

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 12 November 2013.

PRESENT: Mr R J Parry (Chairman), Mr M Baldock, Mr G Cowan, Mrs T Dean, Mr C P D Hoare, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr J E Scholes (Vice-Chairman), Mrs P A V Stockell and Mr R Truelove

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M J Angell

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr R Hallett (Head of Business Intelligence), Mr R Moys (Head of European Policy), Mr A Corcoran (Traffic Schemes & Member Highway Fund Manager), Ms E Sanderson (Strategic Business Advisor (Corporate & Communities)), Ms D Fitch (Democratic Services Manager (Council)) and Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Officer)

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### **30. Introduction/Webcast Announcement**

*(Item A1)*

1. The Chairman welcomed Members to the Scrutiny Committee meeting. For the benefit of new Members and the webcast Committee Members introduced themselves and which division they represented.

#### **31. Election of Vice-Chairman**

*(Item A4)*

1. The Chairman asked for nominations for Vice Chairman.
2. Mr King proposed and Mrs Stockell seconded Mr Scholes as Vice Chairman.

*Carried: 6 votes for, 5 against, 0 abstentions (Chairman's casting vote)*

RESOLVED that Mr J Scholes be elected Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee.

#### **32. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2013**

*(Item A5)*

1. In response to a question from a Committee Member it was confirmed that the minutes of the meeting on 17 April 2013 should have appeared on this agenda for approval and would form part of the agenda for the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2013 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

### **33. Select Committee Work Programme** *(Item B1)*

#### Select Committee Proposal - Commissioning

1. Mr Angell introduced the first Select Committee proposal, a review into Commissioning. He set out the reasons for the review; the Select Committee would focus on removing barriers to entry for the provision of KCC services from new providers, particularly small to medium sized enterprises and members of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.
2. In response to a question Mr Angell explained that the Select Committee should report to County Council on 15 May 2014.
3. Members agreed that this was a vitally important topic. Changes to the Commissioning process were essential to drive down cost.
4. Richard Hallett confirmed that it was possible to resource this review with a Research Officer from the Business Intelligence Team but that it would mean that this resource would be diverted from other tasks.

#### Select Committee Proposal – Review of Kent’s European Relationship

5. Mr King introduced the second Select Committee proposal, a review of Kent’s European Relationship. This Select Committee would look at what had been achieved between 2009 and 2013 in difficult economic times, what the benefit was to trade and lessons to be learned for the future. This Select Committee would report to County Council on 27 March 2014.
6. One Member expressed his concern about the short timescale for this review, that it might be a more in depth piece of work if it reported to County Council during summer 2014.
7. It was considered that Kent’s relationship with Europe was fundamental to the growing economy of Kent.
8. Some Members expressed the view that this review could be a desktop exercise, a statement of what has been achieved which could be reported back to the relevant Committee. There was a suggestion that the review was delayed to enable the issues and scope to be re-drawn with tighter and more cohesive aims and objectives. The proposal form should confirm how this review would contribute to the corporate objectives of KCC and incorporate the concerns of some Members of the Scrutiny Committee.
9. Mr King explained that he understood the points that had been made, he assured Members that, if the Select Committee was established, it would devote time at it’s first meeting to making sure that there were detailed Terms of Reference.

10. Other Members welcomed this Select Committee which would set out what Kent had gained and lost in its relationship with Europe as the Front Line County.

Select Committee Proposal – KCC policy towards traffic speed restrictions and methods of implementing them

11. Mrs Dean introduced her Select Committee proposal on traffic speed restrictions and explained that this review had originally been suggested 12 months ago and it was accepted that the County Council had moved on since then. The proposer was content for the review to be scheduled for 12 months time. The Select Committee had been proposed following concerns about traffic speed and there were also concerns about the Council's policy of turning off streetlights in some areas and any changes as a result of this decision.

12. In response to a question Mr Corcoran explained that areas where streetlights were to be turned off would still be subject to a 30mph speed limit but it would be necessary to implement a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to ensure that the 30mph was enforceable.

13. In relation to the proposed Select Committee review Mr Corcoran explained that it was expected that most of the issues raised by the proposal would be covered by the Casualty Reduction Strategy (which was expected to be submitted to the Environment, Highways and Waste Cabinet Committee in December 2013) (POST MEETING NOTE: This would now be submitted to the Cabinet Committee in April 2014) and the recently adopted 20mph policy. It was considered that this review might be more appropriate if it were to commence in January 2015 (12 months from the planned strategy adoption date).

14. It was suggested that the proposal form be reworded and brought back to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

15. In response to a query about the costs of implementing speed restrictions Mr Corcoran explained that in the short term the typical cost of a speed limit is provided as part of the Member Highways Fund pack, however, there were a number of local factors to consider such as location and other geographical factors.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee agree to establish the Commissioning Select Committee, to report to County Council on 15th May 2014 and establish the Review of Kent's European Relationship Select Committee to report to County Council on 27th March 2014. The Committee agreed that the proposed review on 'KCC policy towards traffic speed restrictions and methods of implementing them' would be revised and brought back to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee (10 December 2013) for consideration.