

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 8 March 2017

PRESENT: Mr A J King, MBE (Chairman), Mr M J Angell (Substitute for Mr N J D Chard), Mrs M E Crabtree, Mr J A Davies, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr C P D Hoare, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr L B Ridings, MBE, Mr D Smyth, Mrs P A V Stockell, Mr N S Thandi, Mr J N Wedgbury and Mrs Z Wiltshire (Substitute for Mr M Heale)

ALSO PRESENT: Miss S J Carey, Mr G Cooke and Mr J D Simmonds, MBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director Strategic & Corporate Services) and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

278. Chairman's Announcement

Mr King said he intended to deal with items B1 – Renewal of the Contract with Kent Fire and Rescue Service for the servicing, repair, maintenance of vehicles and equipment and B2 – Proposal to Implement an Education Services Company following consideration of item E1 – Business Services Centre Potential Trading Company.

279. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item A2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Chard, Mr Heale and Mr Manion. Mr Angell and Mrs Wiltshire attended as substitutes for Mr Chard and Mr Heale respectively.

280. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda

(Item A3)

Mr Angell, Mr Davies, Mr Latchford and Mrs Stockell said they were Members of the Kent Fire and Rescue Authority. Mr Wedgbury said he was an active trade union member for the Kent Fire and Rescue Service. Following advice from the Monitoring Officer they remained in the meeting during discussion of Item B1 – Renewal of the Contract with Kent Fire and Rescue Service for the servicing, repair and maintenance of vehicles and equipment.

281. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2017

(Item A4)

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2017 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

282. Strategic and Corporate Services Performance Dashboard

(Item C1)

Vincent Godfrey (Director of Strategic Business Development and Intelligence), Richard Fitzgerald (Business Intelligence Manager), Victoria Seal (Interim Head of Property Commissioning and Strategy) and Benjamin Watts (General Counsel) were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Fitzgerald introduced the report which set out progress made against targets set for Key Performance Indicators relating to the Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate. He said: the report included data to the end of December 2016; most of the indicators were rated green; and the data could be taken as a forecast for the outcome at the end of year.
- (2) In response to a query about PI01- Percentage of rent due to KCC outstanding at 60 days Mr Cooke undertook to speak to Mrs Dean about issues relating to leases on some properties in her Division.
- (3) In response to a question about the PI04 - Percentage of reactive tasks completed within Service Level Agreement Standards and in particular the performance of Kier, Ms Seal said that Kier had improved substantially since December and that she would confirm the date the new computer aided facilities management system would be implemented.
- (4) In response to a question about GL03 – Data Protection Act Subject Access requests completed within 40 calendar days, Mr Watts said an action plan was in place and additional staff would be in place from 1 April 2017 to ensure that KCC met its obligations under the Act. In addition, the Information Resilience and Transparency Team continued to provide advice to directorates on efficient ways to prepare records. The Information Commissioner’s Office had the right to fine organisations who failed to meet the legal requirements, however, the risk was considered to be low. KCC set itself challenging targets for providing information and feedback from those requesting information was very positive.
- (5) Resolved that the report be noted.

283. Financial Monitoring 2016-17

(Item C2)

Jackie Hansen (Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate Finance Business Partner) was in attendance for this item

- (1) Ms Hansen said the report set out the position for the Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate for December 2016 together with the movement in forecast from the November 2016 monitoring position.
- (2) She drew particular attention to Table 1 of the report which set out the forecast for the Directorate budget was showing an improved underspend of £0.838m and the aspirational savings target for the Asset Utilisation Programme which was showing an overspend of £0.738m resulting in a net underspend of £0.100m. She also said there were no variances on the capital budget.

- (3) Ms Hansen drew attention to paragraph 3.2 which set out the overall revenue position for the authority. A £5.2 million overspend was being projected, however, it was hoped that additional funding would be received from the Home Office to offset the asylum pressure which would result in a revised forecast of a £3.4million overspend.
- (4) Resolved that the revenue and capital forecast variances from budget for 2016/17, that are in the remit of this Cabinet Committee, based on the December monitoring to Cabinet, be noted.

284. Work Programme

(Item C3)

Resolved that the report be noted subject to the inclusion of the Gravesham Gateway on the agenda for the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 15 September 2017.

285. Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2017-18 (Final Draft)

(Item D1)

David Whittle (Director–Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) and Liz Sanderson (Strategic Business Adviser Corporate), Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Whittle introduced the report which asked Members to comment on the final draft of the Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2017-18.
- (2) Ms Sanderson drew the Committee's attention to the changes to the business plan format for 2017-18 including an executive summary for easy reference to the new priorities, a short report on progress towards the current year's priorities as part of a rolling three-year plan and consideration of the opportunities and challenges presented by a rapidly changing operating environment.
- (3) In response to questions and comments Mr Whittle said:
 - (a) A new strategic commissioning function had been agreed in January to deliver specialist and professional services across all phases of the commissioning cycle with a view to driving value for money, reducing costs and supporting strategic commissioning in directorates;
 - (b) The Kent Integrated Data Set was led by the Public Health team who had power to access and share data across a range of public sector organisations, including Kent Police and the Kent Fire and Rescue Service, to improve understanding of customers' needs and the targeting of services;
 - (c) Revised constitutional arrangements such as the Commissioning Advisory Board could be reflected in business plans.

- (4) Resolved that the final draft of the Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2017-18 be noted.

286. Risk Management: Strategic and Corporate Services

(Item D2)

David Whittle (Director–Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) and Mark Scrivener (Risk Manager) were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Whittle introduced the report which set out the strategic risks relating to the Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate and the risks featuring on the Corporate Risk Register which were “owned” by Corporate Directors. He said there had been some revisions to the “actions and mitigations” set out in the appendix and that this later version of the appendix could be circulated to Members.
- (2) Mr Scrivener drew particular attention to paragraph 4.5 of the report which set out the key questions to be asked when reviewing risks.
- (3) In response to comments about the risk of low morale or stress among staff, Mr Cooke (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) said that such issues were considered regularly and in greater detail by the Personnel Committee. He also said the likelihood had been assessed as “2” and staff were generally positive about working at KCC.
- (4) In response to a comment, Mr Simmonds (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement) said the financial position was challenging and would remain so for the foreseeable future. He also said he was alarmed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was looking for reductions in spending by government departments of about 6% especially as there would be little left to cut when the many exclusions and special cases were taken into account. Mr Whittle said that the National Audit Office had said that the Department for Communities and Local Government did not monitor the cumulative effect of Whitehall cuts on local authorities.
- (5) It was suggested that officers and Members should, during the Ofsted Inspection, set out clearly the impact budget cuts were having on service provision.
- (6) Resolved that the report be noted.

287. Corporate Assurance Analysis Bi-Annual Report

(Item D3)

David Whittle (Director–Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) and Mark Scrivener (Risk Manager) were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Whittle introduced the report which outlined the key findings from Corporate Assurance on major change projects and programmes in the period September 2016 to February 2017.
- (2) Resolved that the Corporate Assurance Bi-Annual Report be noted.

288. Housing White Paper Briefing

(Item D4)

David Whittle (Director–Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) and Edward Thomas (Policy Adviser) were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Whittle introduced the report which outlined the main provisions of the recent Housing White Paper and presented an analysis of its potential impact, challenges and opportunities. He also thanked Mr Thomas for the comprehensive report.
- (2) Mr Whittle outlined some of the key changes in policy outlined in the white paper and drew attention to the paragraphs dealing with developers, the green belt, cross-boundary planning, the change in tone from home ownership to affordable and secure rents, the preparation of “Statements of Common Ground” and a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- (3) Members commented that the White Paper did not address issues relating to: timescales for development of land; the delivery of infrastructure such as roads, hospitals and schools; and the particular problems experienced by authorities on the edge of green belts. Members also said that the restrictions being proposed on rents and the proposals for the future of housing associations would limit the number of houses that would be built.
- (4) Comments were also made about the lack of accountability and transparency in the discussions that took place in private during planning appeals.
- (5) Louise Whitaker (Democratic Services Manager – Executive) referred to an urgent decision that was being taken by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport to enable the authority to take advantage of the proposed 20% increase in nationally set planning fees from July 2017 as described in paragraph 5.6 of the report.
- (6) Mr Whittle said the briefing paper could be circulated to all Members.
- (7) Resolved that the White Paper be noted.

289. 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 items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

290. Business Services Centre Potential Trading Company

(Item E1)

Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure) was in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Cooke (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) introduced the report which provided an update on the progress of the

Business Services Centre (BSC) Evolution Programme and asked the Cabinet Committee to comment on, and note, the progression to develop a business case for the establishment of a trading company to generate income for the Council from BSC trading activities.

- (2) Ms Spore provided further detail about the information in the exempt report and answered Members' questions.
- (3) Resolved that:
 - (a) The direction of travel for the BSC and progression to develop a full business case to establish a trading company in order to maintain and grow current income levels for the Council from BSC trading activities;
 - (b) Regular reports on progress be received by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee.

291. Renewal of the contract with Kent Fire Rescue Service (KFRS) for the servicing, repair and maintenance of vehicles and equipment
(Item B1)

John Burr (Managing Director- Commercial Services) was in attendance for this item

- (1) Miss Carey (Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services) introduced the report which asked the Cabinet Committee to consider and endorse, or make recommendations on a proposed decision for KCC to have a contractual arrangement with the Kent Fire and Rescue Service and to task the servicing of this contract to Commercial Services. She said KCC and the KFRS had an arrangement for the servicing, repair and maintenance of vehicles and equipment for a very long time and the proposed contract was worth more than £1 million over its term.
- (2) Mr Burr answered Members' questions.
- (3) Resolved that the proposed key decision of the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services for KCC to have a contractual arrangement with the Kent Fire and Rescue Service and to task the servicing of the contract to Commercial Services be endorsed.

292. Proposal to implement an Education Services Company
(Item B2)

Mr Gough, (Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform), Patrick Leeson (Corporate Director – Education and Young People's Services), Keith Abbott (Director - Education Planning and Access), Simon Pleace (Revenue Finance Manager) and Tim Byles (Consultant) were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Gough introduced the report which asked the Cabinet Committee to consider and endorse or make recommendations on a proposal to establish an Education Services Company.

- (2) Mr Leeson said that: it was important to maintain the existing supportive arrangements with Kent Schools; schools had access to quality, cost-effective services from KCC to support improvement in educational attainment and standards; and the opportunities to generate income from traded services to reinvest in supporting the delivery of education services were maximised.
- (3) Mr Gough and Mr Leeson answered Members' questions relating to the information set out in the exempt appendices.
- (4) Resolved that:
 - a) The proposal to seek approval to create a company, in line with the business case, and to enter into such contractual arrangements as are necessary to facilitate that creation be endorsed;
 - b) The legal structure of the proposed company and the delegation of authority to the Monitoring Officer to agree the final details in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform, the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services, the Corporate Director for Education and Young People's Services and the Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement be endorsed;
 - c) The implementation of the shadow governance structure from April 2017 be endorsed.

293. Announcement by Mr Simmonds (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement)

- (1) Mr Simmonds thanked Mr King for his lengthy service to Kent County Council, his effective chairmanship of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee and many other committees as well as his generous advice and support.
- (2) Mr King thanked him and said that KCC had been good at thinking about and planning for the future.