

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Overview Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 24 September 2009.

PRESENT: Mr M C Dance (Chairman), Mr R W Bayford, Mr J R Bullock, MBE, Mr K A Ferrin, MBE, Mr P J Homewood, Mr J A Kite, Mrs J Law, Mr M J Northey (Substitute for Mr B J Sweetland), Mr R A Pascoe (Substitute for Mrs E M Tweed), Mr K Pugh, Mr M Robertson (Substitute for Mr I S Chittenden) and Mr M V Snelling

ALSO PRESENT: Mr K G Lynes, Mrs J A Rook and Mr A Wickham

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Cockburn (Executive Director, Strategy, Economic Development & ICT), Ms C Forbes (Interim Director of Economic Development) and Miss T Grayell (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

15. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2009

(Item A3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 July are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

16. Locate in Kent - Presentation

(Item B1)

Mr P Wookey, Chief Executive of Locate in Kent, was in attendance for this item at the invitation of the Committee.

(1) Mr Wookey presented a series of slides showing the work of Locate in Kent in relation to the changing patterns of economic development and the job market in Kent since the early 1990s, giving examples of successes and what support Locate in Kent had been able to give to companies, and relating the work of Locate in Kent to Towards 2010 targets. He advised Members that Kent had exceeded its 2010 target for economic development, and that Kent's key strength to take forward into the future was its diversity.

(2) In discussion, and in response to Members' comments, the following points were highlighted:-

- (a) There were some downsides to Kent's economic health in recent years, and to see a balanced picture it was important to include what Kent had lost;

- (b) Although some sectors had moved out of Kent, others such as bio-science manufacturers were still strong; and
 - (c) Companies decided where in Kent to establish themselves; Locate in Kent did not direct them but offered them options of suitable locations for their business. Locate in Kent's successes were fairly evenly spread across the county, and Kent offered an ideal location for a broad range of companies.
- (3) RESOLVED that the information given in the presentation and in response to Members' questions be noted, with thanks, and Locate in Kent be congratulated on its success.

17. Presentation - Research and Intelligence Support for this Committee
(Item B2)

Dr P Welsh, Head of the Research and Information Unit, was in attendance for this item.

(1) Dr Welsh presented a series of slides setting out the work of the unit and how it supported policy and project development. He set out what information was gathered, how it was used, and how it linked to other strategic documents. In particular, the unit used the Mosaic data modelling system. The information was arranged to be as accessible as possible and could be accessed in different ways and at different levels. Other research work carried out by the unit related to population and deprivation, migration patterns, land use and planning and employment land and new homes.

(2) In discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the following points were highlighted:-

- (a) The information used by Mosaic did not include personal data about any individual, so did not give rise to any data privacy problems. Information reflected patterns of community behaviour;
- (b) Examples of what Mosaic has been used for include funding formulas in schools, recruitment of foster carers, identifying bus routes and provision of SEN school places;
- (c) Borough and District Councils could make much use of the data gathered by Mosaic and avoid duplicating data gathering locally. Mosaic is a commercial product owned by Experion and licensed for use by KCC on a bureau licence which included its use by Borough and District councils. All Members had access to Mosaic;
- (d) As the data in Mosaic was complex and could be interpreted in different ways, the unit acted as a bureau to answer questions and guide users on how to interpret the information;

- (e) Mosaic data was updated annually and was cross-referenced to provide as accurate a picture as possible. Some data was updated less than annually (e.g. the 10-yearly census);
 - (f) Data supplied by the unit could be used to indicate areas most in need of jobs funding, and had shown up a disparity in funding between East and West Kent;
 - (g) the unit received some data automatically (e.g., relating to land use) while other info had to be sought, project by project, to answer a specific need; and
 - (h) Information now available via Mosaic was based on much broader lifestyle patterns. Previously, socio-economic categories (A1, B2, B3, etc) were based purely on the job a person did.
- (3) Dr Welsh undertook to answer Members' questions and points of detail relating to specific issues outside the meeting.
 - (4) RESOLVED that the information given in the presentation, and in response to Members' questions, be noted, with thanks.

18. Financial Monitoring 2009/10

(Item B3)

Mr D Shipton, Finance Strategy Manager, was in attendance for this item.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted, with thanks.

19. Draft Towards 2010 Annual Report

(Item B4)

Mrs S Garton, County Performance and Evaluation Manager, was in attendance for this item.

(1) Mrs Garton introduced the report and explained that the third annual Towards 2010 report would be considered by the full council on 15 October. The officer team answered points of detail raised by Members, and some Members disagreed with the progress listed for targets T40 and T46 and commented that some major projects did not appear in the listings. Mr Cockburn replied that the progress shown for any one project would be impacted by the way in which, as well as the point at which, the monitoring was undertaken.

(2) RESOLVED that the information given in the report, and in response to Members' questions, be noted.

20. Proposal to form a Sub-Group of the POC - 'Regeneration and Economy - a District Perspective'

(Item B5)

(1) The Chairman set out a proposal to establish a sub-group of the POC which would address Members' need to talk about and ask about regeneration activity in their area while freeing up POC meetings to concentrate on strategic issues.

(2) He proposed that two small groups, each of 4 – 8 Members, should visit, one by one, District and Borough Councils in Kent to see key local regeneration schemes, talk about how they fitted in with KCC's work and report back to the POC on their findings in each area. The aim would be to visit all districts of Kent over the course of about a year. The work of the group would be supported by Democratic Services only in making the initial arrangements for each visit, and the onus would then be on Members to take part, engage with each host council and report back to the POC on their findings.

(3) Members expressed the following views on the proposal:-

(a) The idea would allow a way of exploring local concerns, as parochial comments at POC meetings divert the committee's energy and focus;

(b) Regeneration Partnerships all involve District and Borough Councils, so it would be good to have them involved in this way;

(c) Visits might help to link together other partners and groups working in similar fields. Making more links, or having a chance to network formally, would help everyone to avoid duplication;

(d) The mechanics of this will not work the same way in all areas – for example, Swale has three urban areas but only one of these areas has a Town Council;

(e) Would the project involved visits to Medway? Mr Lynes pointed out that Kent and Medway had a good, productive relationship with many links and frequent visits;

(f) Establishing such a group should not prevent Members from asking questions at POC about things which affect their local area. Members should always actively represent their electoral division at County Hall;

(g) the work of the sub-group would give Members a good basic knowledge of each area, which they needed;

(h) Two groups would not work well, as each would see different places and be able to make like-with-like comparisons. One group should visit everywhere, to have an overview and be able to make objective comparisons; and

(i) the group would help KCC to identify priorities for regeneration around the county.

(4) RESOLVED that a sub-group of the POC be established to visit, one by one, District and Borough Councils in Kent to see key local regeneration schemes, talk about how they fitted in with KCC's work and report back to the POC on their findings in each area.

21. Draft Annual Performance Report 2008/09

(Item B6)

Mr R Hardy, Head of Performance Improvement and Engagement, was in attendance for this item.

- (1) Mr Hardy introduced the report and explained that it was being submitted to all POCs. This was the first time the report had been produced in this format.
- (2) In discussion, Members made the following comments:-
 - (a) The report gives a good overview of issues. Regeneration is a cross-cutting subject and links to many other areas;
 - (b) This is a performance report, yet it doesn't include any figures to give evidence of any performance:
 - (c) The length of the report is not sufficient to explore issues in detail, yet it is too long to be a summary. Either of these options would be useful, but a shorter summary report would be preferred; and
 - (d) Some parts of the report refer to 'we', for example, 'How we have made a difference'. Readers need to be clear who this refers to, so these references could say 'Local authorities have done x' or 'Residents' groups have done y'.
- (3) Mr Hardy thanked Members for their comments and undertook to take account of the points made when preparing next year's report.
- (4) RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted, with thanks, and Members' comments, set out in paragraph (2) above, be taken into account when preparing future reports.

22. Regeneration and Economic Development, Connecting with Communities - Annual Report to Policy Overview Committee

(Item B7)

Ms J Hill, Performance Manager, was in attendance for this item.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted, with thanks.

23. Update Report on Projects in Regeneration Fund

(Item B8)

Mr N Smith, Head of Development Investment, was in attendance for this item.

- (1) Mr Smith explained that a Regeneration Board had been established to deliver the objectives of the Regeneration Fund. The Board will look at bids for funding, using a three-stage process; a pro-forma for each project, an assessment of the project against Regeneration Fund criteria and risk assessment, and a 'score card',

which is submitted to a sub-group which meets regularly to assess each project in a two-stage process.

(2) RESOLVED that the information given in the oral presentation be noted, but that, in future, written updates be produced for publication with the agenda for the meeting.

24. Potential to Refocus and Restructure the Overview and Scrutiny Function *(Item B9)*

Mr P D Wickenden, Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager, was in attendance for this item.

(1) Mr Wickenden introduced the report and explained that it had been submitted to all other Policy Overview Committees to give Members an opportunity to contribute their views.

(2) Members welcomed the report and the chance to comment, and acknowledged the scrutiny process as a vital opportunity for all Members to influence policy making. Members of each POC could help the Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Members to reach a conclusion on the work that the POC could do.

(3) RESOLVED that the views expressed above be taken into account when deciding the future direction, and the onward process, for debate at Cabinet on 12 October and County Council on 15 October, be noted.

25. Update on Select Committee Work *(Item C1)*

(1) Miss Grayell reported that proposals had been received for two Select Committee topics which would fall within the remit of this POC; Developer Contributions and Skills Shortage.

(2) RESOLVED that the process for agreeing a Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme be noted.