

LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2015 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Firth (Chairman) (Chairman)

Cllr. Pett (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Bosley, Lake, Pearsall, Pett and Raikes

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Barnes, Eyre, Halford, Mrs. Hunter and Ms. Tennessee

Cllrs. Parkin was also present.

9. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 July 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

10. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

11. Actions from Previous Meeting

There were none.

12. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder updated the Committee on general matters including attendance at the Licensing Partnership open day in July. She had also written to the Boundary Commission supporting the Council's submission which had been accepted in principle subject to a further consultation process. The Portfolio Holder was also supporting the work currently undertaken by the Housing and Community Safety team.

Amongst other items mentioned was the new Individual Electoral Registration system, which because of the complexity of the new system, was proving to be more expensive although the new system was designed to improve the accuracy of the Register and electoral accountability.

The Legal Section had retained their Lexcel accreditation which was the legal practice quality management standard and indicated excellence in client care. The assessor was particularly impressed by the extent to which the v6 Lexcel standard was embedded in the processes of the team and the Portfolio Holder congratulated the team for the efforts that had been made despite being in the middle of a re-structuring exercise.

Within Licensing, work was on-going looking for another partner to add to the Licensing hub.

The Shared Services programme continued to look for other partner organisations.

13. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

CHANGE IN AGENDA ITEM ORDER

With the agreement of the Committee, the Chairman brought forward consideration of agenda item 8, and took agenda item 9 after agenda item 6.

14. Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

The Community Safety Manager gave a [presentation](#) which provided an update on the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. The Act replaced 19 pre-existing measures with 6 new measures for tackling anti-social behaviour and each of these were summarised.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

15. Budget: Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)

The Chief Finance Officer advised that the report before the Committee was the second stage of the budget process and would be presented to all Advisory Committees. The first stage had been the 'Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy' report which had been reported to Cabinet on 17 September 2015. The purpose of this report was to ensure that all Members of the Advisory Committees had a role to play in the governance of the Council and the budget decision making process and to make suggestions to Cabinet on growth and savings ideas for the services within their terms of reference.

The main message was that this should be a significant step towards the Council becoming financially self-sufficient. The 10-year budget at Appendix F to the report, included no Revenue Support Grant (RSG) from 2016/17 and no New Homes Bonus (NHB) from 2019/20. In practice it was likely that some funding would still be received from these sources in the near future but the amounts were unknown. The Financial Prospects report had recommended that any amounts that were received were placed into the Financial Plan Reserve which could be used to support the 10-year budget by funding investment to save initiatives and support for the Property Investment Strategy (PIS). Using the funding for these purposes would result in additional year on year income that was not impacted by Government decisions.

Members had agreed the last 10-year budget in February and the changes that had been made since then included:

- Rolling the 10-year budget on for one year and updating base figures.
- Removing reliance on RSG
- Reducing the Council Tax increase assumption to 2% for all years
- Reducing fees and charges inflation to 2.5% for all years

Legal & Democratic Services Advisory Committee - 8 October 2015

- Reducing pay award inflation to 1% for 4 years
- Including income from PIS for the first time of £500k from 16/17, £700k from 18/19, £800k from 23/24
- Savings of £500k in 16/17 and then £100k pa for all future years

The current list of growth and savings proposals was £52,000 short of the £500,000 target (if all of the proposals were accepted), and Members were therefore being asked for further suggestions for growth and savings ideas. He further reminded Members that £5.3m had been saved from 2011/12 to 2016/17 (113 items) and there had been over £10m of savings since 2005/06.

Members reviewed Appendix D which contained the growth and savings proposals put forward by the Portfolio Holders and Chief Officers, and the Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs) in Appendix E. Members also considered and gave individual answers to the following five questions:

- a) What services should the Council invest more in?
- b) What services should the Council disinvest from?
- c) What services work well?
- d) What services don't work well?
- e) What issues would you like Cabinet to take into account?

The Chief Finance Officer summarised the views put forward and Members considered whether there was anything they wanted taken forward as potential growth or savings suggestions.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) the growth proposal identified in Appendix D to the report applicable to the Advisory Committee (SCIA 7 – Individual Electoral Registration) be recommended to Cabinet;
- b) no further suggestions for growth and savings be recommended to Cabinet.

16. Shared Services

The Chief Finance Officer presented the annual report, previously presented to the Finance and Resources Advisory Committee under previous governance arrangements, which set out the benefits, current partners and possible future suitable areas.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Legal & Democratic Services Advisory Committee - 8 October 2015

Resolved: That the report be noted.

17. Further limited consultation period on the Kent County Council (KCC) boundary review

The Electoral Services Manager presented a report updating Members on information recently received from the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC). The LGBC would be going out for further public consultation on the boundary scheme identified by Full Council on 21 July 2015. The consultation period ran from 29 September to 26 October and the final recommendations would be published on 19 January 2016.

The Democratic Services Team were thanked for all the work they had undertaken in relation to the boundary review.

Resolved: That

- a) it be noted that the further information from the Local Government Boundary Commission accords with the recommendations made by Full Council on 21 July 2015; and
- b) the LGBC would be informed that the Committee, having looked at the LGBC's new proposals, were fully in support of such proposals.

18. Work Plan

The work plan was noted subject to the following additions and amendments:

26 January 2016: Trading Company
Update from Equalities Working Group
Licensing
Anti Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014

14 April 2016: Shared Services Update

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.55 PM

CHAIRMAN