

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Communities Policy Overview Committee held at Droit House, The Stone Pier, Margate, Kent on Wednesday, 9 May 2007.

PRESENT: Mr P W A Lake (Chairman), Mrs C Angell, (Vice Chairman), Mr C Hibberd (substitute for Mr R E King), Mr C J Law, Mr T A Maddison, Mr M J Northey, Mr G Rowe and Mrs E M Tweed.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services and Mr C Hart, Local Member for Margate and Cliftonville.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms A Honey, Managing Director accompanied by Ms J Edwards, Director of Policy and Resources, Mrs J Richardson, Inclusive Services Policy Manager, Ms V Pomery, Director, Turner Contemporary and Mrs C A Singh, Democratic Services Officer.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

30. Minutes *(Item A2)*

(1) Members highlighted amendments that needed to be made to the Minutes before they were signed by the Chairman as follows:-

That Mrs Hohler be included as present;

Minute 29 – delete Mrs Honey’s name;

Minute 26 (10) the names of the three closed libraries be included (Whitfield, Horsmonden and Dymchurch); and

Page 4 of the Appendix “Rogue Traders” to be deleted and replaced with “Rogue Traders”.

(2) The Chairman advised the Committee that he had raised his concerns with the Leader of the Council on the style of minuting Members’ comments on the Budget and Medium Term Plan. He added that the Leader had been speaking with the Democratic Services Manager about reviewing the format for this part of the Minutes for the next round of Budget meetings.

(3) Mrs Angell enquired when a progress report on how to two-tier working would affect Museums, would be submitted to the Committee. Mr Hill agreed to advise Members outside this meeting.

(4) RESOLVED that the Minutes of 26 January 2007 be agreed and signed by the Chairman, subject to the amendments as detailed in paragraph (1) and the action in paragraph (3) above be carried out.

31. Portfolio Holder and Managing Director's Update

(Item B1 – Oral report by Mr M Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services and Ms A Honey, Managing Director)

Bewl Water Education Outdoor Centre

(1) Mr Hill advised that Hilary Lister, who became the first quadriplegic to sail solo across the English Channel in 2005, officially opened the Bewl Water Education Outdoor Centre in Lamberhurst on 26 April. He encouraged Members of the Committee to visit the Centre.

Libraries

(2) Members were pleased to note that the Library Book Issue figures had increased and that the consultation on the libraries restructuring concluded on 30 March and that all comments had been responded to.

Margate Theatre Royal

(3) The Committee noted that there were new funding arrangements for the Theatre Royal.

Olympics

(4) Mr Hill announced that the launch of the Olympic Sports Strategy would take place on Monday, 14 May 2007 at The Hop Farm, Paddock Wood, Maidstone.

Capital Programme

(5) Mr Hill advised that he would be submitting a report on the proposals for Ashford Library and a Kent History Centre to a further meeting.

New Appointment

(6) Ms Honey was pleased to announce that Angela Slaven, the newly appointed Director of the Youth Offending Service and KDAAT was now in post. One of Ms Slaven's first tasks would be to produce a Drug Strategy. This will be brought to this Committee at the next appropriate meeting.

"Vision" for Communities Directorate

(7) Ms Honey advised that the draft Vision for the Directorate would be published for consultation with staff during the next few weeks and that the process would include area meetings with staff and a conference for managers in September 2007.

Emergency Planning

(8) Ms Honey informed the Committee that the Emergency Planning operation worked well dealing with the aftermath of the recent earthquake in Folkestone.

Members' Questions

(9) Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. They were as follow:-

- There should be promotion on the achievements of the Kent Library Service;
- Concerns were raised on the Theatre Royal's viability – a request was made for a summary on the best and worst case scenarios;
- A request was made for the wheelchair access to the water front at Bewl Water Education Outdoor Centre being address. *(Mr Hill agreed to look into this);*
- A request was made for the facilities at Bewl Water to be assessed to enable wheelchair users to share the same facilities as their no disabled friends to avoid them being separated. *(Mrs Tweed responded saying that this may be due to the fire regulations but agreed to look into this and report back to the Committee);*
- Officers were asked whether any changes had been made to libraries restructuring proposals in light of the consultation. *(Ms Honey agreed to produce and circulate a note outside this meeting);*
- A request was made for a report on History working in Kent to come to a future meeting. *(Mr Hill felt that this was a good idea and would be an opportunity to review the whole operation).*

(10) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the Committee wished to convey its thanks to Mr Hill and all the staff involved in the achievements in the Library Service;
- (b) the necessary action be taken to carry out the points raised in paragraphs (5), (6) and (9) above; and
- (c) the oral report be received.

32. Turner Contemporary – Presentation

(Item B2 – Report by Ms V Pomery, Director, Turner Contemporary)

(1) Mr Hill introduced this item explaining that Mr D Chipperfield and his team of architects gave a presentation on the Turner Contemporary Art Gallery on 15 February 2007 in Margate where they received good questions from the audience and good press coverage on the event. David Chipperfield Architects would be unveiling the drawings on 18 June 2007 at the Winters Gardens, Margate.

(2) Following on, Ms Pomery gave an oral presentation using overheads. The Committee viewed a selection of building designs of existing art galleries, and a site map of the land where the Turner Contemporary Art Gallery would be built.

(3) Ms Pomery highlighted some of the key considerations that needed to be made in the design of the new art gallery, such as:-

- the environmental conditions;
- focus on education and space;
- small scale auditorium;
- space for music, seminars and conferences;
- shop space;
- storage space;

- staff space;
- building had to be welcoming;
- access to public and deliveries was very important;
- sustainability of the building (*not just on green/environment issues but cost effective such as the air conditioning will be able to be switched on and off when it is not needed*)
- supports the regeneration of Thanet in creating jobs;
- the learning planning programme.

(4) Ms Pomery explained that the “Turner Contemporary” was a wider concept than just the building of the art gallery and included many projects such as:

- Youth tours;
- Art History courses;
- Drop-in workshops [created through grants];
- Street entertainment;
- Making contacts with the European Union.

(5) The Committee noted that Turner Contemporary had a website www.turnercontemporary.org.uk and a newsletter.

(6) After the presentation the Committee agreed to tour the proposed site of the Turner Contemporary Art Gallery, the Rendezvous car park.

(7) The Committee asked the following questions and made the following comments. They were as follows:-

- (a) Members enquired about the future of the life boat station which was sited on the Rendezvous car park Mr Hill advised that the lifeboat station would remain as the cost for resiting would be approximately £1m but the boat yard could be moved.
- (b) Members enquired how the remaining land on the site would be utilised. Ms Pomery advised that this had not been settled although it was hoped it would include sculptures.
- (c) There was concern raised about the lack of car parking space in Margate.
- (d) An enquiry was made as to how the windows of the gallery would be kept clean from salt and bird droppings. Mr Hill and Ms Pomery advised that there were still issues to be resolved.
- (e) In response to whether there would be a permanent art collection and what percentage of the total collection would be on display, Ms Pomery advised that there would not be a permanent art collection. There would need to be storage space for Art but this would be kept to a minimum;
- (f) In response to whether there was a danger of gaps in the exhibiting calendar, Ms Pomery advised that there had been considerable work undertaken in forward planning for loans of art pieces mainly from the Tate Gallery, which was committed in making its collection accessible to regional galleries;

- (g) In reply to whether Droit House would be part of the function of the art gallery, Ms Pomery advised that this had not been settled, although there were a number of options in the way Droit House could compliment the work of the art gallery;
 - (h) In response to whether there would be plans to link the rail network with entrance to the art gallery, Ms Pomery advised that there had been lengthy discussions with South East Trains. The Committee noted that consideration was also been given to links with Canterbury/coach tours;
 - (i) A suggestion was made that there should be promotion at the Kent County Show in July on the development. Ms Pomery advised that this would be taking place, in the Communities Directorate;
 - (j) Members of the Committee requested copies of the stages for the development. Ms Pomery agreed to provide this;
 - (k) The wall space dedicated for displaying art of the art gallery was requested. Ms Pomery advised that she did not have this information;
 - (l) In response to whether the gallery would be open 7 days a week, Ms Pomery advised that the art gallery would be open 6 days a week with varying opening times in the Summer, Winter and public holidays. Student projects would be held in the Autumn and in the Winter when there were less visitors, there could be academic programmes; and
 - (m) Ms Pomery concluded that the construction of the Art Gallery would commence in 2008 and would be completed in 2010.
- (8) RESOLVED that:-
- (a) the points raised in paragraph (11) be taken on board by the Project Managers of the Turner Contemporary, and;
 - (b) the oral presentation be received.

33. Equality Strategy

(Item B3 – Report by Ms A Honey, Managing Director, Communities)

(Ms J Richardson and Ms J Edwards, Inclusive Services Policy Manager were present for this item)

- (1) Members received a report that sought their views on the Equality Strategy that sets out how the County Council will promote equality and community cohesion and tackle unfair discrimination in Kent.
- (2) Ms Richardson advised that strategy brought the three strands; gender, disability and race equality schemes together to make the County Council's work consistent across the County. Members noted that KCC was one of 3 councils to bring the 3 strands together in a strategy and to be published on 30 April 2007.

(3) Ms Richardson advised that further engagement would take place over the next 6 months on the Strategy with service users and employees to explore issues in greater detail and reflect ongoing work in Directorates on equality impact assessments. This work would feed into a formal review of the Strategy at the end of the year.

(4) Ms Edwards advised that a progress report would be submitted to the November meeting of this Committee.

(5) The Committee was given the opportunity to raise comments and ask questions on the report. They were as follows:-

- excellent report;
- ageism needs flagging up;
- like to see more on hearts and mind and less on strategy;
- referring to pages 26-27 – need to be consistent in using titles;
- need more data, e.g. KCC payment schemes;
- need a less turgid document that clients/customers can read easily;
- need to advertise the fact that all can be included and a bit more on doing duty;
- referring to page 30 “Under Building Regulations ...” needs to be expanded upon;
- “Foreword” did not answer the question “What KCC thinks Equality Diversity is”;
- need to have a sentence in Strategy saying “if you have any problems on diversity, contact us through ...”

(6) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the comments made in paragraph (6) above be noted by the drafting officer;
- (b) a progress report be submitted to the November meeting of this Committee; and
- (c) the report be noted.

34. Positive about Our Future – Kent Children’s and Young People’s Plan
(Item B4 – Report by Mr P M Hill, Cabinet Member for Communities and Ms A Honey, Managing Director)

(1) The Committee received a report that gave an overview of the Children and Young People’s Plan, noted the contribution that services within the Communities Directorate made towards its goal and highlighted the forthcoming inspections of the Children and Young People’s Services.

(2) Ms Edwards circulated copies of "Positive about Our Future" and advised there were due to be several inspections in 2008 including a Corporate Inspection, and Inspections of the Youth Service and of the Youth Offending Service.

(3) Members of the Committee made the following comments on the Plan:-

- The problems of young carers in the Community was not mentioned in the Plan;
- Members felt the issue of young carers in Kent should be addressed by the newly appointed Select Committee, "Carers in Kent";
- Some Members' raised their concerns with the trend of young people saying "We want ...";
- Concerns were raised on the influence of children aged 3-11 by adults;
- Referring to page 22, point 66 – it was felt this needed an answer;
- Referring to pages 28 and 29 under the heading "Looked After Children". It was questioned why the cross discipline across the Directorates was not in the report;
- It was questioned whether elected Members were fulfilling their Corporate Parenting role;

(4) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the comments made in paragraph (3) above be noted by the Drafting Officer; and
- (b) the report be noted.

35. Select Committee Work Programme

(Item C1 – Report by Overview and Scrutiny Manager)

(1) The Committee considered a report on the next phase of the Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme for the period Spring to Autumn 2007 and noted that the next two topics were "Carers in Kent" requested by Adult Services Policy Overview Committee and "Abuse of Alcohol" requested by this Committee.

(2) Members of the Committee requested that the Select Committee for the Abuse of Alcohol, included criminality as part of the terms of reference and "Young Carers in the Community" be included in the review for the Select Committee for "Carers in Kent".

(3) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the Overview and Scrutiny Manager be authorised to liaise with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Liberal Democrat spokesman of this Committee on the draft Terms of Reference for the Topic Review of the Abuse of Alcohol, with consideration for criminality being included and the requests in paragraphs (2) for Young Carers in the community being included in the Select Committee for Carers in Kent;

- (b) the update on the Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme be noted; and
- (c) a further report on the Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.