

STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2014 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Dickins (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Mrs. Bayley, Clark, Eyre, Mrs. Parkin, Mrs. Purves, Raikes and Miss. Thornton

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs. George and Miss. Stack

25. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Strategy and Performance Advisory Committee held on 7 October 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record.

26. Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

27. Actions from Previous Meeting

Members noted that Action 1 relating to the Housing Register was in hand and that an update would be circulated once it was completed, and that Action 2 relating to an Inspector's Report had been completed with the report circulated to the Committee via email.

28. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Chairman and Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Performance advised that an appointment had been made to the post of Head of Economic Development & Property. The applicant had delivered major projects including in Ashford and Thames Gateway and had a strong record of getting things done. He advised though that there were recruitment problems in other key areas such as planning and recently the Council had not been able to recruit to the post of Head of Council Tax and Benefits. The Senior Management Team were looking at the recruitment and retention strategy and also at wider options such as sharing of services and extending the current "technicians" scheme.

He also advised that the recent news of national changes to Affordable Housing were of concern. It has been estimated that the change was likely to lose some £2.5m resources to the Council based on the current development applications awaiting decision alone. The changes were likely to mean the Council would be unable to deliver the 3rd round of the DIYSO scheme.

29. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

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There were no referrals from the Cabinet or Audit Committee.

30. Communication Members Working Group - Update

In the absence of Cllr Miss Stack, the Chairman advised that the 3-Member Group had been looking at the Website and that it was vital to get this key communication vehicle right. The current site was not consistent in terms of content, or of approach. A lot of work was being done behind the scenes in order to deliver a modern, engaging site.

The Committee was also advised that there is now a working Sevenoaks Parking App, and the feedback so far had been almost entirely positive.

31. Members Communications

The Chairman advised that this work would feed into planning for the 2015 Election. Work was ongoing to assess Member's needs and to provide a framework that gave useful information.

32. Members' Induction Pack after 2015 Elections - Presentation

The Chief Officer Legal & Governance circulated a pack to the Committee of headline documents that were used in 2011 in order to engage with prospective Members prior to the 2011 election, and to induct the elected Members into the organisation after that election. An outline was given of how it was planned that the process would work in 2015. It was planned to extend the pre-nomination stage to ensure prospective candidates got a positive message of being a Member as well as setting out the demands that Members are subject to.

A key part will be to involve existing Members more, particularly those who joined the Council in 2011 and who can input their experiences and ideas for improvement.

Members generally felt that the idea of a "coach tour" of the District was a good one and that it was the basic things that were important:

- a) How to help a local resident
- b) How to contact KCC
- c) Advice on writing emails to constituents
- d) Resources available – such as LGA.

The Chairman asked that any ideas Members had be sent to the Chief Officer Legal & Governance.

Resolved: The update be noted.

33. Local Government Transparency Code 2014

The Head of Transformation and Strategy presented a report which set out the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2014 which came into effect on 31 October 2014. These Regulations make

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it a legal requirement for local authorities to publish a range of data as specified in Part 2 of the Local Government Transparency Code 2014.

It was noted that, of the 13 data sets required under Part 2 of the Code, the Council currently publishes four to the required standard. Information has to be published in a format and under a licence that allows open re-use, including for commercial activities.

In addition, Part 3 of the Code sets out a further 7 data sets of enhanced information which it is recommended be published, but where there is no legal requirement to do so. Members generally considered that the additional information should be published if it was readily available, but that resources should not be put into non-statutory requirements. There was some concern expressed about the possible risk of fraud with the publication of more detailed financial information, and the possible additional effort needed to redact data as it was felt that more detailed information was likely to involve more personal details. There was also some concern that the Government could impose a further statutory requirement on the “suggested” additional data further down the line. There was also concern that there would be pressure to provide data in an easily analysed format which could require further resources.

The Head of Transformation and Strategy advised that there was still a big job to be done to get to the basic statutory level – particularly around the Local Authority Land and Procurement data sets.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2014 be noted; and
- b) Cabinet be advised that the Advisory Committee felt that, with resignation, the further data as recommended by the Code be published if it was readily available and if there were no adverse consequences foreseeable going forward.

34. Work Plan

Members reviewed the Work Plan for the March, summer and autumn 2015 meetings. The Members Communications item would be moved to the 3 March 2015 meeting.

Resolved: That the work plan be noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.06 PM

CHAIRMAN