present for this item)

- (1) The Committee received a detailed presentation on the Emergency Planning Unit by Mr Ellwood covering the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Unit's duties, responsibilities and partnership working, training and exercising, roles and responsibilities and some of the key projects that the Unit had been involved in. Members thanked Mr Ellwood.
- (2) Mr Lake advised that he would be recommending to the Leader that a presentation on the Emergency Planning Unit be given at a future County Council meeting.
- (3) Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions of the officers present. They were as follows:
 - Some of the Members of the Committee indicated that they had been part of Select Committee for Flood Risk and highlighted that through the evidence gathering, they were keen to see tighter arrangements for the frail and elderly receiving support during times of evacuation and allocations of water during such times. Members also highlighted the absolute necessity of sharing information, highlighting that one of the recommendations from the Select Committee for Flood Risk was through the Flood Liaison Committee, Flood Wardens be appointed. Their role would be to support and identify vulnerable people within the affected area. Mr Ellwood highlighted that the Kent Resilience Forum System Group and Severe Weather Group were also taking this action forward.
 - In response to whether the communications were now compatible between the agencies during the emergencies, Mr Ellwood advised that it was better than it had been and the best form of communication was through the airwaves, although there was still room for improvement.
- (4) RESOLVED that the comments made by Members of the Committee and the presentation and the report be noted.

56. Integrated Youth Strategy

(Item B5 Report by Mr Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services and Ms A Honey, Managing Director for Communities)

(Ms A Slaven, Director of Youth Offending and Substance Misuse and Mr N Baker, Head of Kent Youth Service, were present for this item)

- (1) The Committee received a report on the work being undertaken to develop a high level Integrated Use of Support Strategy and sought Members' contribution.
- (2) Ms Slaven advised that the County Council was required to produce an overall statement of intent for this very specific age group of young people, aged 13 to 19 years. The document would be a high level strategy giving clear detailed operational plans for this group of young people across the County. Members were advised that the draft strategy, which was appended to the covering report, would be put before the Children's Trust Board to seek its approval in January 2008.
- (3) Members of the Committee were keen to see that the guidance took on board what young people wanted and that it did not fall down on the working relationships between the district councils and the County Council. Mr Baker reassured Members that the Commissioning Service was looking for joined up thinking and services focused on a single outcome. In response to concerns over the distribution of money for youth groups, Mr Baker advised that the future development of the Children's Trusts based around the existing 23 clusters would assist in this distribution as they would have the ability to use delegated funding to prioritise budgets.
- (4) Members made the following comments:
 - It was suggested by Mr Northey that the words "young people are our future" be replaced with "young people are our present". Ms Slaven and Mr Baker agreed to consider this idea.
 - In response to whose strategy this was and where the input from young people would come from, Mrs Tweed advised that there had been engagement with young people through the Youth Opportunity Fund with groups such as Kent Youth County Council. Ms Slaven added that young people with disabilities and young offenders had also been consulted; she stressed that the net would be cast wider to include looked after children and faith groups. Mr Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services was taking the lead on this strategy and a joint Communities, and Children, Families and Education Senior Management Team had already been set up and had met on 25 September 2007.
- (5) RESOLVED that the comments made by the Committee be noted by the drafting officer and the report be noted.

57. Select Committees – Update

(Item C1 – Report by Overview and Scrutiny Manager)

(Mrs C Singh, Democratic Services Officer, was present for this item)

(1) Members received a report on the progress of the Select Committee on Alcohol Mis-use and the Select Committee Work Programme for 2007-2008 and potential two year programme.

(2) The Democratic Service Officer gave an update on the decisions made at a meeting of the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee (POCC) held on 5 November 2007 as follows:-

- Members of the Committee noted that it was agreed that the Alcohol Mis-use Select Committee would have a short extension of time to allow the draft report to be shared with the many external agencies before the report was put in the public domain;
- All three topics in the Review Programme for Autumn 2007 to Spring 2008; Accessing Democracy, Vulnerable Children and Access to Healthcare were agreed;
- The potential topics for the two year programme detailed in the POCC report in paragraph 3 (1) (i)-(iii) would be removed from the Review Programme unless these topics were still current and relevant, a bid for these to remain should be made to the meeting of the POCC on 14 February 2008; and
- The potential topic of “Provision of Activities for Young People”, which would be owned by this Policy Overview Committee, would be considered further at the POCC February 2008 meeting with an updated assessment form.

(3) The Committee Members were encouraged by the Democratic Services Officer to put forward any suggestions of Topic Reviews.

(4) RESOLVED that the progress of the Select Committee for Alcohol Abuse and the update on the Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme be noted.