

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 20 September 2019

PRESENT: Mr R A Marsh (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), Mr P V Barrington-King, Mr R H Bird, Mr T Bond, Mr N J D Chard, Mr G Cooke, Mrs M E Crabtree, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr D Farrell, Mr P W A Lake, Mr D Murphy, Mr M D Payne, Mr H Rayner and Mr I Thomas

ALSO PRESENT: Miss S J Carey, Mr E E C Hotson, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr P J Oakford and Miss C Rankin

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms A Agyepong (Corporate Lead - Equalities and Diversity), Ms S Annan-Vetch (Policy Advisor), Mr V Bhatia (FM Commissioning Lead), Mr M Bridger (Strategic Commissioning Standards Manager), Ms Z Cooke (Corporate Director of Finance), Mr S Dodd (Investment and Development Consultant), Mr V Godfrey (Strategic Commissioner), Ms R Kennard (Chief Analyst), Mr N Roberts (Head of Property Strategy and Commissioning), Mrs R Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mr B Watts (General Counsel), Mr D Weiss (Head of HeadStart Kent), Mr J White (Southborough Project Manager), Mr D Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

179. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Sweetland and Mr Cockburn.

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

(Item 3)

Mr Thomas declared an interest as he was the Chairman of the Planning Committee at Canterbury City Council and some of the items on the agenda would require planning permission before decisions could be implemented.

181. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2019

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee meeting held on 13 June 2019 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

182. Strategic and Corporate Services Performance Dashboard

(Item 5)

Ms Cooke (Corporate Director of Finance), Mr Godfrey (Strategic Commissioner – Public Health), Ms Kennard (Chief Analyst) and Ms Rankin (Cabinet Member for Strategic Commissioning) were in attendance for this item.

- (1) Mr Godfrey and Ms Kennard introduced the report which set out progress made against targets set for Key Performance Indicators.

Officers then responded to comments and questions from Members, including the following: -

- a) Miss Carey (Cabinet Member for Customers, Communications and Performance) talked about the level of complexity within each Freedom of Information (FOI) request and said that requests often had multiple sub-questions attached to them. She added that Kent County Council continued to ensure that as much data was available on the Council's website as possible in a bid to reduce the number of FOI requests being received.
- b) Miss Carey confirmed that officers within Kent's County Council's FOI team were responsible for receiving requests and ensuring that the requests reached the relevant departments for a response to be made but it was these departments that were responsible for answering the queries. This meant that simply increasing staffing in the FOI team would not improve performance. Mr Godfrey said that officers within Kent County Council's Commissioning team were often required to answer FOI requests and added that the nature of many FOI requests was unpredictable, varied and complex.
- c) Mr Watts stated that many of the FOI requests that Kent County Council received requested further information in relation to data that was already available on the Council's website. He added that the FOI process would soon be reviewed to ensure best practice, efficiency and transparency.
- d) Miss Carey clarified information within the report in relation to the Performance Management RAG ratings.
- e) Ms Cooke referred to the 'Sundry debt due to KCC which is under 60 days old' rating within the report and confirmed that an income pathway project had been undertaken in order to review the process by which KCC's invoices were raised and the way in which invoices were monitored in relation to debt recovery. She added that the income pathway project changes would be implemented alongside Cantium Business Solutions by December 2019.
- f) Mr Watts mentioned response satisfaction rates in relation to FOI requests and said that a full set of data was published on the Council's website and brought to the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on a yearly basis. He confirmed that he could circulate the current dataset to Committee Members.
- g) Mr Watts referred to the Subject Access request figures within the report and confirmed that circumstances had improved.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

183. Embedding Social Value in KCC's Commissioning Activity

(Item 6)

Ms Agyepong (Corporate Lead - Equalities and Diversity) and Mr Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) were in attendance for this item.

(1) Mr Hotson (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) and Ms Agyepong introduced the report which set out progress against the Equality and Human Rights Policy and Objectives 2016-2020, a statutory requirement under the Equality Act 2010.

Officers then responded to comments and questions from Members, including the following: -

- a) Mr Whittle confirmed that additional work would be undertaken in regard to automating Kent County Council's key processes, which would restrict services' ability to progress Committee reports without the necessary equality impact analysis.
- b) Mr Watts confirmed that he could provide further information to Committee Members outside of the meeting in relation to Kent County Council's workforce profile.
- c) Ms Agyepong referred to the peer reviews that were actively considered by the Local Government Association, who undertook Equality Framework assessments for local government. She added that preparation for the assessment process would allow Kent County Council to grasp a clearer focus on the areas which required improvement.

(2) Mr Watts thanked Ms Agyepong for her dedicated approach to supporting the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, Members supported this.

(3) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

184. Annual Equality and Diversity Report 2018-19

(Item 7)

Mr Hill (Cabinet Member for Community & Regulatory Services), Mr Weiss (Head of HeadStart Kent) and Ms Annan-Veitch (Policy Advisor) were in attendance for this item.

(1) Officers and Mr Hill introduced the report which set out The Domestic Abuse Strategy, a partnership document under the governance of the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive. Kent County Council had worked with partners to develop a coherent and focused strategy, which was out

for consultation. The final strategy will be launched in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office later this year.

Officers then responded to comments and questions from Members, including the following: -

- a) Ms Annan-Veitch said that the consultation was aimed towards Kent County Council's partners and a key theme was stronger coordinated working.
 - b) Mr Weiss stated that each district in Kent had its own support services with different providers to support victims of domestic abuse. He added that Kent Police prioritised urgent domestic abuse cases.
 - c) In response to a Member's question about finding information about domestic abuse on the Council's website, Miss Carey (Cabinet Member for Customers, Communications and Performance) said that the majority of people searching for help would use a search engine such as Google and helpline numbers for Kent were easily found this way. She added that comments made by Members in relation to improving the domestic abuse support page on the Council's website were noted and that appropriate action would be taken to improve the website where possible.
- (2) The Chairman requested that the comments made by Members be incorporated into the strategy and that a copy of the consultation response be distributed to all Members.
- (3) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

185. Domestic Abuse Strategy

(Item 8)

Mr Hill (Cabinet Member for Community & Regulatory Services), Mr Weiss (Head of HeadStart Kent) and Ms Annan-Veitch (Policy Advisor) were in attendance for this item.

- (1) Officers and Mr Hill introduced the report which set out The Domestic Abuse Strategy, a partnership document under the governance of the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive. Kent County Council had worked with partners to develop a coherent and focused strategy, which was out for consultation. The final strategy will be launched in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office later this year.

Officers then responded to comments and questions from Members, including the following: -

- a) Ms Annan-Veitch said that the consultation was aimed towards Kent County Council's partners and a key theme was stronger coordinated working.

- b) Mr Weiss stated that each district in Kent had its own support services with different providers to support victims of domestic abuse. He added that Kent Police prioritised urgent domestic abuse cases.
 - c) In response to a Member's question about finding information about domestic abuse on the Council's website, Miss Carey (Cabinet Member for Customers, Communications and Performance) said that the majority of people searching for help would use a search engine such as Google and helpline numbers for Kent were easily found this way. She added that comments made by Members in relation to improving the domestic abuse support page on the Council's website were noted and that appropriate action would be taken to improve the website where possible.
- (2) The Chairman requested that the comments made by Members be incorporated into the strategy and that a copy of the consultation response be distributed to all Members.
- (3) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

186. Work Programme 2019-2020

(Item 9)

RESOLVED that the work programme for 2019-20 be noted.

187. 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 business as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Exempt Items

(open access to minutes)

188. Maximising returns from Capital Disposals

(Item 10)

Mrs Spore (Director of Infrastructure) and Mr Dodd (Investment and Development Consultant) were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Hotson introduced the report which set out options to drive additional value from the Council's Capital Disposals Programme. Mrs Spore gave a short presentation and answered Members' questions.
- (2) RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted, the omitted Appendix (detailed Strategic Business Case prepared by the council's consultancy team) be circulated to committee members shortly after the meeting, and the next steps outlined in Section 10 of the business case be considered further in January 2020 and following a briefing for Members.

Post-Meeting Note - *The detailed Strategic Business Case prepared by the council's consultancy team was circulated to committee members after the meeting*

189. 19/00057 - East Kent TFM - Contract Extension

(Item 11)

Mr Long (Cabinet Lead for Traded Services), Mrs Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mr Roberts (Head of Property Strategy and Commissioning) and Mr Bhatia (FM Commissioning Lead) were in attendance for this item.

- (1) Mr Hotson introduced the report which asked the Cabinet Committee to comment on the proposed decision to authorise the award of a contract for the delivery of Facilities Management Services in East Kent and delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with him, to agree the final terms and enter into any necessary contractual arrangements.
- (2) RESOLVED that the proposed decision, by the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services, to authorise the award of a contract for the delivery of Facilities Management Services in East Kent and delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services, to agree final terms and enter into any necessary contractual arrangements be endorsed.

190. 19/00058 - Maidstone East Development

(Item 12)

Mrs Spore (Director of Infrastructure) and Mr Dodd (Investment and Development Consultant) were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Hotson introduced this report which asked the Cabinet Committee to comment on the proposed decision by Cabinet to delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services and the Cabinet Member of Finance, to finalise terms and enter into the necessary documentation to complete the transactions in line with the recommendations outlined in section 9.3 of the report. Mrs Spore gave a presentation and answered Members' questions.
- (2) Mr Hotson noted the concerns aired by Members and undertook not to make a decision until after the heads of terms were made available to the Cabinet Committee.
- (3) RESOLVED that the proposed decision to delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services and the Cabinet Member of Finance, to finalise terms and enter into the necessary documentation to complete the transactions in line with the recommendations outlined in section 9.3 of the report be endorsed subject to a further review by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee.

191. 19/00070 - Letting of the building contract for the Southborough Hub Project

(Item 13)

Mr Long (Cabinet Lead for Traded Services), Mr Hill (Cabinet Member for Community & Regulatory Services), Mrs Spore (Director of Infrastructure and Mr White (Southborough Project Manager) were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Hotson introduced the report which asked the Cabinet Committee to comment on the proposed decision, by the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services, to authorise the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services and the Corporate Director for Finance, to enter into the necessary legal documents to enable the construction of the Southborough Hub development.
- (2) RESOLVED that the proposed decision by the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services to authorise the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services and the Corporate Director for Finance, to enter into the necessary legal documents to enable the construction of the Southborough Hub development be endorsed.