

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday, 20th July, 2011
at 7.00 pm in The Guildhall, Westgate, Canterbury**

Present: Councillor Perkins (Chairman)
Councillor Cragg
Councillor Byford
Councillor S Cook
Councillor Edwards
Councillor Flanagan
Councillor Hirst
Councillor MacCaul
Councillor O'Dea
Councillor Thomas
Councillor Sharp
Councillor Wratten
Councillor Williams
Councillor Samper (In place of Councillor Westgate)

In attendance Graeme Brown - Partnership Manager (KCC)

Officers: Mark Ellender - Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Charlotte Hammersley - Senior Scrutiny and Improvement Officer
Jemma Richards - Democratic Services Officer
*Suzi Wakeham - Head of Community Development and Outdoor Leisure

193 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Glover and Westgate. An apology for lateness had been received from Councillor Byford.

194 **SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor Samper attended the meeting as a substitute for Councillor Westgate.

195 **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures at this stage of the meeting.

During the consideration of item 8, relating to the Vision for Kent, Councillor Perkins declared a personal interest in that his wife worked for the PCT had had been recently seconded to the Stop Smoking Campaign which was referred to in the debate.

During the consideration of item 9 relating to the Single Grants Gateway policy review, Councillor Wratten declared a personal interest as he was a member of the

Horsebridge and the Umbrella organisations. Councillor Samper also declared a personal interest as a trustee of Wynn Ellis who were receiving a loan from the council. Councillor MacCaul declared a personal interest as a trustee of the Thanington Neighbourhood Resource Centre. Councillors S Cook and Cragg declared a personal interest as members of the Single Grants Gateway Panel.

196 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman reported that there was no public participation at the meeting.

197 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH AND 18 MAY 2011

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 March and 18 May 2011 were agreed as a true record.

198 FORTHCOMING DECISION LIST - 1 JULY TO 31 OCTOBER 2011

RESOLVED – That the Forthcoming Decision List (FDL) for the above period be noted.

199 VISION FOR KENT

The Partnership Manager from Kent County Council attended the meeting and gave a presentation to the Committee outlining the draft document for the Vision for Kent, and the consultation process. He reported that the consultation would run until 22 August. The on-line 'snap survey' had already received around 500 responses. The revised strategy would be presented to the Kent Forum on 22 September.

The Committee Members commented on various issues and made points including the following:

- The Vision for Kent was similar to Bold Steps for Kent. How would authorities measure whether aspirations were being met?
- The document made references to climate change and sustainable development, but these issues needed strengthening within the document.
- The statistics relating to poverty in families was a huge concern, and should be strengthened. The document should indicate how this issue could be dealt with.
- With regard to Citizens in Control, had anything been addressed in terms of elected representatives such as elected mayors and police commissioners.
- The targets were hard to measure, but the performance measures set out in the document seemed 'fluffy'.
- How were KCC initiatives communicated to district councils?
- Would the county be providing funding to district's to support the actions in the Vision? Would there be any government reward grants for meeting targets? The document was similar to a business plan and required funding in place to secure the goals within it.
- Failure to aspire would result in no achievements.
- At what point would the aspirations begin to be measured?
- Were Locality Boards an opportunity for the county and district council's to align priorities? Would it result in duplication of efforts?
- It was important for the county and districts to work together to solve problems.

The Partnership Manager responded to some of the issues raised, and made points including the following:

- Delivery of the aspirations would be at local level, but not necessarily solely by district council's. KCC would be working with local partners to look at the vision, and consider where the biggest gains could be made. It was important that district's tackled the issues that were relevant to them. The aspirations would be monitored at a district level.
- There were 3 ambitions in the Vision, and a champion had been identified for each ambition.
- With regard to the target relating to Children and poverty, one of the measures related to household income. Fuel poverty was another concern which was likely to increase. An Ambition Board consisting of 2 KCC Cabinet members, and 4 district leaders had been set up for each of the three ambitions, and the core strand in one of the Ambition Boards was tackling family poverty. There had been discussions around the creation of an anti-poverty strategy for local authorities.
- The elections for Police Commissioners would take place in May 2012. It was down to district council cabinet members to consider the prospect of elected mayors.
- The document was flawed without performance measures. Actions could have a long lead-in time, but short-term milestones were needed. Comments on how best to measure actions would be welcomed as part of the consultation process.
- The government had removed all reward grants, and therefore funding to support the Vision for Kent would come from existing resources.
- The measuring of aspirations would take place after the consultation period.
- Locality Boards were still in their early stages, but were purely advisory, not decision making. The first Canterbury Locality Board meeting would take place on 26 July 2011.

The Senior Scrutiny and Improvement Officer indicated that a Member Briefing was being organised to inform members about the purpose of Locality Boards.

The Chairman thanked the Partnership Manager for his attendance at the meeting.

(During the consideration of this item, Councillor Perkins declared a personal interest in that his wife worked for the PCT had had been seconded to the Stop Smoking Campaign recently).

200 **SINGLE GRANTS GATEWAY POLICY REVIEW**

The Head of Community Development and Outdoor Leisure outlined her report which set out the options for consultation to inform the next Single Grants Gateway Policy for 2012 – 2016.

The Committee Members commented on the various options, and made points including the following:

- Option 4 was not appropriate as allowance public money to be distributed by a third party seemed like an abuse of public trust.
- The report was comprehensive and complied with Kent Partners Compact.

- Three year funding for organisations offered more security, and allowed the organisations to get on with the job they were set up to do, rather than spend all their time fundraising.
- Could AMP's be used to consider the distribution of grants?
- The report indicated that a Best Value review into the SGG policy would be taking place. The findings of the Review would be useful before a decision on the policy was made.
- With regard to 3 year funding, provision needed to be made for the demands on the council budget. It was also important not to preclude other new groups coming forward.
- SGG should be kept at a local level.
- Funding to the voluntary sector was vital, as they were absorbing the work of the private sector.
- If the maximum grant were to be reduced, any organisations who were facing hardship could apply for emergency funding throughout the year.
- How staggered were the meetings of the Single Grants Gateway Panel? If organisations were granted with funding for 3 years, would the panel meet every 3 years?

The Head of Community Development and Outdoor Leisure responded to some of the issues raised, and made points including the following:

- The organisations asking for support often operated across the whole district, and it could be difficult to break them down into the relevant areas.
- With regard to the Best Value Review, this would only cover the work of the two organisations set out in the report which equated to 45% of the council's funding. The policy would need to be agreed prior to the Best Value Review due to time scales, but the policy could be amended to incorporate any recommendations arising from the Review.
- The work of the Single Grants Gateway included all voluntary grants, and therefore would still have a role and be required to meet regularly.

The Chairman advised that the Joint Overview and Scrutiny and Executive Forum would be meeting on 4 August to consider Best Value Review topics. He suggested that the Best Value Review into the SGG policy should be given priority.

RESOLVED – That the outcome of the consultation process be reported back to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to allow the Committee to take into account the views of the public and the Single Grants Gateway prior to making any recommendations.

RECOMMENDED (to the **Executive**) that the Best Value Review into the Single Grants Gateway Policy be treated as urgent.

(During the consideration of the item, Councillor Wratten declared a personal interest as he was a member of the Horsebridge and the Umbrella organisations. Councillor Samper also declared a personal interest as a trustee of Wynn Ellis who were receiving a loan from the council. Councillor MacCaul declared a personal interest as a trustee of the Thanington Neighbourhood Resource Centre. Councillors S Cook and Cragg declared a personal interest as members of the Single Grants Gateway).

The Senior Scrutiny and Improvement Officer outlined the report of the Head of Policy and Improvement which explained that consultation on potential scrutiny topics was carried out during the previous council year. A draft programme had been developed from which two topics had been selected for scrutiny reviews by the Scrutiny Sub-Committee. The programme was set out in the report for the Committee's information.

The Senior Scrutiny and Improvement Officer reported that the two topics selected were 'the Impact of High Speed 1', and 'Homelessness'. The Scope for the review into the impact of High Speed 1 had now been agreed by the Scrutiny Sub-Committee, and meetings would commence shortly. She then reported that the Chairman of the Scrutiny Review would be interviewed on Radio Kent at 8am the following morning regarding the Review.

She also stated that the Homelessness Scrutiny Review Panel would be meeting to agree a scope in the next couple of weeks.

The Chairman then invited the Committee Members to make written representations if they wished to contribute to any of the Scrutiny Reviews. He also advised that any suggestions for Scrutiny Topics were welcomed.

202 **MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE**

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on Wednesday 22 June 2011.

203 **REFERENCE FROM THE CANTERBURY AREA MEMBER PANEL**

It was agreed that the references from the Canterbury Area Member Panel be referred to the Scrutiny Sub-Committee for their consideration.

204 **MEMBERSHIP OF HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL, AND THE CHILD SERVICES FORUM**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services reported the membership of the following Overview and Scrutiny Working Groups:

- **Health Scrutiny Panel**
Councillors Cartwright, Eden-Green, Harrison, Howes, MacCaul, Oakey, R Thomas and Windsor.
- **Child Services Forum**
Councillors S Cook, Howes, MacCaul, O'Dea and H Taylor.

The Committee noted the membership as reported.

205 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

7pm – 7 September 2011 – the Guildhall.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.50 pm