

By: Head of Democratic Services
To: Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – 26 March 2008
Subject: Action Taken on Committee's Recommendations
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To note the action taken as a result of the Committee's decisions and recommendations at its meetings on 23 January and 1 February 2008.

1. The Committee is asked to note the action taken as a result of its decisions and recommendations at its meetings on 23 January and 1 February 2008, as shown in italics below.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AT 23 JANUARY MEETING

42. Minutes – 12 December

(2) RESOLVED that:-

- (b) On Minute 33(1), the Leader's agreement (reported by Mr Law) to meet the Committee's Chairman and Spokesmen to discuss concerns that, at its meetings, Cabinet did not appear to be giving any consideration to Committee's recommendations, be welcomed.

The meeting has taken place and the Chairman and Spokesmen will report orally on the outcome.

- (c) On Minute 37(d) and (e), the Informal Member Group on Member Information be asked to look particularly at the quality of information being provided to local Members about KCC proposals or decisions affecting (indirectly, as well as directly) their Division.

This matter is to be considered by the IMG on Member Information at its next meeting (being arranged for late March).

46. Audit Commission Inspection of Kent Supporting People Programme

(19) RESOLVED that:-

- (b) The Managing Director, KASS, be asked to circulate to all Members of the Committee in due course the Action Plan to be prepared in response to the Audit Commission recommendations.

The formal response to the Audit Commission was circulated to all Members of the Committee on 8 February. The more detailed action plan was revised by the Core Strategy Development Group at its meeting in February and is due to be agreed by the Commissioning Body at its next meeting on 20 March, after which time it will be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

- (c) The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services' offer to distribute the planned Supporting People Commissioning Body (SPCB) Member Induction Pack to all

Members of KCC, and to arrange briefing meetings on the Supporting People Programme for KCC Members, be welcomed.

The Induction Pack is currently being drafted and is due to be delivered by April 2008.

- (d) The Cabinet Member and Managing Director be requested to ensure that the planned SPCB Member Induction Pack included an explanation of the process by which service-users could give feedback or express concerns about the Supporting People services provided to them.

The Induction Pack will include information regarding the methods and processes by which service users can give feedback or express concerns.

- (e) The proposals to do more to facilitate independent feedback from users of Supporting People services through 'mystery shopping', user groups, etc, be welcomed and the Managing Director be asked to inform Members of the Committee of the outcome.

A number of means of facilitating independent feedback from service users are currently being explored. The feasibility of a mutual mystery shopping regime with other Supporting People partnerships in other Administering Authorities and departments with Kent Adult Social Services is being examined. Existing service user groups, such as residents' groups, are being used to gain service user feedback. The Programme has indirectly employed two ex-services users as monitoring and review officers to talk directly to users about their experiences of funded services.

47. The Case for Establishing a Credit Union for Kent

(14) RESOLVED that:-

- (b) In the light of the assurance by the Cabinet Members for Environment, Highways & Waste, and Regeneration & Supporting Independence, that the feasibility study was expected to cost approximately £20k, and that the incurring of any further expenditure on pursuing the Credit Union proposal would be subject to a further formal decision by Cabinet, the decision by Cabinet on 14 January be supported.
- (c) The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Supporting Independence's agreement to establish an all-party Informal Member Group (IMG) of Members with knowledge of and/or interest in Credit Unions to oversee the feasibility study be welcomed, and the Cabinet Member be urged to:-

(i) include also on the IMG, Members representing areas of high deprivation; and

(ii) establish the IMG as quickly as possible.

The IMG for Credit Unions was duly established and held its first meeting on 14 February. Its membership comprises Mr Simmonds (Chairman), Miss Carey, Mr Cowan, Mr Gough, Mr Marsh, Mr Scholes, Mr Smyth and Mr Vye. Since the 14 February meeting a consultant has been commissioned to undertake the feasibility study. The IMG will meet again when the first phase of the consultant's report on the feasibility study is ready. In the meantime, arrangements are being made for visits by IMG Members to credit unions across the country.

- (d) Cabinet be advised that, while the Committee was concerned at the potential risks of proceeding with the Credit Union proposal, it hoped that these risks could be mitigated by the carrying out of the feasibility study and the establishment of an all-party IMG to monitor that study.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AT 1 FEBRUARY MEETING

49 Draft Medium Term Plan 2008-11 (incorporating the Budget and Council Tax Setting for 2008/09)

(32) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Mr Chard, Mr Wood and Mr Smith be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Members' questions; and they and the staff concerned be thanked for the work put into the preparation of the Budget, and congratulated on producing it in such a clear and easy-to-read form.
- (b) the Council be congratulated on achieving Level 4 in the Audit Commission's recently-published Use of Resources Assessment.
- (c) the Council be congratulated on its entrepreneurial initiative and innovative ways of increasing income, which had allowed Council Tax and charges to clients to be kept to a minimum.
- (d) the apparent increases in "strategic management" costs in many Directorates be noted and the Cabinet Member for Finance be requested to provide a detailed breakdown of those costs.

The detailed breakdown was circulated to all Members of the Committee in e-mails dated 13 and 14 February.

- (e) The Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues be asked to consider a common definition of "strategic management" for adoption by all directorates to ensure consistency in future years' budgets.

The IMG on Budgetary Issues considered this matter at its meeting on 10 March. Following discussion, the IMG requested a report to its next meeting (on 10 April) setting out:-

- (i) *alternative scenarios for a common definition of Strategic Management (eg, including and excluding support staff);*
- (ii) *the numbers of staff and associated payroll costs for each Directorate within each scenario.*

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Background Documents: None
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