

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 26 July 2019.

PRESENT: Mr A Booth (Chairman), Mr A M Ridgers (Vice-Chairman), Mr P V Barrington-King, Mrs R Binks, Mr R H Bird, Mr D L Brazier (Substitute) (Substitute for Mr M A C Balfour), Mr D Farrell, Mr R C Love, OBE, Dr L Sullivan, Mr J Wright and Mr I S Chittenden (Substitute) (Substitute for Mrs T Dean, MBE)

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M Whiting, Mr A R Hills, Mrs C Bell and Mr K Pugh

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms P Southern (Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health), Ms C McKenzie (Sustainability and Climate Change Manager) and Mr J Cook (Scrutiny Research Officer)

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### **6. Apologies and Substitutes**

*(Item A2)*

Apologies had been received from Mr Balfour, Mrs Beresford, Mr Cooke and Mrs Dean. Mr Brazier substituted for Mr Balfour and Mr Chittenden substituted for Mrs Dean.

#### **7. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019**

*(Item A4)*

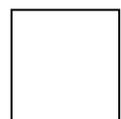
RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019 were, subject to a minor correction to the attendance listings, a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

#### **8. Loneliness and Social Isolation Select Committee Action Plan - 3 months on update**

*(Item A5)*

1. Mr Pugh (Chair of the Loneliness and Social Isolation Select Committee) provided in introduction to the item, explaining that he had been asked by Cabinet to be involved in the Executive response to the Select Committee's recommendations. A key action requested of him was to work on the development of the Member Panel that would be established to monitor relevant work in relation to loneliness and social isolation.

2. Penny Southern (Corporate Director Adult Social Care & Health) delivered a presentation, which outlined the Executive response to the Select Committee's recommendations. She explained that her Directorate was the KCC Lead and that she would be the accountable officer for delivering the response to the recommendations from the report. She advised that the presentation and current plan for responding did not cover budget implications as the initial review had been



focused on what needed to be done and that resourcing would be considered as further progress was made.

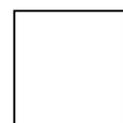
3. Ms Southern explained that the process of reviewing the recommendations had involved four phases;

- Engagement
- Assessment
- Implementation
- Sustainability

4. She advised that the last phase was crucial as all progress and developments had to be sustainable for them to have a reasonable impact and that they would allow KCC to continue to help people appropriately. In terms of timetabling, the plan was that a full response to all recommendations would be developed by October 2019 and that full implementation of the response would take place by October 2020.

5. The presentation outlined the main response element to each recommendation, with key points as follows:

- Work with groups other than older people (as focused on in the main Topic Review) would drive and be linked to a complex piece of work involving field activity identifying relevant people and seek find preventative solutions.
- Important elements of corporate strategy for this area would be incorporated into the Civil Society Strategy rather than being created as a separate strategic document.
- Rather than focusing on a single launch event, KCC would be developing a longer term communications campaign and this would involve the development and promotion of a new toolkit (linked to other recommendations).
- KCC would seek to make best use of existing platforms, while also highlighting the planned toolkit. Signposting to a single point of access was already a core outcome of the wellbeing core offer contract but KCC was not intending to create a single platform.
- The social prescribing arrangements in the County were complex and further review and engagement work was required to fully assess the offer. KCC was keen for there to be a single model for this and would link in with relevant partners to achieve better co-ordination.
- Transport elements were important and required further work, which would involve looking at cross commissioning between KCC Transport and Adult Social Care services. This would be linked with the assessment of the Big Conversation Pilots.
- KCC would conduct further engagement and review before deciding on whether KCC should sign up to the Government Pledge relating to loneliness and building social connections. This would involve engagement with other Kent local Authorities and other partners.
- KCC would not adopt the recommended UCLA Loneliness scale as it was believed by the Directorate that the Warwick-Edinburgh Well-being Scale used by KCC Public Health was a more appropriate measure. KCC would seek to embed this preferred measure via contracts in the future.
- A Member Panel would be set up to monitor the relevant activity and as per the introduction, Mr Pugh had been asked by Cabinet to Chair the Panel which would operate under the Cabinet Member for Adult Social & Health.



6. Members discussed the update, commenting on the importance of Social prescribing, highlighting the need for this to be more joined up and easier to access. Members also commented on the benefits of easy access to services via a single online source or phone number. A Member highlighted concerns around the risk of not linking properly with District Councils in terms of planning considerations relating to placement and accessibility of key service venues.

7. Responding to comments and questions, Ms Southern explained that;

- A key focus was to get the message across that this was everyone's business.
- KCC was not necessarily looking to invest more funding to deliver this work but would instead seek to make best use of available resources.
- KCC was keen to work with all appropriate VCS organisations in responding to these challenges.
- KCC had to link with Districts and Boroughs and other partners to ensure a co-ordinated response.
- KCC was keen to ensure better communication channels for those experiencing loneliness and isolation.
- KCC was working towards high level events like the Kent Show.

8. Ms Southern was grateful for the comments of the Committee and would work towards producing some measurable outcomes.

9. The Chairman thanked Mr Pugh, Mrs Bell and Ms Southern for attending the meeting and for answering Members' questions.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee note the report and progress to date.

## **9. Select Committee Work Programme**

*(Item A6)*

1. Mr Hills, as the Topic Proposer, provide an overview of his proposal that a Climate Change and its effect on Kent be established. He explained that there continued to be concerning information being released by the Met Office and other parties and that this included detailed examination of potential serious climate related problems. Mr Hills highlighted that a long term strategy had been launched to deal with coastal flooding and climate change and that the Environment Agency (EA) was preparing for a 4 degree rise in temperature. He advised the Committee that given the expect development activity, coastline length and population growth in Kent, it was vital that KCC fully understood the challenges so that it could prepare and respond appropriately.

2. Mr Whiting (Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste) thanked Mr Hills for raising the topic and agreed that it was a very important issue. However, he advised the Committee that KCC already recognised that a great deal of work was required and that to respond effectively, a large amount of information had to be collected and analysed, in line with the resolution of County Council with regard to the UK Environment and Climate Change Emergency. Mr Whiting highlighted that both the EA and central Government were developing relevant plans with regard to coastal risk management in relation to climate change and that consideration was being given to flood plain management.



3. Mr Whiting summarised the response to the proposal, advising that in view of the all the activity already taking place at both local and national level, combined with the time needed to allow the Growth, Environment and Transport directorate to collect the necessary information, it was not appropriate to establish the Select Committee at this time but that the matter could be reconsidered in early 2020 when more information might be available.

4. Carolyn McKenzie (Head of Sustainable Business and Communities) reassured the Committee that KCC had completed its own impact and risk assessment using the government model. She explained that this was very detailed and had provided an excellent starting point to build on as part of the extensive ongoing work. She highlighted that the Kent Environment Strategy would involve monitoring this important issue.

5. Members discussed the proposal and the Executive response, noting the points made regarding a possible lack of information being available initially and that a delay to establishing the Select Committee may remedy this. It was also noted that the issue remained quite broad with wide reaching elements and that it would be important to carefully consider the scope of the Select Committee if and when progressed.

6. Members also discussed the idea of more than one Select Committee being run concurrently, however the Clerk explained to the Committee that there were insufficient resources to do so but that the accelerated pace of the most recent Select Committee might be possible for future ones, allowing more to be conducted in a shorter period of time, while still not overlapping.

7. It was agreed that, in recognition of the importance of the issue, the Climate Change and its Effect on Kent Select Committee be added to the Topic Review Work Programme.

8. Mr Bird proposed, seconded by Mr Booth, that the Committee resolve to establish the Affordable Housing Select Committee upon the completion of the current Knife Crime Select Committee and that Climate Change Topic review follow.

RESOLVED that;

- The Climate Change and its Effect on Kent Topic Review be approved for inclusion on the work programme;
- The Select Committee on Affordable Housing be established and formal work to commence upon the completion of the Knife Crime Select Committee;
- The General Counsel be asked to explore options for increasing resourcing for supporting Topic Reviews.

**10. Exempt minute of the meeting held on 9 July 2019**  
*(Item A8)*

RESOLVED that the exempt minute of the meeting held on 9 July 2019 was a correct record and that it be signed by the Chairman.

Signed.....  
Dated.....