

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY OVERVIEW CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday 15 February 2007.

PRESENT: Mr E E C Hotson (Chairman), Mr R J E Parker (Vice Chairman), Mr C J Capon, Mr A R Chell, Mrs T Dean, Mr M C Dance, Dr M R Eddy, Mr W A Hayton, (Mr M J Harrison substitute for Mr R A Pascoe), Mr P W A Lake and Mr D Smyth.

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Mrs E Tweed, Lead Member for Community Services.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P D Wickenden, Overview and Scrutiny Manager, Ms D Fitch, Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Policy Overview), Mrs L Miller, Development Officer, Mr N Warren, Consumer Monitoring Manager, Ms T Weir, Staff Officer to the Labour Group Leader.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Membership

The Committee noted that Mrs T Dean had replaced Mrs M Featherstone as a Member of this Committee.

2. Minutes – 10 August 2006

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2006 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme - update (Item 3 - Report by Overview and Scrutiny Manager)

- (1) The Overview and Scrutiny Manager submitted a report updating the Committee on current Topic Reviews and invited the Committee to set out its priorities for the Work Programme for the period Spring 2007 to Autumn 2007.
- (2) He informed Members that the research officers for both the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)/Children's Health Select Committee and the Transitional Arrangements for Young People Select Committee were writing their reports for submission to the Cabinet at Spring meetings.
- (3) Members were reminded that at their August meeting it was agreed that the following topics were the most likely to be programmed for Spring 2007:-
 - Carers in Kent;
 - Developing the Creative Curriculum through partnership working;
 - Accessing Democracy.

- (4) A number of topics were also identified at the August meeting for possible inclusion in the two year Work Programme. These included:-
- Young peoples spiritual, moral, social and cultural development values based on education and behaviour;
 - Student's voice;
 - Communal activities for young people; and
 - Impact of supermarkets and out of town shopping malls and retail parks on businesses in Kent.

Updated information in relation to these topics was circulated with the report.

- (5) The Committee were informed that at the meeting of the Children, Families and Education POC on 16 November 2006 the Committee requested this Committee to consider removing the topic of Primary School Attainment from the Work Programme as the Children, Families and Education POC were satisfied that this subject was being adequately reviewed through the Members Monitoring Group.
- (6) The Committee were reminded that at their meeting in August 2006 it was decided not to include in the Work Programme for the time being a review on the abuse of alcohol. However the Communities POC on 17 November 2006 had expressed their disappointment that this topic had been removed from the current two year Work Programme and felt that it should be given priority.
- (7) A number of Members had also continued to make it known that this was a priority issue for them and had approached Mr Gibbens, the Cabinet Member for Public Health. Mr Gibbens had publicly indicated that he would like to see a short focussed piece of work undertaken, initially desk-top research focussed looking at best practice elsewhere prior to being considered by an Informal Member Group. Mr Wickenden informed Members that Dr David Turner in his team would be available to support an Informal Member Group up until May 2007. In discussion Members agreed that it would be more appropriate for this topic to be the subject of a Select Committee topic review, covering a range of issues wider than the public health.
- (8) The report referred to the possibility of including a piece of work which focused on Looked After Children (LAC) and how their "life outcomes" could be improved.
- (9) Dr Eddy had referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Manager a letter from a County Councillor in West Sussex seeking the possibility of a joint review with colleagues from East Sussex, Kent and West Sussex to look at the issues of climate change and water supply on a regional basis.
- (10) The Overview and Scrutiny Manager set out the resources available to deliver the work programme, which were two full time research officers supporting the Policy Overview Committees Topic Review Programme up until June 2007 when this would reduce to 1.5 full time research officers (the remaining half of part of one of these posts being a contribution to Democratic Services budget savings. In

addition the Committee were reminded that there was a dedicated research officer to the NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(11) The Committee were also reminded that the Overview and Scrutiny Manager currently funded one of the trainee posts from the Advanced Development Programme. Due to budgetary constraints it was unlikely that this trainee post would be funded beyond the end of September 2007 and whilst the placement was recognised as an excellent placement for trainees there would be no automatic guarantee that a trainee would be placed in the unit.

(12) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the Work Programme for Spring 2007 to the end of Autumn 2007, to be started as soon as resources become available, should be as follows:-

- **Carers in Kent**
- **Abuse of Alcohol**

(b) the meeting of the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee on 7 June consider an up date report on the following suggested topics for Select Committee reviews and consider which to include in the next phase of the work programme:-

- **Accessing Democracy** – (taking into account the work of the IMG on Going Local)
- **Developing the Creative Curriculum**
- **Young People's Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, values based education and behaviour**
- **Consultation and participation with children and young people**
- **Provision of activities for young people**
- **Impact of supermarkets and out of shopping malls/retail parks on businesses in Kent**

(c) no action be taken to establish a joint review with colleagues from East Sussex, Kent and West Sussex to look at the issues of climate change and water supply on a regional basis, but that the colleague from West Sussex be informed of the regional mechanisms that were already in place to consider these issues.

(d) the proposed Select Committee topic review on Primary School Attainment be removed from the work programme as requested by the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee.

4. Dates for future meetings

RESOVLED that:-

- (a) the following meetings of the Committee be arranged:-

Thursday 7 June 2007 – 2:00 pm

Thursday 27 September 2007 – 10:00 am

- (b) the programmed meeting of the Committee due to be held on Tuesday 24 July be cancelled.

Chairman

7 June 2007