

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Communities Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 17 December 2013.

PRESENT: Mrs S V Hohler (Chairman), Mr M J Angell (Vice-Chairman), Mrs P Brivio, Mr B E Clark, Mrs M E Crabtree, Mr T A Maddison, Mr M J Northey, Mr C R Pearman, Mr C Simkins, Mr A Terry, Mr M A Wickham and Mrs Z Wiltshire

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms A Honey (Corporate Director, Customer and Communities), Mr G Adey (Head of Registration & Coroners), Mr N Baker (Head of Integrated Youth Services), Mr S Beaumont (Head of Community Safety and Emergency Planning), Mr S Charman (Head of Consultation and Engagement), Mr D Crilley (Director of Community Cultural Services), Ms L Egercz (Project Manager), Mr G Rusling (Public Rights of Way Operations Manager), Ms E Sanderson (Strategic Business Advisor (Corporate & Communities)), Mr D Shipton (Head of Financial Strategy), Ms A Slaven (Director of Service Improvement), Mr K Tilson (Finance Business Partner - Customer & Communities), Mrs L Whitaker (Democratic Services Manager (Executive)) and Ms A Evans (Business Support Officer)

#### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### **18. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda** (Item A3)

None.

#### **19. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 September 2013** (Item A4)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2013 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

#### **20. Portfolio Holder's and Corporate Director's update (verbal)** (Item A5)

(1) The Cabinet Member for Community Services reported the following information to the Committee:

- (i) Alan Pughsley had been selected as the new Kent Police Commissioner and this would be confirmed at a meeting of the Police and Crime Panel later in the month.
- (ii) He thanked officers for the work that had been done within the Directorate and the successes that had been achieved.
- (iii) The Libraries Deep Dive report would not be received today as originally planned. Library Services work undertaken by the Directorate had been put on hold and had been overtaken by the Transformation programme.

Before any decisions were taken on the matter it would be discussed by a Committee.

- (iv) A new cultural hub in Tunbridge Wells had been mooted along the same lines as the Beaney in Canterbury. If it were to proceed it would bring together several cultural services.
- (v) The recent floods had been well managed thanks to the measures put in place over the years. Some evacuations did take place and had been well managed.
- (vi) Mr Hill thanked the Emergency Planning Team for their work during the recent floods. Some evacuations had taken place and these had been well managed.

(2) The Corporate Director for Customer and Communities reported the following information to the Committee:

- (i) Troubled Families – the programme continued as a priority for the Directorate and the Council as a whole. The programme now engaged with 1500 families and more than 12,000 contacts from the Family Intervention Project (FIP) to families with, often complex, needs.
- (ii) That she and the Cabinet Member had visited two families, who had both reported positive changes as a result of the programme.
- (iii) A conference would be held in February 2014 to establish how the work undertaken could be embedded further.
- (iv) Youth Justice Convention had been held in Birmingham this year. Both the Corporate Director and the Cabinet Member attended. A green paper relating to young offenders leaving custody was expected in the New Year and was awaited with interest.
- (v) The convention also reviewed the alternatives to custody. It was well documented that once young people entered the custodial system they often struggled to break the cycle. Work continued with magistrates to ensure that any alternative to custody was viable.
- (vi) Finally, the convention addressed the issue of Looked After Children entering the prison population. 25% of the adult prison population had once been Looked After Children and work was being undertaken with Surrey County Council to improve the experience of those children in care and care leavers.
- (viii) Transformation – It was clear that the transformation programme would have a significant impact on the Customer & Communities Directorate and she thanked staff for their continued hard work in difficult circumstances.

(3) Following comments received and questions raised the following further information was provided for the Committee:

- (i) That the Troubled Families programme would remain as a complete programme despite any changes implemented by the Transformation programme. It would not be fragmented.
- (ii) The programme worked across all relevant agencies including social services. Where children became Looked After Children and were then returned to home the Troubled Families programme would become involved where appropriate, and for as long as appropriate.
- (iii) Children's Centres were involved in the multi agency work that linked into the Troubled Families Programme.

- (iv) Community Justice Awards had ceased to exist as the national NVQ programme no longer recognised them as part of their accreditation system, owing to a lack of success in other areas of the country. Work continued to establish an alternative.
- (v) That 12 services were subject to review and market testing within the first phase of the Transformation programme and this information was provided in more detail in the 'Facing the Challenge' papers to the Council.

## **21. Creation of an integrated Kent Resilience Team**

*(Item B1 – Stuart Beaumont, Head of Community Safety and Emergency Planning, was in attendance for this item)*

(1) The Committee received a report from the Cabinet Member and Corporate Director seeking endorsement of, or comments on, the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member to undertake all necessary arrangements to create and implement an integrated emergency planning team involving personnel from KCC, Kent Police and Kent Fire & Rescue Services.

(2) The Cabinet Member introduced the paper. He spoke about the benefits of the proposal in both financial and efficiency terms and maintained that the integration and co-location of the team would create a stronger resilience. Co-location was key as proved by Margate Task Force.

(3) The Chairman stated that Kent Fire & Rescue Authority would also consider the decision to integrate this week.

(4) Mr Beaumont spoke to the item. He reported the following information for the Committee:

- (i) KCC, Kent Fire & Rescue Service and Kent Police each had statutory responsibilities related to planning for and responding to civil emergencies. He stated that in recent months these plans had been tested, both on the Sheppey and the Queen Elizabeth II Bridges.
- (ii) He stressed that although the integration project was expected to deliver savings the primary motivation was to improve the service delivered.
- (iii) Should the decision be agreed an integrated team would be established in April 2014.

(5) In response to questions and comments, the following information was put to the Committee:

- (i) That the first year of the project would be spent on setting up the new team. There were over 30 different organisations that had statutory responsibilities for emergency planning. There would be a review of the team during the last quarter of the first year to ensure it was fit for purpose and optimally efficient.
- (ii) That in year one staff would be seconded from their current employer. After that, and considered as part of the review, staff may be transferred to the new team.
- (iii) Unions and staff had been consulted and both had been supportive of the proposals.

- (iv) Kent Fire & Rescue Authority were offering Godlands as a physical base for the team.
- (v) It was likely that the Team Manager would be a KCC officer as it was envisaged that there would be ten KCC staff and three or four from both the Police and Fire & Rescue teams. Overall management would be shared between the three key organisations.
- (vi) Integrating the teams would provide a reduction in revenue costs and also reduce duplication of process for all three parties.
- (vii) That the Coastguard and Ambulance services were not currently included in the proposal for an integrated service. This was a deliberate attempt to ensure that the process was as simple as possible. Both organisations were statutory partners on the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) and at a recent meeting of the Forum the proposed model of integration had been unanimously accepted. Further integration would be considered in year two of the project.
- (viii) That the current service was run as a shared service with a pooled budget and the Kent Resilience Forum providing the statutory governance. Further detailed work would be conducted in relation to service level agreements between organisations.
- (ix) Finally, he reported that the contributions made by various organisations to the KRF pooled budget had the potential to reduce should savings be realised, thus alleviating pressures on Forum partners in the coming years.

(6) It was RESOLVED that the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member to undertake all necessary arrangements to create and implement an integrated emergency planning team involving personnel from KCC, Kent Police and Kent Fire & Rescue Services be endorsed.

## **22. Customer Relationship Management System Funding**

*(Item B2 – Lynn Egercz, Project Manager, was in attendance for this item)*

(1) The Committee received a report on the procurement of a Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) which would allow the Council to complete 'end to end' processes to customers either online, by phone or through face-to-face contact. Customers had a growing expectation for convenient self-service and CRM is the tool which will deliver this, enabling KCC to become a Digital Council.

(2) The Chairman reported that some of the financial information contained within the report was exempt from publication and should not be discussed in open session. The Committee agreed to proceed on that basis and the Corporate Director also confirmed her agreement.

(3) The Cabinet Member introduced the report stating that it was a comprehensive report on an important subject as to deliver services effectively and efficiently the CRM system was essential. The savings projected were critical to the Council's overall targets.

(4) Mr Crilley spoke to this item. He reported the following information to the Committee with regards to the implementation of the system:

- (i) The proposal had been to various discussion forums including Corporate Management Team, Budget Programme Board, Procurement Board and

the Project Advisory Board and at each stage the proposal had been refined and improved.

- (ii) CRM was a piece of software that would enable the Council to pull together and store all customer data together to form a clear and concise picture. Without that ability the council could not improve its services to customers further.
- (iii) The system would enable KCC to oversee and analyse those services delivered in house as well as those commissioned out to other organisations, something which would be crucial as the transformation of the Council continued.
- (iv) That much business was now conducted online and users had an expectation that this would be not only possible, but simple. Some systems currently in use at KCC were not able to provide this level of service as they had become outdated. In addition many different systems were being run simultaneously across the organisation and there was no one area where all the data could be held centrally. The Contact Centre currently had to manage 28 systems at any one time that were not integrated. CRM would sweep away this plethora of different systems and create one unified system and produce one complete record per customer.
- (v) Once authorised CRM would be implemented in summer/autumn 2014.

(5) In response to comments and questions from Members Mr Crilley confirmed the following information:

- (i) That users of council services would each have a complete record of activity and therefore targeted information could be distributed where appropriate, for example offering additional services. However members were assured that the information would be appropriate and limited in order not to overwhelm users. Furthermore, the introduction of such marketing would be gradual.
- (ii) Officers would be mindful that not everyone was able to conduct business online and the response to service users would be tailored to meet what were sometimes multiple and complex needs. CRM was not intended to depersonalise the service delivered but rather a way of taking people out of the queue who did not need to be in it.
- (iii) In order that those people for whom the internet was the appropriate way to contact the council could do so quickly and easily, officers were working closely with colleagues on the development of the new website which would be launched in spring/summer 2014.

(6) In order for the Committee to consider the financial implications of CRM Mr Crilley and Ms Egercz, Project Manager, Customer and Communities spoke to the item and provided the following information:

- (i) There were three key elements that went together to form the funding for the support of the system and these were:
  - Service redesign of existing services that did not currently require the CRM;
  - Contact Point efficiencies, including the reduction of FTEs by provision of services more efficiently and online services; and
  - Channel Shift and future business cases.

- (ii) This was not, as already reported, a request for new funding but instead came from the existing budget

(7) It was RESOLVED that: the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member to authorise the procurement for the development of a Customer Relationship System be endorsed.

### **23. Transfer of Coroner's Officers**

*(Item B3 – Giles Adey, Coroner's Services Manager was in attendance for this item)*

(1) The Cabinet Committee received a report from the Cabinet Member and Corporate Director setting out details of the role of the Coroner's Officer and an agreement with Kent Police to transfer the employment of 15 FTE Coroner's Officers from Kent Police to Kent County Council on 1 January 2014.

(2) The Cabinet Member introduced the report by stating that the proposed decision brought both challenges and opportunities. The challenge was that the Council had a statutory duty to deliver the service in question and as a result there would be financial implications for KCC's budget. However there would also be an opportunity to rationalise the current arrangements and make significant savings while providing a more efficient service.

(3) Mr Adey, Coroner's Services Manager spoke to this item and offered the following information:

- (i) Historically Coroner's Officers had been employed by the Police, they were responsible for taking statements and making enquiries into circumstances surrounding deaths, making arrangements for post mortems, liaising with families and interested persons and arranging and attending post mortems.
- (ii) The Coroner's and Justice Act 2009 came into effect on 25 July 2013 and for the first time recognised in law the role of Coroner's Officers, and placed on local authorities a statutory responsibility for their provision.
- (iii) Currently the service was somewhat disjointed. Coroners were based in solicitors' offices or their own homes and not employed by KCC, while Coroner's Officers were employed by Kent Police and KCC with statutory responsibility for the service. The new legislation offered the opportunity for a much more holistic approach to be taken.
- (iv) In designing the new model co-location of Coroners and Coroner's Officers offered obvious benefits, as highlighted in the earlier item on emergency planning and the Kent Resilience Team. Coroners Officers transferred to KCC on 1 January 2014 and once this had happened there would be a formal consultation on a new structure.
- (v) It would not be necessary to implement TUPE transfer as the function was an administrative one but any staffing issues would be managed under the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice (COSOP) guidelines.
- (vi) The role of Medical Examiner had arisen from the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and for the past two years KCC had been waiting for a formal consultation from the Department of Health about how this would work in practice. This was a new role and the intention was that the Medical Examiner would independently assess all deaths not referred to the

Coroner. Currently 50% of deaths were referred to the Coroner but the expectation was that in the future only 25% of deaths would be dealt with by the Coroner and the remaining 75% would be reviewed by the Medical Examiner and referred if necessary.

- (vii) The total cost of implementing this service across England and Wales was estimated at approximately £48m. The intention was that any costs would be funded by a fee payable by the family of the deceased and therefore would be cost neutral to the local authority. An announcement from the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt was due later today about the Department of Health's proposals and timetable for implementation

(4) In response to comments and questions from Members Mr Adey confirmed the following information:

- (i) Pilots elsewhere in the country had shown that although fewer deaths were being referred to the Coroner, the number of post mortems had increased slightly, as had the number of lengthy inquests and therefore there was a potential for the cost of the Coroner's Office to increase in the future. Negotiations continued with Government to establish responsibility for any increase in costs if realised.
- (ii) A 'Joint Negotiation Committee' negotiated Coroner payment levels nationally, to which the Local Authority and local Coroners had regard when setting payment levels in Kent. There were currently four Coroners in Kent, one full time and three part time. Full time Coroners were paid on a pro-rata basis dependent on case load, those who were part time were able to claim long inquest payments and these could run into large amounts. The Chief Coroner was working on proposals to standardise pay.
- (iii) In the pilot areas, no charge had been made to families of the deceased for the services of the Medical Examiner. Representations had been made to government that this aspect of the proposals remained untested and asking that the government fund the cost of the Medical Examiner rather than pass the costs to families.
- (iv) That there was currently no public mortuary in Kent and therefore KCC contracted facilities from the NHS. There were medium term contracts until 2017 and one option being explored was the construction of one or more public mortuaries to replace those contracts when they expired. In the future a paper would be prepared looking at the costs of building a public mortuary.
- (v) That the role of the Medical Examiner would be to scrutinise deaths not referred to the Coroner in order to provide independent medical scrutiny of death certificates signed by a Doctor. The reduction in deaths being referred to the Coroner would be achieved by the Department of Health legislating which deaths would be referred to the Coroner.

(5) It was RESOLVED that: the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member to transfer the employment of Coroner's Officers from Kent Police to KCC be endorsed.

## **24. Holly Hill Traffic Experiment**

*(Item B4 – Graham Rusling, Public Rights of Way & Access Manager, was in attendance for this item)*

(1) The Cabinet Committee received a report from the Cabinet Member and Corporate Director about making permanent the experimental scheme of Traffic Regulation (Traffic Prohibition) on Byways Open To All Traffic (BOATs) at Holly Hill, near Snodland following the experimental scheme which had been in operation for over 12 months.

(2) The Cabinet Member introduced the report, reporting that it was a straightforward case of making a successful trial a permanent order.

(3) Mr Rusling spoke to the item and reported the following information to Members:

- (i) That some objections had been received to the order and these would be given due consideration by the Cabinet Member on deliberation of the decision. The objections reflected a feeling within the vehicular using community that traffic orders penalised the majority for the misdemeanours of the minority.
- (ii) That although those misusing the area were a minority, they were a significant minority. The area the scheme had targeted had been severely damaged owing to misuse and in the twelve month closure it had been completely transformed and restored.
- (iii) A permit scheme was now in operation and users had to agree to a set of Terms and Conditions when they joined the scheme. If users did not abide by the T&Cs their permits were revoked. Two access by permit schemes for BOATs were already in place at Bredhurst and Lenham and the three schemes had been amalgamated and the scheme was now run at a cost of approx £10 per week. Permits were not given to offenders.
- (iv) The scheme also included routes in Medway and officers in both authorities had worked closely to ensure a sensible and effective solution which transcended local authority boundaries.
- (v) The scheme was dependent largely on barriers for successful enforcement and therefore a large police presence was not required to make the scheme a success.

(4) In response to comments raised and questions received the Committee received the following further information:

- (i) The scheme relied on those people in receipt of permits abiding by the terms and conditions of that permit and as yet no permit user had transgressed.
- (ii) That in the future reports such as this one would be accompanied by illustrations of the site and any damage suffered.

(5) Members requested a more definitive paper be brought to a future meeting with a view to rolling out the scheme.

(6) It was RESOLVED that: the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member to make permanent the experimental scheme of traffic regulation at Holly Hill be endorsed.

## **25. Youth Service Transformation Model inc. Deal Youth Hub decision**

*(Item B5 – Nigel Baker, Head of Integrated Youth Services, was in attendance for this item)*



(1) The Cabinet Committee received an update report on the progress made to implement the new model for the delivery of youth work services in the county since January 2013. The report set out for the Committee a summary of the new delivery model, and provided an analysis of quantitative and qualitative performance for both direct delivery and commissioned services during Quarters 1 and 2 of 2013-14.

(2) The Cabinet Committee were also asked to consider and either endorse or make recommendations on the Cabinet Member Decision to proceed with the construction of a new Youth Hub for the Dover District, to be located in Deal.

(3) The Cabinet Member introduced the report stating that it had been delayed in order to ensure that it took account of the full evidence of the Youth Service Transformation. He reported that the quantity of services being delivered exceeded targets set and the quality of those services was also good, although it in some areas, work continued toward this end. He and the Corporate Director had recently visited a number of commissioned services in East Kent and were pleased to report that the work being undertaken was encouraging.

(4) Mr Baker spoke to the item and reported the following information to Members:

- (i) The transformation had been launched on 1 January 2013 and had been a joint venture with young people, staff and borough and districts for two years before that.
- (ii) The new service was 'owned' by the County Council but with vastly increased commissioning of services. KCC now delivered fewer services directly but instead, engaged with 23 groups to provide and commission services, all but one of which were Kent based.
- (iii) KCC delivered a core service which was the same in each district. There was one hub in each area as well as school based and street based services. In addition county wide services such as Outdoor Education Centres and the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards were also provided. These services were overlayed by a commissioning budget of £1.6m which is not equally distributed throughout the County. This was now completely awarded.
- (iv) The hubs were usually housed in an existing building, many of which were refurbished, however in one areas (Dover) a new building was commissioned.
- (v) Street based youth workers now had state of the art mobile facilities to support their work.
- (vi) The services, whether they were directly delivered by KCC or commissioned, were both quality assured in the same way. Each project had quantitative and qualitative performance targets captured on a single Information Management System. Observations were carried out by both officers and young people. Observations were undertaken by visits and currently there had been 106 visits by officers and 28 by young inspectors. The visits by young people were unannounced and recorded their impressions of the service as a 'first time' user, the officer visits provided professional opinion of what the services should look like and where they should be.

*[The results of the 28 visits carried out by the young people are attached to these Minutes for information].*

- (vii) Quantitative measures were in place looking at attendance and outcomes such as certificates and qualifications. There had been a 30% increase in attendance and a 13% increase in outcomes across the county since the service launched.
- (viii) Quality assurance work had led to immediate impacts, one of which was the requirement to produce session plans and record the outcomes of that plan; KCC was currently working with providers in this area. In addition work was being undertaken to identify outcome opportunities more easily. Young people's comments had also resulted in actions for providers. Importantly differences were not reported between KCC delivered and commissioned services.
- (ix) Members of Kent Youth County Council (KYCC) and young people across the county were all taking part to improve the quality of the service.
- (x) KYCC elections were held last month and had attracted 23,000 votes. This was now a fully online process and was almost back to levels achieved in the past when votes were collected by hand by officers from secondary schools countywide, a system which had proved unsustainable.
- (xi) Improvements continued to be seen in the number of Duke of Edinburgh Award golds being achieved and in Outdoor Education provision, usage was rising. Youth Advisory Groups were being chaired by elected members and meeting successfully.

(5) The Chairman congratulated Mr Baker and officers on the successful work of the transformation to date.

(6) In response to comments and questions from Members, Mr Hill and Mr Baker confirmed the following information relating to the transformation:

- (i) Mr Hill agreed with a Committee member that the provision of services in rural areas had a large part to play in the transformation process but needed to begin in the areas themselves via outreach workers and volunteers with support from KCC as it was not possible to set up permanent centres in all villages.
- (ii) Mr Baker reported that by its nature street based work was flexible. He described an example cited by an Ofsted Inspector's visit to Eccles one evening where a street based mobile unit had been set up in a bus stop with lights and hot drinks etc. The Inspector reported that it was the best street based work she had ever encountered. The street based youth worker had not planned to set up in the bus stop and the whole event had been intuitive. He was slightly concerned by the street based scores, however a large proportion of this work was commissioned and therefore new, and it would take time to establish links with young people.
- (iii) Mr Baker described the hubs as the core of youth work provision across each district and the only element still delivered by the local authority. Support staff and team managers were based there alongside other agencies such as KIASS. He emphasised the importance of hubs as a youth service first and an administrative base second.

(7) The Committee continued to consider the proposed decision element of the report before them relating to the new hub at Deal.

(8) The Cabinet Member described the proposed decision to construct a new youth hub for the Dover District to be based in Deal.

(9) Mr Baker shared the following information:

- (i) In relation to comments received from a Committee member earlier in the debate he spoke about the closure of Archers Court and the provision of a new hub. Following consultation the location of the proposed hub had been moved from Dover to Deal but the hub as reported previously would not be the sole provider of youth work in the district. Outreach and other commissioned work would continue and this would include the Buckland Estate.
- (ii) Funding was now in place for the construction of the hub and Dover District Council had confirmed a contribution of £200,000 and provision of a site adjacent to the Tides Leisure Centre. He hoped it would provide an excellent amenity for young people.
- (iii) Services would continue to operate from the existing Linwood Youth Centre until the new hub was built to ensure that there was no cessation of services.

(10) It was RESOLVED that: the update report on Youth Services be noted and the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member to proceed with the construction of a new Youth Hub for the Dover District, to be located in Deal be endorsed.

## **26. Review of Member Grants**

*(Item B6 – Steve Charman, Head of Consultation & Engagement, was in attendance for this item)*

(1) The Cabinet Committee received a report on the proposal for a new combined Members Grant Scheme that would deliver annual base savings in the region of £1.42m, mistakenly included in the report as £1.32m. The paper indicated how this new scheme would work and the benefits and impact for Members, namely a reduction in grant but an increase in the flexibility for members to spend it as they wish.

(2) The Cabinet Committee was asked to comment on and endorse the proposal, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Members for Community Services and Transport and Environment with regards to the new Member Grant Scheme as outlined in the paper. The Cabinet Committee was asked to support any 2013/14 underspend being used to fund/part fund any adaptations that may be required to the existing IT system within EHW.

(3) The Cabinet Member explained that the background to the report was that significant savings were required within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Member Grants would have to bear their share of these savings. To this end a root and branch review of all grant schemes was being undertaken. All existing grants would be cancelled and a new grant scheme was proposed where each Member would have £25,000 to be spent at their discretion on either Communities or Highways projects.

(4) The Chairman informed the Committee that she had received an amendment, which was in two parts. She explained that the first part was a request that the

matter be referred to the next full Council meeting and the second was in regard to the ability to rollover any money to the following year.

(5) A discussion followed where it was established that any money not spent in 2013/14 would not be rolled over but would be used to fund the transformation process of the scheme. It was anticipated that from 2014/15 and onwards funds could be rolled over two years, to enable large highways schemes. The details of this are still to be finalised however. The Members who had submitted the amendment, Mr Maddison and Mrs Brivio, agreed that on this basis the amendment would be withdrawn.

(6) The Committee discussed the first part of the amendment, regarding the discussion of the grant scheme as an agenda item at the February Council meeting. The amendment was proposed by Mr Maddison and seconded by Mrs Brivio.

(7) Following a request for guidance Mrs Whitaker informed the Committee that the Committee could send a report to a normal meeting of the Council but could not put forward an item for the agenda. In addition she reiterated that, as the Chairman had stated, the 13 February 2014 was the Budget meeting and therefore the agenda would be limited to discussion of the Budget. If the amendment was agreed, and a report put forward it would be submitted to a different, later, meeting of the Council. A member of the Committee added that the Member Fund would be included within the budget and that this would provide Members with the opportunity to address the matter.

(8) Members discussed the paper; different views were received regarding the generosity or otherwise of the proposal and the importance of the scheme to local members.

(9) Mr Charman confirmed that, although it varied year to year, there were some Members who did not spend the full amount available to them.

(10) The second amendment was also withdrawn and it was RESOLVED that the new Member Grant Scheme as outlined in the paper be endorsed and any 2013/14 underspend being used to fund/part fund any adaptations that may be required to the existing IT system within EHW be supported.

## **27. Customer & Communities Performance Dashboard and Half Year Business Plan Monitoring**

*(Item C1 – Richard Fitzgerald, Head of Integrated Youth Services, was in attendance for this item)*

(1) The Cabinet Committee received a report containing mid-year Business Plan monitoring. The report provided highlights of achievements to date for the Divisions within Customer and Communities and the Directorate Dashboard which showed progress made against targets set for Key Performance Indicators.

(2) Mr Fitzgerald introduced the report for the Committee. He described the business plan monitoring and the projects and developments for each service. The report was positive and showed successful progress.

(3) The second part of the report monitored performance against Key performance indicators, the majority of which were green or amber. Two red indicators remained and full commentary on each was included in the report.

(4) No questions or comments were received.

(5) It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

## **28. Customer & Communities Directorate and Portfolio Financial Monitoring 2013/14**

*(Item C2 – Kevin Tilson, Finance Business Partner - Customer & Communities, was in attendance for this item)*

(1) The Committee received a report of the Cabinet Member detailing the second quarter's full budget monitoring report for 2013/14, as reported to Cabinet on 2 December 2013.

(2) Mr Tilson introduced the report for the Committee. In particular he reported the following:

- (i) That the report included details of movements since the quarter one report. Specifically the previously reported £140,000 underspend now stood at £2.4million largely as a result of vacancy management in anticipation for budget reductions for 2014/15, further underspend on the Kent Support & Assistance (KSAS) service and in relation to effective contract management for the supporting people programme.

(3) In response to comments made and questions raised the Committee heard the following further information:

- (i) That the Communities Directorate continued to find savings. The £2.4millions reported would not reoccur in the next financial year as they would have been delivered or redistributed depending on decision due by Cabinet and Council on the 2014/15 budget.
- (ii) That where underspends on KCC funded services occurred as a result in reduction of demand/increase in income, then this would be reflected in the next year's budget. KSAS had agreed to award non-cash help for residents in the form of goods or food, yet the budget from central government (a two year pilot) had been based on the previous delivery model, which included cash awards. This helped to explain the lower uptake. There were not believed to be barriers to take up. In addition any monies underspent on the KSAS fund this year would be ring-fenced for year two of the pilot and be available for distribution in 2014/15.

(4) It was resolved that the quarter two financial information be noted.

## **29. Consultation on 2014/15 Revenue Budget**

*(Item D1 – Dave Shipton, Head of Financial Strategy and Steve Charman, Head of Consultation and Engagement were in attendance for the item)*

(1) The Committee received a report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement providing details of the budget consultation on the forthcoming Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan launched on 8 November 2013.

(2) The Chairman reported that this item was the precursor to a report to the Committee in January detailing the outcomes of the consultation and a fuller picture of the proposed budget for consideration by Council in February.

(3) Mr Shipton introduced the report and said the aim of the consultation was to engage with and better inform Kent residents and businesses of the financial challenges for the authority as a result of: reductions in funding from central government; additional demands on spending; and restrictions on the ability to raise council tax.

(4) Mr Charman (Head of Consultation and Engagement) and Mr Shipton gave a presentation about the consultation on the Budget 2014/15 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/17. *[Available to view in full on the council's website]*

(5) Mr Shipton spoke of the work undertaken with the Council's consultants and the exercises conducted to seek the views of residents of Kent, including the in-depth exercises with statistically relevant control groups.

(6) The final draft budget would be considered by Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> January and agreed by full Council in February.

(7) In response to questions received and comments made the Committee received the following information:

(i) That although it was possible for a member of the public to respond to the on line questionnaire more than once, the work with groups representative of the demographics in Kent, called control groups, would be checked against the on line results so that any obvious anomalies could be identified.

(ii) That it was felt that external consultants added value to the process but each year that value would be assessed. Similarly the consultants used would also be reviewed yearly

(8) The Cabinet Member congratulated officers and the consultants on the comprehensive consultation process that would allow the Cabinet and Council to have a full picture of the concerns of residents of Kent when considering the budget in January and February

(9) It was RESOLVED that the consultation process be noted.