

By: Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services
Richard Parry, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee

To: Scrutiny Committee – 11 June 2015

Subject: **Select Committee Work Programme**

Summary: To receive an update on the Select Committee Topic Review Programme

1. Current Select Committee – Corporate Parenting

(1) This Select Committee under the Chairmanship of Mrs Z Wiltshire has been looking at the role of the Elected Member as a corporate parent.

(2) Due to the timescale, and as provided for in the Constitution, the terms of reference for the Select Committee were endorsed by the Chairman and spokesmen, with the comments made by them passed to the Select Committee (Appendix 1)

(3) The Select Committee, at its inaugural meeting, requested that the timescale of the Committee be extended to enable it to report to County Council in July instead of March, again in order to allow the Committee to hear evidence before this meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. Approval was obtained from the Chairman and spokesmen to this extended timescale.

(4) During February/March the Select Committee held evidence gathering meetings and heard from 17 witnesses and groups of witnesses including, former children in care, foster carers, social workers, health care professionals with specific responsibility for Children in Care, and colleagues from Essex County Council. In addition Members visited the Swattenden Centre to meet with children in care and also White Rocks Farm, to hear about schemes to support Children in Care. A survey of all elected members to gain an insight into their level of knowledge of their responsibilities as corporate parents has also been carried out.

(3) The Committee met on 14 May 2015 to consider the first draft of their report, and agreed minor amendments. The draft report is due to be shared informally with the Cabinet Member and Corporate Director at a meeting on 9 June 2015 and their comments invited for consideration by the Committee before they approve the final report. The report is due to be submitted to the Cabinet, for comment, on 6 July and to County Council, for consideration, on 16 July 2015.

2. Next Select Committee to be established – Energy Security - timescale

(1) At the meeting of this Committee on 12 December 2014 it was agreed that a Select Committee on Energy Security (see proposal attached as Appendix 2) be established when the Select Committee on Corporate Parenting had completed its work. This topic is particularly timely as this subject was specifically referred to in the recent Queen's Speech.

(2) Due to the change in timescale for the Corporate Parenting review the background research for the Energy Security review was not started until May. It is intended that the membership of the Committee will be established shortly so that informal cross party discussions to refine its terms of reference can take place, prior to the Select Committee

formally starting its work in July. The Select Committee would then submit its report to Cabinet for noting and County Council for consideration in December 2015.

3. Monitoring of Select Committee reports

(1) In accordance with the process set out in the Constitution, the two Select Committees (Kent's European Relationships and Commissioning) which completed their work in 2014 are due to hold a "one year on" review meeting to receive an update on their recommendations. These meetings are being arranged for June 2015 and the minutes from these minutes will be submitted to the following Scrutiny Committee meeting.

4. Recommendation: that

- (a) the progress of the Select Committee on Corporate Parenting be noted; and
- (b) the Select Committee on Energy Security be established to enable it to formally start work in July 2015 and submit its report to County Council in December 2015.

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Background Papers – Nil

Select Committee – Corporate Parents

Terms of Reference

1. To consider the definition of “Corporate Parent” and the variety of roles and duties associated with it.
2. To engage with, amongst others, children and young people in care to better understand what works well for them and what KCC can do to improve the fulfilment of its corporate parenting responsibilities.
3. To investigate best practice across the country and abroad of how elected representatives within local government engage with and support children and young people in care.
4. To examine the extent to which the monitoring mechanisms available to KCC Members are effective in ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people in care.

ASSESSMENT OF A SELECT COMMITTEE TOPIC REVIEW

*-sections to be filled in by the proposer of the topic

<p>*Subject of Proposed Review:-</p> <p>Energy security</p>
<p>*Reason for the Review:- (see Note 1 below)</p> <p>loss of spare capacity in energy production Failure to replace Dungeness C with a new nuclear power station Rush to cover farmland with solar panels Excessive subsidies for renewable energy Construction of inefficient unreliable wind turbines and their damage to wild life Danger of power cuts and their economic impact</p>
<p>*Issues to be covered by the Terms of Reference:-</p> <p>All the above</p>
<p>*Scope of the review:-</p> <p>County wide</p>
<p>*Purpose and objectives of the Review:-</p> <p>To ensure we have sufficient energy supply for our needs we avoid power cuts provide cheap energy and have sensible ways of reducing c02 emissions.</p>
<p>Proposer of the review - (Please print name and sign)</p> <p>.....Jim Wedgbury 03.11.1.</p>

To be completed by the Directorate/Cabinet Member(s)

Are there any reasons why this review should not be put forward for inclusion in the work programme for 2014/16? (see Note 2 below)

This work would serve to consolidate existing related KCC policy and strategies into an objective review on energy, energy security and energy generation. This will build on the earlier Renewable Energy Select Committee. Increasing energy prices across public, business and domestic sectors and limited spare energy capacity are making this an important agenda item both nationally and locally. In addition, in Kent and Medway with expected increase in both population and housing numbers together with economic growth the demand for energy will continue to increase.

The topic is frequently in the press and can be an emotive area of discussion – 'will the lights go out!', debate around wind turbines and solar farms, depletion in traditional fossil fuel supplies, the challenges of delivering new nuclear capacity and the recent debate around 'tracking' for shale gas.

The solution lies with no one technology but a balanced mix of low carbon energy generation. Kent already has a diverse energy mix and whilst new renewable solutions have come forward other energy plant is nearing the end of its life. For example Dungeness B is scheduled for decommissioning from 2018. The local impact of lost capacity, the implications for energy security and the opportunities for new generation solutions are issues worthy of consideration.

Energy supply and the operation of generation plant have a vital role in the well being of the Kent economy and support many jobs. New markets are also being created for the supply of low carbon and renewable technologies and associated services. The low carbon sector already has a strong foothold in the County and there is recognition nationally that Kent is an important location from which to support offshore renewables. The designation of key ports on the North Kent coast as part of a South East Centre for Offshore Renewables (CORE) recognises the County's capability to support the operation and manufacture of offshore wind turbines.

Having regard to the above, the review would provide an informative and objective basis for the development of a cross Kent and Medway energy security strategy, one which could form part of a revised Kent Environment Strategy and which encompasses both supply and demand issues.

Will the review support the achievement of "Facing the Challenge"? If yes, please identify aim(s) and give details:- YES:

- Assess security of supply issues for KCC and Kent and the measures that can be taken to mitigate and build resilience
- Assess alternative/local energy generation opportunities to tackle energy security issues, and the potential to provide cheaper energy and a reduction in carbon emissions for:

- o The KCC and schools estate, including the potential to use KCC owned land for community energy generation to generate an income and provide lower cost supplies.
 - o Residents with the view to reduce fuel poverty related negative health impacts which often result in an increase in the demand for KCC's services
 - o Businesses to increase competitiveness in the Kent economy and support the low carbon industry in Kent.
- Develop an energy strategy and appropriate energy policies for Kent to build future resilience and support the development of new appropriate energy generation whilst also protecting Kent's natural and historic environment.

How will the review contribute to corporate objectives and priorities?

As above

How will this review have an impact on KCC policy development and/or help to influence national policy?

It will inform the development of an energy strategy for Kent (incorporated in the Kent Environment Strategy) and the need for any related energy policies, as well as enable KCC to play a more effective role in lobbying on national energy policy and influence local planning and developments.

How will this review add value to the County Council and residents of Kent?

The review will add value to the County Council, local residents and businesses through:

- Increased energy security
- Opportunities for lower energy bills as a result of local energy generation
- Opportunities for community ownership and new incomes streams to support local services
- Opportunities for economic growth in the low carbon sector
- Reduced harmful emissions
- Reduction of negative health impacts due to fuel poverty
- Local leadership on the planning and development of new utility infrastructure
- Harnessing local resources
- Sustainable development and growth

Does the review need to be completed within a specific timeframe? If yes, please give details:

No, but rising energy prices and energy security is a growing issue and solutions often have a long lead in time and therefore the sooner action is taken, the better.

Any additional comments from the Portfolio Holder/Corporate Director:-

Portfolio Holder's Signature:



Strategic Director's Signature:-

Contact Officer:-

