

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Communities Policy Overview Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 7 July 2009.

PRESENT: Mrs E M Tweed (Chairman), Mr A R Chell, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr H Craske, Mr D A Hirst, Mrs J Law, Mr J Ozog, Mr R Tolputt, Mr C T Wells, Mr A Wickham and Mr A Willicombe

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M J Angell, Mr P M Hill, OBE and Mr A Sandhu, MBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr C Bainbridge (Director of Community Safety & Regulatory Services), Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Service Manager (Policy Overview)), Mr C Hespe (Head of Sport, Leisure & Olympics), Ms A Honey (Managing Director Communities), Mr D Shipton (Finance Strategy Manager), Ms A Slaven (Director Youth Services and KDAAT), Ms S Staples (Head of Kent Arts Development Unit) and Mr K Tilson (Head of Finance for Policy and Resources)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

(Item A2)

RESOLVED that Mr A R Chell be elected Vice Chairman of the Committee

4. Minutes of the meetings held on 25 March 2009 & 25 June 2009

(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 25 March and 25 June 2009 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

5. Dates of Meetings 2009 & 2010

(Item A5)

The Committee noted the dates of its future meetings, as follows:

Thursday 17 September 2009
Wednesday 11 November 2009

Tuesday 12 January 2010
Tuesday 6 April 2010
Friday 9 July 2010
Thursday 16 September 2010
Thursday 11 November 2010

All meetings will start at 10.00 am. The Chairman stated that, when business allowed, meetings may be held in venues outside of County Hall.

6. Portfolio Holder and Managing Director's Update

(Item B1)

(1) Mr Hill and Ms Honey gave a verbal report looking forward over the next four years and highlighting their key priorities.

(2) Mr Hill stated that a key theme would be finance, and especially the long term impact that the recession would have on public finance. He emphasised the importance of the services provided by the Communities Directorate especially during the recession.

(3) He identified the following major issues and challenges over next few years:-

- Turner Contemporary: - there would be an update report later in the meeting
- Libraries:- Kent was leading in this area with the modernisation of its library service and it was important to maintain the momentum.
- Adult Education, Apprenticeships and skills training were particular important in the recession.
- The Youth Service had received an outstanding Inspection report. It was important to build on work with partners including those in the voluntary sector, and colleagues in Children Families and Education Directorate in relation to Extended Schools.
- The Olympics and Cultural Olympiad – there was a report on this later in the meeting.
- Community Safety – the success of the Community Wardens Scheme and the desire to work more closely with the police was highlighted.
- Capital programme – it was important to ensure that it was effective and deliverable. Schemes such as the Kent History Centre and Ashford library would be delivered during the next 4 years.

(4) Ms Honey referred to their 2007 vision document and highlighted the 3 principles, which were involvement, improvement and impact. She emphasised the importance of policy-led budgeting.

(5) Ms Honey drew attention to the following areas of work :-

- Spotlight sessions – where each of their services was looked at and the management team had a discussion with the heads of service. This included benchmarking to ensure that the services were as streamlined as possible.
- Capital programme – the Directorate had over 300 assets which needed to be utilized effectively, this could involve co-location of services.

- Community Services and private providers – it was important to make sure that the balance was right in relation to each service.
- Communities had a workforce of 4,500. Work was being undertaken on succession planning and supported development to ensure that it was fit for purpose.
- Use of technology – in the library service there had been a saving of £1.3m from a re-negotiated contract. They would be looking at what IT could achieve across their services.

(6) Members asked questions and made comments which included the following:-

- The Community Wardens scheme was commended as being an excellent service and good value for money.
- In relation to the Youth Advisory Group (YAG), Mr Hill confirmed that the paper from the review was currently out to consultation. He stated that he regarded the YAGs as valuable building blocks and that he wanted to strengthen them.
- In relation to a question on the low revenue stream for youth services, Mr Hill explained that there were other areas, such as the Community Wardens, which added value to the youth service. The directorate was also working closely with colleagues in Children, Families and Education and exploring funding from extended schools. He emphasised the importance of working effectively with the voluntary sector to maximise resources.
- In relation to extended schools, it was mentioned that not all areas had a secondary school which could work in this way with the youth service.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

7. 2008/09 Final Outturn Report (Item B2)

(1) Mr Shipton reminded Members that, in January 2009, the Committee had received an in-year performance monitoring update. He presented a report which summarised the end of year position for the Communities Portfolio, including budget and business plan outturn.

(2) Members were invited to ask questions and make comments, which included the following:-

- It was confirmed that the Learning Skills Council would finish at the end of March 2010.
- Overspend on the Coroner's service, which was out of KCC's control. It was hoped that the Coroners Bill would result in the Council having more control of this budget but that would not happen for another 2 to 3 years.

- Regarding holding posts vacant, it was confirmed that there was an assumption that there would be a certain level of turnover. If that did not occur then it would have an impact on the budget. The difficulty of recruiting trading standards officers was highlighted.
- The success of the re-build of Ramsgate Library was commended.
- Parklife Youth Centre at Herne Bay was mentioned as a good example of partnership working.

(3) RESOLVED that the report, and comments made by Members, be noted.

8. 2009/10 Budget Monitoring Exception Report

(Item B3)

(1) The Chairman welcomed Mr Tilson to his first meeting of the Committee. Mr Tilson presented the Directorates initial budget monitoring exception report for 2009/10 which was to be considered at Cabinet on 13th July 2009.

(2) RESOLVED that the budget variations for the Communities Portfolio for 2009/10, based on the first exception monitoring report to Cabinet, be noted.

9. Turner Contemporary Update

(Item B4)

(1) Mr Hill presented a report which set out the latest position regarding the construction of the gallery, operational developments and transition to the Turner Contemporary Trust (TCT). Members were invited to ask questions, and the comments and responses included the following:-

- It was suggested that a jazz band playing on the remainder of the Rendezvous site on a Sunday would be a good use of the site.
- Mr Hill confirmed that the Turner Contemporary Arts Trust had raised £650,000 of the £2.9m revenue required.
- Ms Honey stated that Andrea Pullford had been appointed to the post of Head of Operations and Resources for Turner Contemporary.
- Staff currently employed by KCC would transfer to the TCT in April 2010 under a TUPE arrangement. Staff appointments after that date would be made under TCT's terms and conditions.
- It was explained that KCC was the lease holder for Turner Contemporary and that the Service Level Agreement set out KCC's revenue contribution. There was £1.1m revenue funding in the Medium Term Plan for Turner Contemporary and a sum for the remainder of the Rendezvous site.

(2) RESOLVED that the latest developments on Turner Contemporary, and the responses made to the issues raised by Members, be noted.

10. KCC's Work on the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

(Item B5)

(1) Mr Hespe presented a report which updated Members on progress with the Kent 2012 Campaign and identified some of the future challenges and direction for Kent County Council's work on the London 2012 Games.

(2) In response to a question, Mr Hespe stated that no decision had been made on whether the Olympic torch would enter the UK at Dover.

(3) Members congratulated Mr Hespe and his team on achieving beacon status.

(4) RESOLVED that the latest developments on KCC's work on the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games be noted.

11. Kent Cultural Strategy Update

(Item B6)

(1) Ms Staples presented a report which updated the Committee on the latest position regarding the development of the Kent Cultural Strategy, in the wake of the recent successful Cultural Strategy Summit. Members were invited to ask questions, and the comments and responses included the following:-

- The importance of making sure that the Strategy had a link with Kent history was emphasised, and Ms Staples confirmed the first Summit had included heritage presentations and that the standing delegates included heritage professionals from English Heritage and the National Trust.
- Creative Margate Strategy was mentioned in connection with the importance of engaging with the local residents of Margate in the context of developing a successful future for Turner Contemporary.
- There needed to be adequate facilities for visitors to Turner Contemporary.
- Regeneration of East Kent was crucial and this was wider than Turner Contemporary. Making a link for visitors between Turner Contemporary and other culture facilities in Kent was essential.

(2) RESOLVED that the latest developments on the Kent Cultural Strategy development, and the comments made by Members, be noted.

12. Kent Children & Young People's Plan 2008-2011: Year One Progress Report

(Item B7)

(1) Ms Slaven explained that the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) was central to the work of the Kent Children Trusts and was the overarching strategic plan for the Partnership setting out the priorities for improvement in outcomes for children, young people and families in the area. She presented a paper which contained the first annual monitoring report, covering progress made so far in the delivery of Kent's Children & Young People's Plan 2008-2011, focusing on areas particularly relevant to

services within the Communities Directorate. The report was also going to be considered by the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committees.

(2) Members were invited to asked questions, and the comments and responses included the following:-

- In relation to Physical, Social and Health Education, a view was expressed that the youth service and Community Wardens had a role to play as young people often found it easier to discuss these issues outside of the school environment, and for those who were not in school this could be their main opportunity to get advice on these sensitive issues.
- Officers undertook to supply Mr Chittenden with a note on the reasons behind the increase in under 18 conception rates for Maidstone compared to other areas and details of what was being done to address this. Also information was requested, by Mr Chell and Mr Chittenden on how many births there had been compared to conceptions.

(3) RESOLVED that the Children & Young People's Plan Review, and the comments made by Members on the contribution made by Communities' Services, be noted.

13. Kent's Policy Framework for Later Life

(Item B8)

(1) Mr Angell, KCC Older People's Champion, set out the background to Kent's Policy Framework for Later Life – *'Living Later Life to the Full'*. Ms Exall explained that this was about a broader, holistic approach across the County Council and its partners to ensure that in all our work the interests of older people were taken into account. Ms Honey informed the Committee that a workshop was going to be held to look at inter-generation work across the Directorate.

(2) Members were invited to asked questions, and the comments and responses included the following:-

- The mutual benefits of intergenerational working were emphasised, and examples given.
- The Community Wardens' role in supporting older people was mentioned.
- The ability of older people to give advice and support to young people was raised.
- Reference was made to promotional activities sponsored by the Primary Care Trusts which empowered people in the 50+ age range.
- Mr Bainbridge undertook to circulate information on the HandyVan scheme.

(3) RESOLVED that the report, and the comments made by Members, be noted.

14. Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder matters

(Item B9)

(1) Mr Bainbridge introduced a report which updated Members on the identification of this Committee as the County Council's "Crime and Disorder Committee", and set out a suggested way forward to establish Protocols for the operation of this part of the Committee's remit. He stated that representatives from the Kent Police and the Kent Police Authority wished to meet with the Chairman, Cabinet Member and officers to discuss how the Crime and Disorder Committee would operate. It was anticipated that this meeting would take place in late September/ early October and that there would be a report back to the November meeting of the Policy Overview Committee.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

15. Select Committees - update

(Item C1)

(1) The Committee received a report which reminded Members that the report of the recent Select Committee on Provision of Activities for Young People had been very well received by County Council in April. The report also set out the process for identifying a future work programme, and Members were encouraged to put forward suggestions for potential topic reviews.

(2) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the Select Committee on the Provision of Activities for Young People be thanked for their work and that it be noted that an action plan to address the recommendations in the report would be submitted to the September meeting of this Committee.

(b) Members submit any suggestions for Select Committee topic reviews by email to the Democratic Services Officer for this Committee.