

Supplementary Information to Agenda Item 4

New Governance Arrangements for Kent County Council – Review Discussion Points for the Committee

Design of the new governance arrangements

Members are reminded that the new governance arrangements were designed to:

- (a) streamline the committee infrastructure;
- (b) make the decision making process more transparent and inclusive;
- (c) support Cabinet Members in making more effective and informed decisions;
- (d) provide non executive Members with a greater opportunity to shape the Council's policies and major decisions; and
- (e) have a cost neutral impact on the Members Allowances Scheme.

New Governance Arrangements

- Apart from the Policy and Resources Committee there have been three cycles of the new Cabinet Committees
- Member and Officer feedback is that the early potential of the new structure is beginning to be realised.
- Agendas for Cabinet Committees are focussing on the big strategic issues, both in terms of policy development, forthcoming decisions and performance management of services
- The volume of business on a number of the Cabinet Committees is leading to long meetings and some Members have questioned their effectiveness. For example, the first meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee resulted in a great deal of time being utilised by the Committee spending time pre-considering proposed minor property decisions. Greater work on agenda planning to make the best use of time and resources will be required.
- Bearing in mind that one of the outcomes of the introduction of the new Governance arrangements was to streamline the committee infrastructure, any proposal put forward by a Cabinet Committee to establish a Sub Committee would need to be considered very carefully by the portfolio holder in consultation with the Leader.
- Members will recall that, in streamlining the Committee infrastructure and in the interests of transparency, Informal Member

Groups (IMGs) were not to be part of the new infrastructure. However, elected Members cross-party and officers have expressed the view that having a minimalist approach to the number and purpose of small task and finish groups, be they IMGs or Member working groups on a time limited basis, were invaluable. If agreed any new proposals for the establishment of an Informal Member Group will need to be discussed and agreed with the Leader, the relevant Cabinet Member and Cabinet Committee Chairman and spokesmen

- The introduction of the new governance arrangements and the new template for an entry into the Forthcoming Decisions List has resulted in a much larger and informative plan of decisions. This has added to the transparency of the decision making process and provided non-executive Members with the opportunity to involve themselves in the decision making process.
- The Education Cabinet Committee does not currently include persons nominated by the Diocesan Boards of Education of the Canterbury and Rochester Dioceses of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Bishop as well as persons elected as representatives of parent governors at schools maintained by the Council as the local education authority for Kent. It should be recalled that under the Local Government Act 2000 these persons have a right to serve on the Scrutiny Committee when that committee is exercising powers in relation to education functions. They do not have a right to sit on the Cabinet Committee, which is an executive committee and not a Scrutiny Committee, constituted under section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000. The Committee may nevertheless wish to consider whether these persons should be invited to attend the Cabinet Committee as a co-opted Member for which they would not be entitled to a vote.
- The Scrutiny Committee has met once since 1 April. To assist with the Head of Democratic Services in establishing the validity of a 'call-in' the attached form has been prepared for the Committee's consideration.
- The current Select Committee Topic Review Programme has been exhausted. Select Committees are time limited, task specific sub-committees of the Scrutiny Committee, appointed to carry out reviews on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee with the same powers as the main committee.

Note:

The Council on 25 October 2012 will be invited to approve changes to the Personnel Management Rules and the Property Management Protocol to reflect the new governance arrangements.

The Council will also be invited to consider a small change to Article 11 Paragraph 11.5, which sets out a statutory requirement for the Council to provide sufficient resources to the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer.

This does not preclude the Council from voluntarily providing the same support to the Head of Paid Service and with that in mind the County Council will be recommended to amend Article 11 Paragraph 11.5 to read as follows:

“Provision of sufficient resources to the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer.

The Council will provide the *Head of Paid Service*, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer with such officers’ accommodation and other resources as are in their opinion sufficient to allow their duties to be performed.”

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Scrutiny Call-In Form



To: Head of Democratic Services

I would like to call-in the decision as detailed below:

Decision made by Cabinet or Cabinet Member:

Date decision made:

Reasons for the call-in:

Have you discussed your concerns over this decision with the Cabinet Member or the Leader of the Council?

What is the proposed recommendation for the Cabinet/Cabinet Member to consider? E.g. what action would you like to see the Cabinet/Cabinet Member take to address the concerns outlined in the call-in, or what needs to be done to alter their decision?

Member(s) calling in the decision

Name

Signature (or email confirmation) Date

This completed form must be delivered to the Head of Democratic Services within the time-scale notified on the appropriate record of decision or decision notices (where appropriate)

Email: scrutiny@kent.gov.uk

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