

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room - Sessions House on Wednesday, 5 September 2018.

PRESENT: Mr S Holden (Vice-Chairman), Mrs P M Beresford, Mrs R Binks, Mr A Booth, Mr R A Marsh (Substitute for Mr A H T Bowles), Mr I S Chittenden, Mr A Cook, Mr D Farrell, Mr P J Homewood, Mrs T Dean, MBE (Substitute) (Substitute for Mr A J Hook), Mr J A Kite, MBE, Mr G Lymer, Mr P J Messenger, Mr S C Manion, Mr A M Ridgers and Mr J Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M Hill, OBE (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services) and Mr M Dance (Cabinet Member for Economic Development).

IN ATTENDANCE: Barbara Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport) and Georgina Little (Democartic Services Officer).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

91. Membership

(Item 2)

1. Mr Holden welcomed Mrs P Beresford and Mr P Homewood as new Members to the committee.
2. RESOLVED that the membership change be noted.

92. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 3)

Apologies were received from Mr A Hook and Mr A Bowles, Mrs T Dean and Mr A Marsh attended as substitutes respectively.

93. Election of Chairman

(Item 4)

1. Mr Booth proposed, seconded by Mr Messenger that Mr Ridgers was elected as Chairman of this Cabinet Committee.
2. RESOLVED that Mr Ridgers was elected Chairman to the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee.

94. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
(Item 5)

There were no declarations of interest received.

95. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2018
(Item 6)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2018 are a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

96. Verbal updates by Cabinet Members
(Item 7)

1. Mr M Hill, OBE (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services) announced the launch of the Open+ pilot that took place at Deal, Higham and Paddock Wood library. The Open+ model was a new innovative approach that offered customers the opportunity to access library services outside of normal staffing hours via a secure electronic coding system. Mr Hill assured Members that the piloted service model was already common practice in many places across the UK and had proved to be a success. A report would return to the committee upon completion of the pilot.
2. In addition, Mr Hill also announced the opening of the new Bearsted Library on 14 August 2018 in its temporary location at the Station Master's House next to ticket office at Bearsted railway station. Assessments were due to be undertaken at the old library building to evaluate its possible future use.
3. Mr Hill reported that the Libraries, Registration and Archive services was awarded accreditation status. Mr Hill commended the quality of the archive service and applauded the work carried out by the officers.
4. In regard to recent sporting events, Mr Hill commended the success of the Kent School Games which was attended by 8,538 young people from 334 schools.
5. Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport) briefed the committee on the Serious Incident that occurred at Sittingbourne Library on 22 June 2018. Mrs Cooper confirmed that the two staff members who were victims of the attack had received medical treatment and were back in work; the person responsible for the attack was in police custody and would be subject to legal proceedings. Due to the severity of the attack a range of actions had been undertaken to ensure that all involved, principally the team at Sittingbourne and the wider district, had the support they needed. Mrs Cooper thanked the team for continuing to deliver a high-quality service under such challenging circumstances and thanked Kent Police who had been

highly cooperative. Mrs Cooper said that there was an action plan to review key procedures which received tremendous corporate support and input from the local Libraries, Registration and Archive (LRA) Services, the Health and Safety Team, Human Resources and Unison. Mrs Cooper affirmed that the care of staff was Kent County Council's key priority alongside the continuation of providing an open access service to LRA facilities. However, whilst Kent County Council continued to promote that all people were welcome into libraries, it also needed to ensure that all staff work within a safe and acceptable environment.

(a) Members endorsed the kind words expressed by Mrs Cooper for both the victims of the Sittingbourne and the Tunbridge Wells attack along with the constabulary for their efficiency in managing the incidents.

6. Mr M Dance (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) provided an update on the No Use Empty initiative which received international recognition from a South Korean film company. Mr Dance, along with a national representative from Government were interviewed on the scheme, raising awareness of the issues surrounding empty properties and highlighting the success of the Kent initiative.

7. RESOLVED that the verbal updates be noted, with thanks.

97. Performance Dashboard

(Item 8)

Richard Fitzgerald (Business Intelligence Manager, Performance, Strategic Business, Development & Intelligence) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Fitzgerald introduced the Performance Dashboard which showed progress made against targets set for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and referred, in particular, to the summary on page 22 which highlighted the drop in performance levels within the Libraries, Registrations and Archives (LRA) service. Mr Fitzgerald informed Members that the red and amber indicators were reflective of the increased performance targets which specifically impacted on the LRA service.

2. Members queried the performance indicators of the LRA service and sought clarity on how often these were reviewed to ensure that the correct performance was being measured. Mrs Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport) advised Members of the Committee that the fluctuation in LRA activity combined with the increased target levels resulted in the service's performance decline.

1. Mr Pearson (Head of Service Libraries, Registration & Archives) assured the Committee that actions were being undertaken by the LRA service to ensure that increased targets would be met by the end of the year. With regard to the percentage of birth registrations booked online (DT12), the LRA service was working with Agilisys on the implementation of a new online registration

booking system to increase ease of access, in terms of the number of archival documents utilised by the public (LRA16) Mr Pearson confirmed that the archive digitisation programme was on track and part of the contract with Find My Past; and finally, with regards to the number of volunteer hours (LRA17), the LRA service aimed to review its recruitment programme and utilise social media platforms such as Facebook to promote this with greater effect.

2. In terms of customer satisfaction figures, Mr Pearson assured the Committee that the LRA team carried out both an email or physical survey, the results of which were in the process of being collated. The final figures would be available for Members to view in the next Performance Dashboard due at the November Cabinet Committee.
3. In response to a Members question regarding the digitisation of Parish records, Mr Pearson agreed to liaise with the Archives and Local History Service Manager to confirm whether the digitalised Parish records included deaths and marriages as well as the registration of births.
4. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

98. Libraries Registration and Archives performance update against the service specification 2017- 2018

(Item 9)

James Pearson (Head of Service Libraries, Registration & Archives) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr M Hill, OBE (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services) introduced the report that set out the Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA) performance against the outcome-based specification for 2017-2018. Mr Hill reminded Members that LRA was one of the first services to be internally commissioned and was within its third year of delivery.
2. Mr Pearson said that the LRA Service Specification used Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and an outcome evaluation framework to measure its quality of service delivery. The development of the outcome evaluation toolkit generated a new approach to capturing data. This new methodology was being delivered via masterclass training sessions to other authorities working with the National Libraries Taskforce, allowing others to view and adopt a new way of working. Mr Pearson acknowledged that the KPI table (page 34) indicated a downward trend in terms of library usage, however, this was in line with national trends. LRA had also planned for short-term refurbishments or closures of library buildings at key sites, including Tonbridge and Cliftonville last financial year. Mr Pearson assured Members that there had been an increase in the number of e-issues which included e-books, e-newspapers and e-magazines. In terms of the red indicator (KPI18 – Library Community Outreach), LRA was looking at new innovative ways to promote its existing schemes such as the ‘Home Library Service’ or ‘Touch a New

World Scheme', using social media platforms such as Facebook. Mr Pearson summarised the positive outcomes of the Ambition Statement as attached at Appendix 1 using a series of statements which highlighted LRAs high quality of service delivery and the positive difference LRA was making to people's lives.

3. In response to Members enquires regarding career development within LRA, Mr Pearson said that one of the key strategic priorities was staff training and ensuring that all staff were holistically equipped with the correct skills. Initially, the Kent History and Library Centre had an integrated team which created a number of issues around training. Upon reflection of this the LRA team took the decision to create a separate archives team and looked at ways to introduce a career development programme for that specific field of expertise. Mr Pearson said that staff required a multitude of skills, a key element of which was the development of customer service training, however, it was important to ensure that staff had both the time and space to learn new skills. Libraries Connected, a national organisation also offered a host of pathways for skill development including national shadowing whereby staff would be given the opportunity to learn from other services. In terms of succession planning, LRA hoped to introduce a new apprenticeship scheme and develop its digital training to future-proof the success of digitalised library services.
4. Members commended the work of the LRA service and the pivotal role it played within a community.
5. RESOLVED that the progress made by LRA over the financial year 2017-2018, be noted.

99. Thames Estuary Commission *(Item 10)*

David Smith (Director of Economic Development) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr M Dance (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) introduced the report that set out the Thames Estuary Commission's visions for growth by 2050.
2. Mr Smith informed the committee that the Thames Estuary Commission report was an opportunity to prioritise a number of important transformational projects over the next thirty years and that work was taking place collectively across government and local government as part of the Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership to discuss the Commission's recommendations. Mr Smith said that Ministers had invited local authorities to respond to the Commission's recommendations by Christmas and he would welcome the Committee's views to help prepare Kent County Council's response.

3. In response to the questions raised concerning the Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership, Mr Smith said that the constitution of the Partnership dated back thirty years and meetings of the Partnership were chaired on rotation by the Leaders of Kent County Council, Essex County Council and a Deputy Mayor of the Greater London Authority. The commission had recommended that a review of governance arrangements be undertaken by December 2018.
4. Members queried whether the Commission's recommended governance arrangements was a means for creating a new unitary authority. Mr Smith assured the committee that neither Lord Heseltine's nor Sir Armit's Thames Estuary Commission addressed the need for a unitary authority or a development corporation. Committee Members felt that the response of the Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership at the November meeting should be to work up other arrangements to manage and promote the priorities for the Estuary.
5. RESOLVED that the Thames Estuary Commission's Report be noted.

100. Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)
(Item 11)

David Smith (Director of Economic Development) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr M Dance (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) introduced the report that set out the Government's review on the 'Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnership.' The review identified a series of reforms that would need to be implemented by the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) before they could access Government funding beyond 2019. Mr Dance reminded Members that failure to implement the Government's proposed reforms would have a significant impact on the LEPs ability to secure future funding, noting that demonstrated in the report, the general consensus from local businesses suggests that a move away from the existing SELEP governance structure would be detrimental. Mr Dance welcomed comments from the committee on the content of the Government's Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships report.
2. Mr Smith said that the findings of the Government's LEP review published on 24 July 2018 concluded that some LEPs in specific parts of the country fell below the required standard of public conduct. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) had a federated governance model which met the standards required but would not conform to the detailed membership requirements the Government were looking for. A response was being drafted to send to the Secretary of State by the end of September 2018.
3. In response to concerns raised regarding appropriate representation, Mr Dance said that the Business Advisory Board consisted of thirty successful business people and one elected Member (Mr Dance) who was responsible for ensuring

that the comments of the Advisory Board were presented to the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP). KMEP membership consisted of a majority of business representatives plus the Leaders of the Kent's District and Borough Councils, Kent County Council and Medway Council and was chaired by a Business representative. Mr Dance confirmed that KMEP delivered effective outcomes.

4. Mr Smith said that democratic accountability and accessibility of the current SELEP arrangements had not been criticised by the review. The Local Authorities who were Members of the SELEP Accountability Board approved all major funding decision and monitored and managed SELEP's capital programme. SELEP was responsible for ensuring that investments decisions were made in a transparent and public forum with full due process.
5. Mr Smith confirmed that the Government's Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnership report had been discussed and approved by the Cabinet.
6. In response to the proposals set out within the Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships report, the committee made the following comments:
 - (a) Businesses were primarily accountable to their shareholders and would not necessarily take into consideration the views of the local community. The committee would like KCC to make strong representation to Government that democratic accountability and transparency needed to be included as a major component of the LEP (as exists within the current model) and dilution of Local Authority representation would weaken democratic balance and risk disengagement.
 - (b) The timeframe in which stakeholders were required to put forward their proposals for LEPs geographical boundaries (28 September 2018) was unacceptable.
7. Mr Dance agreed to include these points in the response to the Secretary of State and copy this to the Party Group Leaders.
8. RESOLVED that the content of the Government's Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnership report be noted.

101. Developing a Kent and Medway Enterprise and Productivity Strategy: Progress Update
(Item 12)

David Smith (Director of Economic Development) and Johanna Howarth (Deputy Director of Economic Development) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr S Holden (Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Development) introduced the report that provided an update on the development of a 2050 Enterprise and Productivity Strategy for Kent and Medway. The work programme over the coming year included the launch of the Calls for Evidence and data collection analysis to form an evidenced based strategy. Mr Holden informed the committee that an informal meeting was due to be held directly after the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee to discuss the development of a Kent and Medway Enterprise and Productivity Strategy, Members were welcome to attend.
2. Mr Smith said that the main objective of the strategy was to contribute to the improvement of people's living standards in the long term, to 2050. This would be achieved through working with and listening to key sectors, local businesses, local authorities and public service providers to ensure Kent County Council identified better ways of measuring and understanding standards of living to provide stronger evidence with which to develop the strategy. The report was one of a series of updates that would be presented to the committee over a period of time containing details of upcoming work.
3. Mrs Howarth said that there would be a number of planned additional activities that would be used to strengthen the Enterprise and Productivity Strategy for Kent and Medway. Alongside the Call for Evidence. Other activities included: engaging with residents and young people to ensure that the strategy addressed issues that were inherently important for them, discussions with businesses and local public agencies to interpret the evidence and the practical actions that should be taken collectively in response in order to improve productivity and address living standards; and finally, a commissioned detailed scenario analysis which would be used to forecast the current trends , identify the likely drives of change and the impacts this would have on the Kent and Medway Economy. The Call for Evidence looked at two elements, the first being living standards and the second was business productivity. Mrs Howarth said that as part of the strategies development, Kent County Council would be seeking the views from Local authorities, public agencies, academies and business representatives in relation to four main areas, this included:
 - a set of measures to help understand and define living standards in Kent and Medway
 - the potential impact that future external changes i.e. democratic/ environmental/ technological would have to Kent and Medway
 - the characteristics that made businesses high performing and what could prohibit them from being more productive; and
 - the opportunities and challenges raised by technology

Mrs Howarth said that the two call for evidence documents were in draft form, however feedback had started to be received from Members of the Committee and businesses on how to increase accessibility.

4. In response to queries regarding the inclusion of committee members at the evidence gathering events, Mr Smith agreed to provide details of the events to the Members of the committee and welcomed the active participation of the relevant committee Member at those discussions.
5. Mr Holden confirmed that the Membership of the Enterprise and Productivity Leaders Working Group consisted of the following individuals – Mr S Holden, Mr A Bowles, Mr A Cook, Mr G Lymer and Mr J Kite
6. RESOLVED that the draft Call for Evidence and next steps, be noted.

102. Kent and Medway Business Rates Pilot

(Item 13)

David Smith (Director of Economic Development) and Johanna Howarth (Deputy Director of Economic Development) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr M Dance (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) introduced the report that provided an update on the Kent and Medway Business Rates Pilot and the plans to prepare a new bid to participate in a third wave of pilots in 2019 – 20.
2. Mr Smith said that the Government had a stated policy ambition to move towards 100% business rates retention by 2020-21. Ahead of the planned 75% business rates retention reforms in 2010-21, Kent and Medway were one of several pilot areas chosen by Government to participate in a second round of pilots to test how the new system would work. On 24 July, Government invited areas to apply to participate in a third round of 75% business rates retention pilots.
3. Mrs Howarth said that the business rates income projections for 2018-19 indicated that the total proceeds for the pilot would be in the region of £36 million. Kent County Council's proposed bid would use retained growth in two ways; the first would be to use 70% of the growth to support authorities to manage the additional costs and pressures associated with growth and the remaining 30% would be used to support authorities to drive further growth using the existing cluster leader board arrangements across a wider sub-county geography. Discussions had taken place in the three cluster areas regarding the proposed allocation of the fund, the next step was to amalgamate the proposals into a prospectus and receive agreement from the existing leaders board. Mrs Howarth confirmed that a Kent and Medway bid to participate in the third round of the business rates retention pilots had commenced.

4. In response to questions raised regarding the number of areas participating in the pilot, Mr Smith said that there were 9 other Local Authority groups participating in the second wave of pilots. Our 2018-19 pilot included Kent County Council, 12 Kent District Boroughs and Medway Borough Council. He said that due to the complexity of Kent, judges were keen to see how authorities would work together to manage financial risks and rewards.
5. RESOLVED that the delivery of the Kent and Medway Business Rates Pilot in 2018-19 and the proposal to bid for a pilot in 2019-20, be noted.

103. Update on the Work of Kent Trading Standards in 2018 and Future Opportunities and Challenges

(Item 14)

Katie Stewart (Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement) and Steve Rock (Head of Trading Standards) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr M Hill (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services) introduced the report which provided an update on the work of Trading Standards and its key achievements. It also identified the breadth of work that had been carried out across the county and highlighted the future opportunities and challenges that could be faced by the service due to increased demand. Mr Hill commended the service and the pivotal role it played as part of the criminal justice system, the threat of increased pressure however remained imminent due to the demands faced by Brexit.
2. Mrs Stewart said that since the report to the Committee in March 2017, the service still continued to face considerable pressures, dealing with an increased number of criminals engaged in serious organised crime, administering more complex processes and managing uncertainty over changes to UK legislation following Brexit and its impact on Kent businesses. The Trading Standards Team however were innovative in their approach to finding new ways of generating income to ensure future sustainability. Mrs Stewart said that the report highlighted many of the same themes as presented previously in the March 2017 report therefore Members were aware of the existing breadth of work and pressures inherent within the Kent Trading Standards Service.
3. Mr Rock provided a summary of key themes highlighted within the report and welcomed questions from the Committee.
4. In response to queries raised regarding intelligence received from European Partners, Mr Rock said that there was not a specific channel for intelligence, however, information would be received from a number of sources including, the Public Protection Intelligence Team that interacted with all criminal enforcement agencies and the National Trading Standards Intelligence Team which was linked to the Action Fraud Agency. Mr Rock said that the Kent Trading Standards was a fully intelligence led service and therefore any information held by the Intelligence

Units that posed a significant risk to Kent, would be collated in an intelligence package and passed to Kent Trading Standards, similar to the process used by the Police.

5. Members queried whether the additional staff based at the Port of Dover would be a sufficient number to support the increased service demand, Mr Rock assured the Committee that the service used an intelligence led approach to forecast the predicted volume of work post March 2019 and confirmed that four additional staff members would be sufficient. Mrs Stewart said that Trading Standards continued to engage with Government Civil Servants and was working with its partner agencies across the county to continually review the impact of Brexit. Due to the posed risk presented by Brexit, she assured Members that work around this was being prioritised and should the service require additional resources, Kent County Council would respond.
6. Members commended the work of the Kent Trading Standards team.
7. RESOLVED that the reported be noted.

104. Work Programme 2018 - 2019
(Item 15)

1. RESOLVED that the work programme be noted subject to the inclusion of Kent County Council's visit to Gravesham on 16 November 2018 along with the Thanet and Ebbsfleet District Council visits that were due to be scheduled for 2019.