

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE - LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

MINUTES of a meeting of the Select Committee - Loneliness and Social Isolation held in the Darent Room - Sessions House on Monday, 23 July 2018.

PRESENT: Mr M A C Balfour, Mr D L Brazier, Ms K Constantine, Mrs L Game, Ms S Hamilton, Mr A R Hills, Ida Linfield and Mr K Pugh

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs K Goldsmith (Research Officer - Overview and Scrutiny) and Mr G Romagnuolo (Research Officer - Overview and Scrutiny)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Membership

(Item 1)

(1) The Committee noted that Ms Hamilton and Mr Hills had replaced Mrs Bell and Mr Sweetland.

2. Election of Chairman

(Item 2)

(1) Mr Brazier proposed, and Mr Balfour seconded, that Mr Pugh be elected Chairman on the Select Committee.

(2) RESOLVED that Mr Pugh be elected Chairman of the Select Committee.

3. Social Isolation Select Committee Topic Review

(Item 3)

(1) The Committee considered a report on the terms of reference, scope, potential witnesses and timescale for the review.

(2) Members had a free ranging discussion on the scope of the review and potential witnesses.

(3) Members agreed that the title of the Select Committee should be amended to "Loneliness and Social Isolation", as the two concepts differed, and the committee would consider both.

(4) Members discussed the focus of the committee. In accordance with the process in the Constitution for developing the Terms of Reference, the Chairman Designate and a member from the other two political groups had held an informal

discussion and agreed in principle that the focus of the committee should be on older people.

(5) The importance of the Terms of Reference being clear and focused was emphasised and due to the tight timescale for the review this would enable the Committee carry out an in-depth review. It was clarified that the final report should acknowledge that older people were not the only group to suffer from social isolation and loneliness, and if so minded the Committee could recommend that further work carried out.

(6) In relation to the first proposed Term of Reference, Members asked for the word "contextualise" to be amended to "put into context". Also, the wording should read "social isolation and/or loneliness" because people can suffer from one without the other.

(7) In relation to the fourth proposed Term of Reference, Members asked for the following addition to be made: "to recommend initiatives and strategies to prevent or reduce the impact of social isolation and loneliness on Kent's older residents", because the overall goal should be for no older person to become lonely or isolated.

(8) Mr Romagnuolo explained that the "Proposed Exclusion" in item 4 had been suggested to ensure that it was clear that the Committee would be looking at the prevention of loneliness, but not the effectiveness of the services that deal with its effects. Whilst acknowledging the importance of remaining focused on their Terms of Reference, Members did not think it was necessary to set out this Exclusion.

(9) Members discussed the possibility of individual County Councillors speaking to individuals in their community as part of the evidence gathering process. The use of rapporteurs would be added under the Site Visit section in the Terms of Reference. Members also asked that a question structure be circulated, though they were free to develop and expand these questions as they wished.

(10) In relation to proposed witnesses, and sites to be visited, there was general agreement over those listed in the topic review. If a Member did have a particular group they wished officers to contact, they were to let Mr Romagnuolo know by the end of the week. Where it was not possible to arrange a hearing or site visit, written evidence would be requested.

(11) It was agreed that a press release would be arranged so that wider members of the community could submit written evidence to the committee if they wished.

RESOLVED that the terms of reference, as amended to take account of the comments made in paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 above, and the general approach to the review, including the suggested witnesses and timetable be approved.

(A copy of the agreed Terms of Reference is attached as an appendix to these minutes)