

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 13 March 2024

PRESENT: Mr D L Brazier (Chairman), Mr M Dendor (Vice-Chairman), Mr P V Barrington-King, Mr P Bartlett, Ms M Dawkins, Mr A J Hook, Mr H Rayner, Mr P Stepto, Dr L Sullivan and Mr M Whiting

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D Jeffrey and Mr P Oakford

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Deputy Chief Executive), Mr M Scrivener (Head of Risk and Delivery Assurance), Mrs R Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mr B Watts (General Counsel), Mr D Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance), Ms L Gannon (Director of Technology), Mr A Carty (Head of Facilities Management), Alison Petters (Risk and Delivery Assurance Manager) and James Church (Compliance and Risk Manager)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

192. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Bond, Mr Lehman and Mr McInroy. There were no substitutes present.

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

(Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

194. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024 were a correct record and that a paper copy be signed by the Chairman.

195. Risk Management: Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive Departments

(Item 5)

Mr Roger Gough was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Mark Scrivener and Mr Roger Gough introduced the report which presented the strategic risks relating to the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive Departments, in addition to the risks featuring on the Corporate Risk Register that fall within the relevant Cabinet portfolios. It was said that the corporate risk ratings remained the same as previously reported, with the

exception of “CRR0045: Maintaining effective governance and decision making in a challenging financial and operating environment” for which the rating had been increased in light of findings from recent External Audit reports and the Council’s Annual Governance Statement. It was said that the responses to the recommendations raised in these reports were being monitored via an action plan.

2. Members were reminded that the criteria for what risks appear on the corporate risk register and the criteria for risks to come off the register would be reviewed to ensure focus on material matters.
3. In response to comments and questions from Members it was said that:
 - a) The Risk Team worked closely with directorates to establish the current scores and target scores for risks identified on the Corporate Risk Register. Evidence was used to support these scores when available. There was aggregation and modelling carried out in relation to emergency response planning.
 - b) It was emphasised that the Council was operating within an extraordinarily challenging external environment which impacted its financial sustainability. These challenges were not unique to KCC. Mr Oakford assured the Committee that the Council was taking significant action to prevent the issuing of a Section 114 notice. However, it was noted that this level of activity was not sustainable. Members agreed that there were democratic challenges associated with having to reduce activity to the provision of statutory services.
 - c) Regarding workforce shortages, it was highlighted that there were challenges related to recruitment into skilled positions, for which the Council was competing with the private sector to attract suitably qualified and experienced staff. Members questioned whether there was the opportunity for joint authority working to address some of these workforce related challenges.
 - d) The Risk Team would consider the suggestion for the separation of “CRR0049: Fraud and Error” into two separate risks.
4. RESOLVED to consider and comment on the risks presented.

196. Facilities Management Bi-Annual Update

(Item)

1. Ms Rebecca Spore and Mr Tony Carty introduced the report which provided an update on KCC’s Facilities Management (FM) arrangements to provide services across both the corporate and schools estate, for which KCC has responsibility. It included an update on the performance of the current contract and changes over the last six months. This was the first report that disaggregated the performance of the Hard FM services and the Soft FM contracts. Members were told that there had been a significant restructure within the Infrastructure Service and the FM Team to ensure that the structure was aligned with the new operating model. There would be a phased recruitment process to strengthen the teams and drive performance across the contracts.

2. In response to questions and comments from Members it was said that:
 - a) All of the FM contracts included a social value consideration. Ms Spore would provide Members with further information regarding this outside of the formal meeting.
 - b) Dip testing was carried out on a monthly basis and the KPIs attached to the dip tests were verified.
 - c) Performance data relating to email response times would be provided to Members via email. It was confirmed that there was a specific KPI attached to email responses which would also be communicated to Members.
 - d) It was agreed that the maintenance of the Member car park would be followed up with the relevant service managers.
 - e) Mr Oakford confirmed that he had raised concerns regarding the terms and conditions of the contractors working for KCC. He was working with officers to ensure that KCC's duty of care towards these contractors was fully recognised in the contracts.

3. RESOLVED to note the report and progress.

197. Work Programme

(Item)

RESOLVED to consider and note the planned work programme for 2024.

198. Future Meeting Dates

(Item)

RESOLVED to note the future meeting dates of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee.

199. Cyber Security Annual Report

(Item)

1. Ms Lisa Gannon and Mr James Church introduced the report which updated the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on the Council's current approach to cyber security and provided an update to the report presented to the Committee on 9 March 2023. It was highlighted that there was an increasing number of cyber attacks globally and that investment into the Council's IT networks and cyber security remained a priority. It was said that further cyber security training would be provided to Members in light of the evolving risks, and Members were reminded of the reporting mechanisms in place. Members were told that a cross-directorate resilience group regularly looked at different ways to respond to cyber security incidents should they occur.

2. RESOLVED to note the Council's current approach to cyber security.