

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 23 April 2014

PRESENT: Mr A J King, MBE (Chairman), Miss S J Carey (Vice-Chairman), Mr H Birkby (Substitute for Mr C P D Hoare), Mrs T Dean, Mr J Elenor, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr S C Manion, Mr R J Parry (Substitute for Mr N J D Chard), Mr L B Ridings, MBE, Mrs P A V Stockell, Mr D Smyth and Mr N S Thandi

ALSO PRESENT: Mr G Cooke, Mr P B Carter, CBE, Mr J D Simmonds, MBE and Mr B J Sweetland

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr E Austin (Process Change Programme Manager), Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director Human Resources), Mr P Bole (Director Information & Communication Technology), Mr J Burr (Director Highways, Transportation & Waste and Principal Director of Transformation), Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director Strategic & Corporate Services), Mr R Fitzgerald (Performance Manager), Ms J Hansen (Finance Business Partner (Strategic & Corporate Services), Mr P McCallum (Head of Corporate Portfolio Office), Mr G Wild (Director of Governance and Law), Mr D Whittle (Head of Policy and Strategic Relationships), Mr A Wood (Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement) and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

55. Apologies
(Item A1)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Chard and Mr Hoare.

56. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
(Item A2)

There were no declarations of interest.

57. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2014
(Item A3)

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2014 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

58. Performance Dashboard
(Item C1)

- (1) Richard Fitzgerald introduced the report and said it included data to the end of February 2014. He said it was a positive report and all indicators

were either ahead of target or at an acceptable level above the floor standard for the year to date. He drew Members' attention to the improvement in the performance relating to Freedom of Information Act Requests (GL02).

- (2) Mr Fitzgerald also said that the Dashboard now contained indicators for the Customer Relationship team and Communication and Engagement team that had transferred to Strategic and Corporate Services directorate with effect from 1 April 2014.
- (3) Two indicators (User satisfaction with the KCC website and Percentage of calls to the contact centre answered within 20 seconds) had received a Red RAG rating for February 2014. These indicators had been negatively impacted by the aftermath of flooding and related events and resulted in increased demand and volume of phone calls and enquiries. Many of the additional enquiries related to Highways issues and special funding had been awarded by government to deal with these issues.
- (4) Concerns were raised about the level of satisfaction with the website (CE03) and views were expressed that targets should be higher, the website should be user friendly and benchmarked against appropriate private sector websites and not just local authority ones.
- (5) It was confirmed that the method for calculating the payment of invoices within 20 days (FP03) had changed and that invoices were being paid promptly to creditors.
- (6) Questions were raised about the ability of the Contact Centre to respond to increased demand during incidents such as the recent flooding. A further report on the Contact Centre and on the work being done to improve the usability of the website is to be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 10 July 2014.
- (7) Ed Austin (Process Change Programme Manager) answered questions relating to the work being done to increase the number of contacts from customers on-line, thereby enabling the Contract Centre to respond to emergency calls. He also provided more information about the statistics used to calculate CR02 (Percentage of customers using Gateway who rated the experience good).
- (8) Members drew attention to the excellent performance of ICT, the improvement in dealing with Freedom of Information Act requests and the associated reduction in the cost of responding.
- (9) Members requested that, in future reports, it be made clear which cabinet member was responsible for each indicator and where appropriate to include actual figures as well as percentages.
- (10) Resolved that the Performance Dashboard be noted.

59. Financial Monitoring *(Item C2)*

- (1) Jackie Hansen (Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate Finance Business Partner) introduced the report which set out the third quarter's full budget monitoring report for 2013-14 as reported to Cabinet on 24 March 2014. She said that a small overspend had been predicted for the Business Strategy and Support Directorate at the end of quarter 2 but a net underspend of £249K was predicted for the end of the year.
- (2) In response to questions, she said:
 - it was anticipated that the projects that had been re-phased would be delivered within the three-year lifespan of the Medium Term Financial Plan
 - the non-ring-fenced DfE capital grant to fund revenue expenditure had to be spent on activities related to education
 - the under-recovery of income from schools related to stretching targets set for income generation at the beginning of the year and the Schools Financial Services had been unable to generate the last £120k of the target.
- (3) It was also confirmed that: the Capital Programme budget would roll over to 2014-15 and not used to balance the budget; the roll out of local health and wellbeing boards was on target; and the roll forward of funding was for a pre-existing, two-year secondment to support the boards.
- (4) A question was raised about the rollout of rural broadband and it was agreed that a briefing on the status of the project be provided to members of the committee.
- (5) Resolved that the revenue and capital forecast variances from budget for 2013-14 that are within the remit of this Cabinet Committee, based on the third quarter's full monitoring report to Cabinet, be noted.

60. Strategic and Corporate Directorate Business Plan
(Item C3)

- (1) David Whittle (Head of Policy and Strategic Relationships) introduced the report which presented the draft business plan for the Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate. The report also set out the rationale for the new approach as agreed by this committee at its meeting in September 2013. Mr Whittle said that the final version of the Strategic Priority Statements would be produced on A4 paper and the font would be larger.
- (2) In response to a question, about the risk associated with removing the requirement that divisional or business unit plans use a corporate template, he said the drafts received to date had used last year's corporate template and did not give rise to concerns. The business planning process was kept under review and any issues would be addressed.
- (3) Concerns were raised about the health of the workforce especially given the rate of change and uncertainty. Mrs Beer (Corporate Director Human

Resources) and Mr Whittle agreed to bring back some corporate indicators to enable the committee to satisfy itself that staff wellbeing was under control.

- (4) Mr Whittle said that the strategic priority statements and business plans would be approved by cabinet members in May and members would be advised by email when the documents were available on the website.
- (5) The Committee thanked the staff who had been involved in developing the strategic priority statements which were considered to be well laid out and user-friendly.
- (6) Resolved that the draft 2014-15 directorate business plan (Strategic Priority Statement) for the Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate be endorsed for approval by the cabinet member and corporate director.

61. Legal Services' Evolution Efficiency Enterprise Update for Quarter 3 2013-2014

(Item C4)

- (1) Mr Sweetland (Cabinet Member for Traded Services) and Geoff Wild (Director of Governance and Law) introduced the report which provided an update on work continuing within Legal Services, as the Evolution, Efficiency, Enterprise project moved towards the end of its second year.
- (2) Mr Wild confirmed that the end of year report would contain "hard" data and figures quantifying the results of activity and input.
- (3) The Committee congratulated Mr Wild and his staff on their achievements.
- (4) Resolved that the report be noted.

62. Transformation Agenda (verbal update)

(Item D1)

- (1) Mr Carter (Leader of the Council) said that the Transformation Programme was on target and a report would be considered at the next meeting of the County Council on 15 May 2014.
- (2) John Burr (Principal Director of Transformation) outlined some of the activities that had taken place to ensure staff were engaged in the process including workshops, challenger events, his blog, recent sessions with 200 top managers who wished to get more involved, mystery shopping to ensure messages were getting through to staff and the transformation project pages on the intranet which now accounted for 50% of all intranet hits. All of the Phase 1 projects were on target for completion by the end of April and the next steps would be to develop detailed business cases and take them through the formal decision making process.

- (3) Mr Burr said Phase 2 would start imminently. This phase would review existing services and consider how they might be delivered more efficiently by the service. He also said the top-tier re-alignment with effect from 1 April had been smooth because of the extensive work done by HR, ICT and Finance behind the scenes. The challenge now was to build on the synergies created as a result of the re-alignment.
- (4) Paul McCallum (Head of the Corporate Portfolio Office) outlined the role of the Corporate Portfolio Office in developing oversight and assurance on initiatives identified as part of the Transformation Programme. This included reviewing programmes against their lifecycle; reinforcing accountability; standardising approaches; sharing learning; and filling gaps in information that enabled the organisation to understand progress and blockages as well as providing assurance that programmes could be delivered.
- (5) Resolved that the update be noted

63. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

64. Kent Public Services Network

(Item E1)

- (1) Mr Cooke (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) and Peter Bole (Director of Information and Communication Technology) introduced the report which provided information about the Kent Public Services Network and the progress of the project to procure a replacement service. Since the report had been published, strong bids had been received from suppliers.
- (2) Mr Bole answered members' questions relating to the savings expected, competition within the market, the relationship between scale and costs and collaboration with the NHS commissioning body.
- (3) Resolved that the report be noted.