

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 Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 6 September 2017.

PRESENT: Mr M Whiting (Chairman), Mr S Holden (Vice-Chairman), Mrs R Binks, Mr A Booth, Mr D Butler, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr A Cook, Mr D Farrell, Mr A J Hook, Mr J A Kite, MBE, Mr G Lymer, Mr P J Messenger, Mr A M Ridgers and Mr J Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance and Mr P M Hill, OBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mrs K Stewart (Director of Environment Planning and Enforcement), Ms A Agyepong (Corporate Lead - Equalities and Diversity), Mr R Fitzgerald (Performance Manager), Ms S Holt (Head of Culture & Sport Group), Mrs S Nurden (Kent and Medway Economic Partnership's Strategic Programme Manager), Mr J Pearson (Service Improvement Programme Manager), Mrs C Ridgway, Mr D Smith (Director of Economic Development) and Miss E West (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

17. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

No apologies were received.

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

(Item 3)

No declarations of interest were received.

19. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017

(Item 4)

1. Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017 are a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

20. Verbal updates by Cabinet Members and Corporate Director

(Item 5)

1. Mike Hill (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services) said that he had visited the Gulbenkian theatre in Canterbury to share a platform with the Chief Executive of the Arts Council England for a young person's arts event. He said that the event was held to allow young people to take part in art events and was organised entirely by the young people. The Chief Executive was very impressed with the young people at the event and the event was strongly

supported and sponsored by Kent County Council. Mr Hill had also visited Margate with Barbara Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport) to look more closely at the new arrangements aimed at regenerating the area.

- a) In response to questions and comments around the need to promote changes that had been made to transform towns in Kent, Mr Hill said that Kent County Council promoted the majority of work carried out and tried to get as much recognition for the positive impacts of the work.
2. Mark Dance (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) discussed the Discovery Park's fifth anniversary event and said he would be attending it to meet with new owners and seek their commitment to build upon the work that had been done.
3. RESOLVED that the verbal updates be noted.

21. Performance Dashboard

(Item 6)

1. Richard Fitzgerald (Business Intelligence Manager) introduced the Performance Dashboard which showed progress made against targets for key performance indicators.
2. Mr Dance commented on the 'External Investments secured through European Funding' rating and explained that this was a Brexit implication.
3. The Chairman commended the hard work undertaken by staff and officers to ensure that the majority of the ratings remained green.
 - a) In response to comments and questions, Mr Dance discussed the amber ratings in the report in further detail and said it was important to allow companies time to grow and develop in order to succeed. Katie Stewart (Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement) undertook to bring a report about Trading Standards to a meeting of the Committee in the future.
4. Resolved that the report be noted.

22. Work Programme 2017/18

(Item 7)

1. Resolved that the work programme for 2017 be noted.

23. Revision of South East Local Enterprise Partnership's (SELEP) Strategic Economic Plan

(Item 8)

1. Sarah Nurden (Strategic Programme Manager – KMEP) introduced the SELEP (South East Local Enterprise Partnership) report and discussed the Strategic Economic plan which set out how Economic Growth would be driven forward in the area. She presented a set of slides and welcomed feedback from the Committee.

2. Mr Dance said that start-up and innovation buildings must run at full capacity to ensure good value for money and best practice.
 - a) In response to comments from Members, Adam Bryan (Managing Director of SELEP) said that SELEP aimed to engage as many people as possible and to take a lead from the local area.
 - b) In response to comments from Members, Jim Sims (Consultant – The Service Design Company Ltd) discussed population and productivity growth and the challenges around productivity and innovation. He said that high value/growth sectors needed to be supported appropriately in order to compete more effectively in a global economy.
 - c) In response to comments from Members, Sarah Nurden said that the system was fairly difficult to navigate. She said it had been suggested that schools were a ‘missing link’ in the Local Enterprise Partnership should be invited to nominate one person to join the board to allow conversations to be had across the whole sector and therefore target a larger audience. She discussed the importance of work readiness, transferrable skills and a smooth transition process into a workplace for students and said that careers advice was very important for students who may not have the right attitude to work.
3. Sarah Nurden said that feedback would be taken on board and suggested bringing the item back to the Committee once a final output had been received. The Chairman agreed that this would be beneficial to the Committee.
4. RESOLVED that the activity underway to review and revise the South East Local Enterprise Partnership’s Strategic Economic Plan, be noted.

24. Libraries, Registration and Archives ambition work and proposed Member working group

(Item 9)

1. Mr Hill commended the hard work that had been undertaken over recent months and said that despite severe financial constraints, no libraries had to be closed in Kent.
2. James Pearson (Head of Service – Libraries, Registration and Archives) introduced the report which outlined the proposal to develop an ambition statement for Libraries, Registration and Archives, and recommended the setting up of a cross-party Member working group to support the work. He said that Kent had seen and would continue to see a change in demography and changes in how people accessed services. Libraries, Registration and Archives would look at the future challenges of population growth and work towards recognising benefits, importance and financial realities that the service had.
3. The Chairman talked about the cross-party Member working group to support the work and reminded Members that the group should be balanced and effective. He added that the report would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

4. In response to comments from Members, the Chairman commented on the range of activities that were offered in libraries.
5. RESOLVED that:
 - i. The proposal to develop an ambition statement for Libraries, Registration and Archives, be noted.
 - ii. The setting up of a Member working group to support this work, be supported.

25. 2016/17 Growth, Environment and Transport Equality and Diversity Review
(Item 10)

1. Akua Agyepong (Corporate Lead – Equality and Diversity) introduced the report which set out a position statement for services within the Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate regarding equality and diversity work and progress on KCC equality and diversity objectives for 2016/17.
2. Stephanie Holt (Head of Countryside, Leisure and Sport) explained the structure of the report and said that a directorate group met every six weeks with a clear focus on ensuring equality and diversity were embedded into every stage of the commissioning cycle. The group also ensured that evidenced Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken for all priority programmes and projects, including service redesign and transformation, appropriate training was in place for staff to ensure the Directorate met its equality and diversity duties efficiently and to understand and analyse the data regarding GET staffing.
 - a) In response to comments from Members, Akua Agyepong said statistics had shown that diverse teams had a high level of productivity. She said that although diversity increased productivity and offered an insight into communities, it was still important to ensure that people in a certain role were the best people for that role.
3. Barbara Cooper said that the Strategic Business Development Intelligence team (SBDI) held information about communities and KCC's services and that it was important to understand communities in order to provide the right services. She added that staffing was monitored to ensure that policies did not inadvertently give a biased or perverse outcome to certain groups of staff.
4. In response to comments from Members, Akua Agyepong said that decisions must be made based on evidence. In relation to transgender equality, the Equality and Diversity team had been working on KCC's transgender policy, and training and monitoring guidance would be delivered to staff. She said that the policy framework began with respect, and that staff needed to have the confidence to challenge, question and speak up when they needed extra training on certain areas.
5. RESOLVED that the current performance be noted and that the report be received annually in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.