

Minutes of the meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 13 March 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor C D Zosseder

Councillors: E A Biggs (as substitute for Councillor P M Brivio)
T A Bond
D R Friend
D A Hawkes
S C Manion
H M Williams

Also Present (virtually): Rebecca Spore (Director of infrastructure, KCC)
Ben Sherreard (Programme Manager, KCC)
Hema Birdi (Assistant Director, Adolescents and Open Access (Eastern Division), KCC)

Officers: Strategic Director (Corporate and Regulatory)
Democratic and Corporate Services Manager

90 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P M Brivio, M Rose, R S Walkden and P Walker.

91 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillors D G Beaney and E A Biggs had been appointed as substitute members for Councillors R S Walkden and P M Brivio respectively.

92 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S C Manion declared a Voluntary Announcement of Other Interest (VOAI) in Minute No. 99 (Kent County Council Services Consultation).

Councillor T A Bond declared a Voluntary Announcement of Other Interest (VOAI) in Minute No. 99 (Kent County Council Services Consultation).

93 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 12 December 2022, 23 January 2023 and 20 February 2023 were approved as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

94 DECISIONS OF THE CABINET RELATING TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Cabinet did not consider any decisions relating to recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its last meeting.

95 ISSUES REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY PUBLIC PETITION, COUNCIL, CABINET, OR ANOTHER COMMITTEE

The Democratic and Corporate Services Manager advised that a Motion had been referred to the Committee by the full Council. The Motion was read out by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as followed:

“This Council notes that there is more work to be done to encourage a more diverse range of candidates for elections in future, in order that councillors better reflect the diverse communities they serve.

This Council therefore resolves to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to include in the Committee work programme consideration of how more residents from across those communities can be encouraged to participate in local democracy and potentially stand as candidates in future council elections.”

Councillor C D Zosseder proposed that the Motion should be considered by the new Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting on 12 June 2023.

It was agreed with the affirmation of the meeting that the consideration of the Motion for inclusion in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s work programme be deferred to the meeting to be held on 12 June 2023.

96 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

The Democratic and Corporate Services Manager presented the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions to the Committee for its consideration.

It was agreed with the affirmation of the meeting to note the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions.

97 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic and Corporate Services Manager presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme to the Committee for its consideration. Members were advised that matters beyond May 2023 would be for the new Overview and Scrutiny Committee to determine for inclusion within its work programme.

Members agreed to note the work programme subject to the inclusion of the Motion from the full Council as an item for future consideration for the work programme.

98 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Democratic and Corporate Services Manager advised that no members of the public had registered to speak on items on the agenda to which the public speaking protocol applied.

99 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL COMMUNITY SERVICES CONSULTATION

Councillor C D Zosseder welcomed the virtual attendance of Rebecca Spore (Director of infrastructure, KCC), Ben Sherreard (Programme Manager, KCC) and Hema Birdi (Assistant Director, Adolescents and Open Access (Eastern Division), KCC) to speak to the matter of the KCC Community Services Consultation.

A presentation was provided to Members that outlined the reasons why the consultation had been undertaken and what the proposals were for community

services in the Dover District. Members were directed to the document in their agenda that summarised these proposals.

The drivers for change were the need to:

- reduce the high costs associated with maintaining a large number of buildings
- find savings to balance the budget
- meet the commitments made in the KCC Net Zero action plan by 2030
- provide effective support to residents in need of the services

The proposals would deliver the following benefits:

- Revenue savings between £5.6 – 6.9 million
- Reduction of maintenance liabilities of at least £7.3 million
- Capital receipts of up to £7.5 million
- 22% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions

The proposals would affect the delivery of services as followed:

Sites proposed to deliver services from
Dover Discovery Centre (community hub)
Buckland Children's Centre (family hub)
Deal Youth Hub (family hub)
Samphire Children's Centre (family hub)
Deal Adult Education Centre (community, learning and skills)

Sites it was proposed to leave
Sunflower Children's Centre
Blossom Children's Centre
Dover Gateway (service relocation)
Walmer Centre (service relocation)

In the case of the Dover Gateway and the Walmer Centre the service would be relocated to Dover Discovery Centre.

The intention was where possible to deliver multiple services from buildings to enhance how services worked together and serve the community more holistically.

The proposals would also see the continued use of outreach services which were the most effective way of reaching some of the most vulnerable residents and an expanded digital offer which was more convenient for many residents and gave them better access to services.

As part of the consultation there had been drop-in sessions in February 2023 held in Deal and Dover. The consultation ran until 26 March 2023 and it was expected that the KCC Cabinet would make a decision in July 2023 for implementation if approved in early 2024.

Members raised the following points in response to the presentation:

- To express concern over the lack of detail in respect of future service delivery.
- That recent improvements such as the sensory room in Blossoms risked being lost by relocating the service to a new facility.
- Whether all the buildings could be disposed of for the projected capital receipts.
- Whether the cost of breaking leases on some of the buildings had been considered.

- The compatibility of co-locating some services, such as early years and teens at Linwood.
- To welcome the principle of outreach service expansion but to express concern over the lack of detail in respect of the services and what the cost of delivering outreach services would be.
- To express concerns over access to the new hubs by public transport or on foot. There was discussion over how the 30-minute travel time to the sites had been calculated and what the cost of using public transport would be to service users. References were made to the impact of cuts to rural bus services.
- To express concern that while services were being centralised, the towns were growing in a de-centralised way.
- The need for outreach services to be delivered safely.
- The importance of partnerships in service delivery.

The Programme Manager (KCC) advised that they had not tried to pre-judge the outcome of the consultation and that further detail would emerge in due course. However, if the principle of 'need' driving service delivery was accepted then it should be accepted that service delivery would need to change over time in response to changing needs.

As part of the consultation, engagement had been undertaken with key stakeholders as well as the public. In respect of consultation responses, a statement explaining why a service should continue to be delivered in a particular way would have more impact in shaping the final proposals.

Councillor C D Zosseder thanked the officers from Kent County Council for attending and extended an invitation, which was accepted, for them to return to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee once more concrete proposals on service delivery were known.

100 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD – THIRD QUARTER 2022/23

The Strategic Director (Corporate and Regulatory) presented the Strategic Performance Dashboard for Quarter 3, 2022/23.

In response to concerns from Members that the Strategic Performance Dashboard was not particularly strategic, the Strategic Director (Corporate and Regulatory) advised that following the trial year of the new Dashboard it would be reviewed and that a revised format would be brought to Members. It was acknowledged that it needed to be simpler and more strategic in the indicators it focussed on.

Members raised the following points in relation to the Strategic Performance Dashboard:

- To congratulate the Head of Property Assets on his teams work over the last year.
- To question the accuracy of the Dover footfall figures. Members expressed concern it did not match with their anecdotal experience.
- To express concern at the parking income figures forecast. It was stated that this was a forecast and subject to potential change.
- To question if the decrease in leisure centre usage part of a trend or a temporary situation. Anecdotally it was noted that the Dover Leisure Centre remained busy.

- In respect of questions relating to specific indicators HOM012 and HOM013, it was suggested that this would be better discussed with officers outside of the meeting.

It was with the affirmation of the meeting agreed to note the Strategic Dashboard for Quarter 3, 2022/23.

(Councillor T A Bond declared a Voluntary Announcement of Other Interest by reason of his wife's employment.)

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm.