

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent County Council held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 25 October 2012.

PRESENT:

Mr R E King (Chairman)
Mr E E C Hotson (Vice-Chairman)

Mrs A D Allen, Mr M J Angell, Mr R W Bayford, Mr R H Bird, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr D L Brazier, Mr R E Brookbank, Mr J R Bullock, MBE, Mr R B Burgess, Mr C J Capon, MBE, Ms S J Carey, Mr P B Carter, Mr N J D Chard, Mr A R Chell, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr L Christie, Mrs P T Cole, Mr N J Collor, Mr G Cooke, Mr H J Craske, Mr A D Crowther, Mr J M Cubitt, Mrs V J Dagger, Mr D S Daley, Mr M C Dance, Mrs T Dean, Mr J A Davies, Mr K A Ferrin, MBE, Mr T Gates, Mr G K Gibbens, Mr R W Gough, Mrs E Green, Mr M J Harrison, Mr W A Hayton, Mr C Hibberd, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr D A Hirst, Ms A Hohler, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr P J Homewood, Mr M J Jarvis, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr J D Kirby, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr P W A Lake, Mrs J P Law, Mr R J Lees, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr S C Manion, Mr R F Manning, Mr R A Marsh, Mr M J Northey, Mr J M Ozog, Mr R J Parry, Mr T Prater, Mr K H Pugh, Mr L B Ridings, MBE, Mrs J A Rook, Mr A Sandhu, MBE, Mr J E Scholes, Mr J D Simmonds, Mr C P Smith, Mrs P A V Stockell, Mr B J Sweetland, Mr R Tolputt, Mrs E M Tweed, Mr M J Vye, Mrs C J Waters, Mr J N Wedgbury, Mr C T Wells, Mr M J Whiting, Mrs J Whittle, Mr M A Wickham and Mr A T Willicombe

IN ATTENDANCE: Ben Watts and Peter Sass (Head of Democratic Services)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

162. Apologies for Absence

(1) The Chairman introduced Ben Watts, the Deputy Monitoring Officer, who reported apologies for absence from the following Members:

Mr Bryan Cope
Mr Gordon Cowan
Mr John London
Mr Richard Pascoe
Mr Kit Smith
Mr James Tansley

(2) Mr Roger Gough had also given his apologies as he was speaking at a National Adults & Children's annual conference in Eastbourne and so would join the meeting slightly late.

163. Declarations of Interest

(1) Mr Wedgbury announced that he had been appointed as the union representative for his branch from the trade union. He also declared an interest as a

District Councillor in relation to Item 10 on the agenda, the Motion for Time Limited Debate.

(2) Mr Koowaree declared an interest in Item 8 on the agenda, Peer Review of Children's Services, as his grandson was in care.

164. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2012 and, if in order, to be approved as a correct record

(1) The Chairman asked that the minutes of the meeting of the County Council, held on 13 September 2012 be approved as a correct record, with the minor alteration that the Council agreed to approve the minutes of the Governance and Audit Committee and not simply note them, and, if so, he would sign them.

(2) Mr Christie raised the issue of the full account of the Leader's report that was now included in the Minutes, which he stated covered twelve paragraphs, yet the only mention of the Opposition Group Leader's or Labour Group Leader's response was a line stating that they had responded as was their right under paragraph 1.19(2) of the Constitution. Mr Christie stated that he had done some research and gone back to the Minutes for October 2011 where there was one paragraph on the Leader's speech. He asked if there could be a more balanced record if the Leader's report was to be recorded in such detail.

(3) The Chairman undertook to address this issue with staff in Democratic Services.

(4) Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 13 September 2012, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, with the minor alteration that Council approve the minutes of the Governance and Audit Committee and not simply note them.

165. Chairman's Announcements

(a) Withdrawal of Item from the Agenda

The Chairman announced that the proposer and seconder of Item 9, New Governance Arrangements – 6 month review, had asked for the report to be withdrawn and instead a report would be presented at the December meeting.

(b) Death of Mr Michael Snelling

(1) The Chairman announced that it was with much regret that he had to inform Members of the sudden death of Mike Snelling, Conservative Member for the Gravesham Rural Electoral Division, on Friday 19 October 2012.

(2) He stated that Mr Snelling had played a great part in the work of the Council over a number of years and had been someone who could be looked to for straight-forward common sense and a refreshing approach to any debate he took part in. He stated that Mr Snelling had been well respected both at Borough and County level and that this was reflected in the number of Members who wished to pay tribute to him.

(3) Mr Carter, Mr Christie, Mr Daley, Mr Cubitt, Mr Sweetland, Mr Simmonds, Mr Brazier, Mr Hill, Mr Craske, Mr Parry and Mr Bowles gave tributes to Mr Snelling.

(4) At the end of the tributes, all Members stood in silence in memory of Mr Snelling.

(5) After the silence, it was moved by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice Chairman and:

(6) Resolved unanimously: that this Council desires to record the sense of loss it feels on the sad passing of Mr Mike Snelling and extends to his family and friends our heartfelt sympathy to them in their sad bereavement.

(c) New Member

The Chairman welcomed Mr Robert Harry Bird, the newly elected Liberal Democrat Member for the Maidstone Central Electoral Division, to the County Council.

(d) Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal Launch

The Chairman took the opportunity to remind Members that the annual Poppy Appeal would begin the next day. He stated that there would be a ceremony during which veterans and serving soldiers would be presented with poppies, to mark the start of the period of National Remembrance and the associated Poppy Appeal. This launch would take place in the Lecture Theatre here at 11.00 am and be followed by refreshments in the Stone Hall. Before this the recipients of the poppies would be pinning large poppies onto the railings at the front of County Hall to complete a display of poppies. The Chairman invited Members to come along and watch this before the ceremony.

(e) Petition

(1) The Chairman stated that Mr Mike Angell had notified him of a petition relating to a planning application being determined by KCC either in or close to the village of Shadoxhurst. The Chairman asked Mr Angell to present him with the petition which he duly did.

(2) The Chairman then asked the Chairman of the Planning Applications Committee, Mr John Davies, to formally accept it and investigate the matter and respond to the petitioners in accordance with the Council's petition scheme.

166. Questions

Under Procedure Rule 1.17 (4), 5 questions were asked and replies given.

167. Report by Leader of the Council (Oral)

(1) The Leader dedicated the majority of his speech to the three substantive items on the agenda, the Dilnot Commission; the Peer Review of Children's Services; and the motion for time limited debate.

(2) He stated he was delighted to see that when the National Apprenticeship Service published its figures for apprenticeships across the South East, Kent was far and beyond all other authorities in the South East of England with a massive and dramatic increase in the number of apprenticeships in Kent, some 39% more young people aged 16-25 in modern apprenticeships than the previous 12 months before that, showing the build up and success of Kent Jobs for Kent Young People.

(3) The Leader stated a second piece of very good news was the recent announcement of the Regional Growth Fund bid, known as the TIGER bid, for the Thames Gateway, led by the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership and Kent County Council and also involved Thurrock Council.

(4) With reference to the Peer Review of Children's Services, the Leader stated that he had been interviewed fairly intensively by the LGA peer review team and attended the feedback session at the end of the week and he had congratulated the Member and Officer team on a job well done at the end of that week.

(5) With regard to the Dilnot Commission, the Leader stated that he hoped that the whole County Council would endorse the recommendations urging, as a united front, the government in many ways to introduce Dilnot by 2015.

(6) Finally he stated that he and his group would be voting against the motion tabled for later during the meeting.

(7) In her response Mrs Dean stated that she agreed with the Council's stance on Dilnot in particular and agreed that the increase in the number of apprenticeships in Kent in the past twelve months was very good news. With regard to the Thames Gateway Mrs Dean stated she was delighted that KCC had won that as it seemed to her to be exactly the kind of development that should go on in Kent if it was done in the right way.

(8) She stated that Mr Carter had misconstrued the meaning and purpose of the motion for time limited debate, which may not have been drafted as concisely as it should have been. She stated that she did not oppose at all the need to renegotiate the Section 106 agreements, indeed in response to Mr Carter's report Mrs Dean suggested a meeting between an Administration spokesman and Mr Chittenden to put together a motion that both sides could agree on as she was sure that neither she nor Mr Carter wanted to see the removal of those powers.

(9) Mr Christie spoke in response to the Leader on behalf of Mr Cowan. With regard to the Peer Review Mr Christie stated that he had not been interviewed and this had been a shame; and with reference to the Dilnot Commission he stated he would wait for the debate other than to say that he agreed entirely with the timescale. Mr Christie then turned to a couple of issues that Mr Carter had touched on in relation to children's issues; Birmingham City Council had been found to be inadequate in the provision and safeguarding of children's services and Mr Carter had mislead the Council at its previous meeting about Looked After Children's statistics.

(10) Mr Christie stated that he was surprised that the Leader had not mentioned in his report the prospect of the Paramount resort at Swanscombe, Northfleet.

(11) During his right of reply, the Leader welcomed the fact that all parties were in agreement at the success of the apprenticeship programme to date. He stated that he had had no intention of misleading the County Council at the previous meeting. He had been advised that the number of Looked After Children had gone down by some 25, if this was due to numbers being counted slightly differently that needed to be explained to him. The Leader suggested the motion for time limited debate on today's agenda could be withdrawn, subject to Mrs Dean's views and that working together a collective note to Mr Pickles could be produced stating what the Council's thinking was around the planning flexibilities.

(12) He apologised for leaving out the Paramount announcement. He stated he was only too aware of it and had done an interview with BBC South East in the Conference Centre in Birmingham on the subject.

168. Dilnot Commission on Funding of Care and Support

(1) Mr Gibbens moved, Mrs Whittle seconded, that the County Council note the contents of the report and debate the following motion:

(2) At the heart of the County Council's Adult Social Care Transformation Programme is the aim of supporting more people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

(3) The County Council urges the Government to allocate the funding necessary to implement the Dilnot Commission's recommendations by 2015, to alleviate the stress and anxiety that the funding of care and support is causing to many of Kent's older residents and their families.

(4) RESOLVED that these recommendations be approved.

169. Peer Review of Children's Services

(Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director Families and Social Care, gave a short presentation on the Peer Review)

(1) Mrs Whittle proposed, Mr Gibbens seconded that the County Council note the contents of this report.

(2) RESOLVED that this recommendation be approved and the Council records its thanks to the Cabinet Member, other Members, Mr Ireland and his team for all their hard work in this area.

170. New Governance Arrangements for Kent County Council

This item was withdrawn from the agenda during the Chairman's Announcements.

171. Motion for Time Limited Debate

(1) The Chairman announced that following assurances from the Leader Mrs Dean and Mr Chittenden had agreed to withdraw the motion to a joint response to Mr Pickles to be drafted.

(2) Mr Christie stated that he hoped the Labour Group would be granted if not input at least sight of the agreed response. The Chairman agreed that this was fair and reasonable.

172. Quarterly Report on Urgent Key Decision: Contractual Arrangements for Academies post Building Schools for the Future

(1) Mr A King proposed, Mr Whiting seconded that the County Council note this report.

(2) RESOLVED that this recommendation be noted.

173. Minutes for Approval

(1) Mr Long proposed, Mr Ferrin seconded that the Minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 25 September 2012 be approved.

(2) RESOLVED: that the Minutes be approved.

174. Minutes for Information

Pursuant to Procedure Rule 1.10(8) and 1.23(4), the minutes of the Planning Applications Committee meeting held on 9 October 2012 and the Regulation Committee meeting held on 5 September 2012 were noted.