

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

EAST KENT (JOINT SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the East Kent (Joint Scrutiny) Committee held in the Kent County Council on Wednesday, 30 June 2010.

PRESENT: Mr M Vye (Chairman) (Kent County Council); Mr D Brazier (Kent County Council), Councillor M D Conolly (Dover District Council), Councillor H Cragg (Canterbury City Council), Councillor C Goddard (Shepway District Council), Councillor A Friend (Dover District Council), Councillor M Harrison (Thanet District Council), Councillor J Holben (Shepway District Council), Mr R F Manning (Kent County Council), Councillor K Mills (Dover District Council), Councillor J Roberts (Thanet District Council), Councillor B Rogers (Thanet District Council), Councillor J Samper (Canterbury City Council)

ALSO PRESENT: Research Officer to Cabinet Scrutiny Committee (Kent County Council)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

25. APOLOGIES

(Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Perkins, D Lloyd-Jones, T Prater and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Canterbury).

26. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

(Item 2)

It was noted that in accordance with the Operating Arrangements, Councillor A Friend had been appointed as a substitute for Councillor D Lloyd-Jones.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

28. MINUTES

(Item 4)

The Chairman confirmed that if an authority was not participating in a service then the representative Members from that authority would not be entitled to vote on the service.

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 January 2010 were approved as a correct record.

29. OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

(Item 5)

Point 4 of the Terms of Reference of the East Kent (Joint Scrutiny) Committee (EKJSC) set out in Schedule 1 of the Operating Arrangements stated that “Propose an annual budget for the EKJSC in accordance with the requirements of the parties”. Members confirmed that at present the work of the EKJSC was resourced within each host authority’s budget.

30. ISSUES REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE EAST KENT (JOINT ARRANGEMENTS) COMMITTEE

(Item 6)

There were no items for consideration.

31. ITEMS PLACED ON THE AGENDA BY A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE

(Item 7)

There were no items for consideration.

32. APPOINTMENT OF HOST AUTHORITY, DELEGATION OF POWERS FOR THE PROPOSED THANET, DOVER AND CANTERBURY SHARED SERVICES AND LOCATION OF STAFF

(Item 8)

The Chairman conveyed the regret of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Canterbury) that he was unable to attend the EKJSC meeting.

Members raised concerns that the opposition groups were not represented in the appointment of the Director of Shared Services and Members expressed their disappointment that there was not greater Member involvement in the process. The Chairman suggested that Members report their concerns back to their own Councils.

Members queried the use of [E/C] within the report. POST MEETING NOTE: [E/C] distinguishes between Executive and Council functions as per the functions and responsibilities regulations – some may be joint functions.

33. REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EAST KENT (JOINT ARRANGEMENTS) COMMITTEE AND THE EAST KENT (JOINT SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

(Item 9)

The Chairman referred Members to recommendation 4 of the report, which set out the matters to be kept under review in relation to the operating arrangements of both the East Kent (Joint Arrangements) Committee (EKJAC) and the East Kent (Joint Scrutiny) Committee (EKJSC).

Members expressed their concern about Member involvement in issues relating to the preparation of a Service Level Agreement to describe the role of the administrative host authority for the EKJAC.

Members were aware that the EKJSC had the power to call-in any decision made by EKJAC, a sub-committee of EKJAC, or any member of officer with delegated authority from EKJAC, however this power was not regularly used.

Mr R Manning stated that the Committee should be focussing on scrutinising in a positive way, the operating framework had been set up and it was down to Members to use it effectively. Councillor J Samper explained that the EKJSC existed to hold the EKJAC to account. The Chairman asked Members whether it was their wish that he contact the Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees across Kent to discuss the process with them, the protocol regulating the relationship between EKJSC and the individual Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been parked and this was perhaps an issue worth exploring.

Councillor M Conolly stated that he would seek to facilitate the sharing of services as soon and quickly as reasonably possible without holding up the process.

At the last meeting of the EKJSC there had been a discussion about the Chairman's casting vote, the recommendations of the report stated:

That the East Kent (Joint Scrutiny) Committee operating arrangements be amended as follows:

To add at the end of 11.1 "In the event of an equality of votes the chairman may have a second or casting vote unless his council is not participating in the shared service concerned".

The Committee agreed that this was an appropriate amendment.

34. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(Item)

The Chairman referred Members to the Terms of Reference of the EKJSC set out in Schedule 1 of the Operating Arrangements. The Committee had a role in preparing reports and recommendations on the performance and delivery of the shared services provided by the EKJAC. This would become more important as more services became shared across Kent.

Members questioned the role of the Committee in shaping the work of the Director of Shared Services; Members of EKJSC asked that the newly appointed Director of Shared Services be invited to their next meeting to discuss her role and how it was progressing.

Councillor M Conolly explained that the first tranche of shared services had been proposed and it was understood that the Director of Shared Services would be working closely with these projects, with the support of dedicated implementation managers. Members were keen to see the best value out of the money allocated for these roles.

Members raised concerns about duplication of work; the Chairman explained that as set out in the Terms of Reference part of the remit of the EKJSC was to monitor the performance and delivery of shared services. Members briefly discussed the use of pre-scrutiny and post-scrutiny; however this was something that could be discussed

in the future. Decisions taken by the EKJAC required ratification by the individual Council's Executives and the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees could call those decisions in.

Members requested sight of the forward plan of work for the EKJAC and a timetable for the shared services programme. The Chairman expressed the view that where EKJAC was giving permission to Councils to go ahead with shared services it was appropriate to invite the relevant Chief Executives to EKJSC to explain their decisions.

Councillor M Harrison expressed concern about the future workload of the EKJSC as the number of shared services increased.

The Chairman said that at the end of his year in office he would present a review of the Committee's work, to help the Committee evaluate its effectiveness; and would consider drawing up a draft future work plan for presentation to the Committee.

RESOLVED: that the East Kent (Joint Scrutiny Committee):

1. Invite the Director of Shared Services to the next meeting in October to discuss her role and how it was evolving

The meeting ended at 11.20am.