

MINUTES of the meeting of the **COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 11.00 am on 25 September 2014 at County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Monday, 20 October 2014.

Elected Members:

- * Mrs Denise Saliagopoulos (Chairman)
- * Mr Chris Norman (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr Mike Bennison
- * Mrs Yvonna Lay
- * Mrs Jan Mason
- * Mr John Orrick
- * Mr Saj Hussain
- * Mrs Mary Lewis
- * Mr Chris Pitt
- * Ms Barbara Thomson
- * Mr Alan Young
- * Mr Robert Evans

Ex officio Members:

Mrs Sally Ann B Marks, Vice Chairman of the County Council
Mr David Munro, Chairman of the County Council

Co-opted Members:

Substitute Members:

Mr Richard Wilson

In attendance:

48/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Denise Saliagopoulos, Saj Hussain, John Orrick, Yvonna Lay and Kay Hammond.

Richard Wilson substituted for Saj Hussain.

482/14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 23 JULY 2014 [Item 2]

This item was postponed until the next meeting.

483/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

No declarations of interest were received.

484/14 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

No questions or petitions were received.

485/14 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

None were received.

486/14 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

The Committee noted and agreed the Forward Work Programme.

487/14 CREATION OF A JOINT TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE WITH BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL [Item 7]**Witnesses:**

- Steve Ruddy, Community Protection Manager
- Amanda Poole, Trading Standards Manager at Buckinghamshire County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The report was introduced by officers from Surrey County Council Trading Standards and Buckinghamshire County Council Trading Standards. It was noted that the work on the joint service has been under way for a number of months and was a result of the Public Value Review in 2011. A number of partnership opportunities were looked at before deciding to work on this proposal with Buckinghamshire. The Committee was informed that the Buckinghamshire County Council Cabinet member is closely involved and fully supportive of the merger, and as Surrey would be the host the current Buckinghamshire staff would be transferred to Surrey. The Committee was informed that Buckinghamshire was chosen as the most suitable authority to merge with due to similar demographics and

political ethos and because both authorities have similar strategic priorities.

2. The Committee raised the concern that as Surrey is the larger organisation, the sustainability of its Trading Standards service could be reduced. Officers explained to the Committee that sustainability would be increased, as crisis knowledge and support could be shared. For example Buckinghamshire have considerably more staff with animal health expertise than Surrey. Sharing knowledge and support would increase resilience across both authorities.
3. The Committee asked officers if what was being discussed could be achieved through a memorandum of understanding and whether the projected returns over three years were worth the risk of merging the two authorities. Officers replied that projected savings ensure both authorities can achieve their current medium term financial plan savings targets, approximately 11% of the budget. Without this approach the savings would need to be made from front line service delivery. The joint service approach would enable services to be enhanced whilst making savings and this would not be possible to achieve through a memorandum of understanding.
4. The Committee expressed concern over staffing as Surrey holds more full time Trading Standards posts compared to Buckinghamshire, who have more part time posts - Members asked how this would affect major incidents in each county. Officers informed the Committee that Buckinghamshire has different specialism's compared to Surrey which would be beneficial to Surrey in the event of a major incident for example animal disease outbreaks. It was noted that Primary Authority Partnerships is the main part of income generation. These Partnerships enable the service to provide specialist advice service to business and are chargeable. Resources for marketing and delivering those services can be shared between both authorities. It was noted that future projections of growth were based on what had been delivered to date. Regarding collaboration it was noted that other models of delivery were considered for regulatory service including looking at merged authorities in other areas.
5. Officers informed the Committee that any possible negatives of the joint service were marginal compared to the possible positive outcomes. There had been initial concern that staff might be required to relocate or to frequently travel between the two counties – this is not the case. The services will retain their current local bases and it is important that there was a strong physical presence in each county. It was recognised that a new joint service would mean that decisions would need to be made jointly. Part of the proposed merger is a joint committee of the two authorities which would be established to make decisions. Other examples where authorities have merged services have been looked at and have proved successful in the majority of areas. It has been proposed that the minimum term for this merger would be 5 years and after that one year notice period following for a partner to end the merger.

6. The Committee noted that savings could be made be shared between both authorities. This would be 2/3rd to 1/3rd ratio.
7. The Committee voted to approve the Joint Trading Standards Service on the condition regular updates are received on how the specified savings are being achieved and an update to be received at Committee in one year.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

None.

Recommendations

- The Committee supports the proposal to create a new Joint Trading Standards Service with Buckinghamshire County Council.
- The Committee is invited to highlight any particular issues where it would like to see further clarification.

Resolved

- The Committee supported the proposal to create a new Joint Trading Standards Service with Buckinghamshire County Council.
- The Committee is invited to highlight any particular issues where it would like to see further clarification: financial information requested to be provided before Cabinet meeting on 21 October 2014.
- The Committee to review the process in a year.

Select Committee Next Steps:

None.

Robert Evans left the meeting at 11.55am.

488/14 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - REVIEW OF SURREY ARTS 2013/14 [Item 8]

Review of Surrey Arts Internal Audit

Witnesses:

- Philip Trumble, Surrey Arts Manager
- Kathy Newlands, Operations Manager
- Pascal Barras, Compliance Auditor

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. It was noted that Surrey Arts had commissioned the Internal Audit in response to their changing environment. The auditor introduced the report and notified the Committee that the review showed 'significant improvement needed' within Surrey Arts. It was added that there was no further concern around Surrey Arts asset management but the concern was focused more on where the service is in relation to the recent changes the service has undergone and business as usual practices. The Surrey Arts manager noted this was in relation to the instruments service being operational in different areas making

logistics such as tracking rented instruments difficult. It was decided to bring all instruments to one place and to input all instruments into a database. Tracking instruments would then be possible. This process is currently underway.

2. Officers noted that the service is talking to other authorities to gain knowledge to develop a more effective asset management system and there was work under way for all other areas identified for needing improvement. The service was also gaining information on the possibility of selling instruments. The Committee was informed that current work was under way to change the procedures of the service for example filing to ensure the service was more robust and the disposal of assets to developing countries and schools.
3. The auditor informed the Committee that a follow up in the current financial year would take place and be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee. This review would check on progress for the timescales of the management actions.
4. The Committee discussed with officers that a lack of staff could have had an impact on the result of the review. Officers noted that the service would look into hiring apprentices as staff costs need to be kept as low as possible. Officers discussed the fact that different timings of the year, such as the end of school term times, have an effect on the service and the ability to have the time to manage instruments. The service's short term plan was to find the capacity to document instruments, meaning this could be under control sooner.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

None.

Recommendations

- That the Committee review the audit report and Management Action Plan and makes recommendations as necessary.

Resolved

- The Committee noted the contents of this review item and approved it.
- The Committee to review the Surrey Arts service at a future meeting, including the issue of staffing numbers.

Select Committee Next Steps:

- None.

489/14 MAGNA CARTA UPDATE [Item 9]

Magna Carta Update

Witnesses:

Peter Milton, Head of Cultural Service

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Head of
Cultural Services introduced the report and informed the Committee

that the report is summarising the plans of public engagement for the anniversary of Magna Carta highlighting the Council's involvement. It was noted that Cabinet approved £1million for the programme, identifying £300,000 for the organisation of the events programme and £700,000 to support the commissioning of a piece of public art. A selection panel, chaired by the Leader, was organised to implement the choosing of an artist. An artist was selected, and a public announcement will be made after contractual arrangements are confirmed (expected 4-6 weeks).

2. The Committee were informed that in addition to the budget from SCC and National Trust, there was likely to be a contribution from the City of London Corporation (to be confirmed) and a minor payment from the American Bar Association towards the official event (15th June 2015) - and that further fundraising is underway. The Committee were informed that money had been allocated to various projects/events/activities promoting the Magna Carta, and that numerous events are being organised and coordinated with partners. It was noted that a large proportion of the events being organised are family friendly.
3. The Committee raised the concern that the partnership bid submitted with five other partners to the Heritage Lottery Fund had not been successful. It was noted that they have been encouraged to re-submit the bid in December 2014 and that this bid was for the Legacy plan to develop the Runnymede locality and did not affect the planning of events in 2015
4. Members raised concern that the art commission would not be ready in time for the anniversary date. Officers advised that delays in communication would not affect timescales.
5. It was noted that Surrey Arts Community Concert 'Freedom Games' will be held at the Royal Albert Hall, not in Surrey, but will be attended by Surrey residents. The Committee noted the report

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps

The Committee will receive a further update in January 2015

**4810/14 APPOINTMENT OF A PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE SUBGROUP
[Item 10]**

Key points raised during the discussion:

- 1. The Committee noted the update and agreed the setting up of the performance and finance sub-group.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

None.

Recommendations

- The Committee agreed the membership of the performance and finance sub-group which were Denise Saliagopoulos, John Orrick, Robert Evans and Saj Hussain.

Resolved

- That the Committee agree the membership of a Performance and Finance Sub-Group, as set out by the Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Committee Next Steps

None

Alan Young left the meeting at 1.05pm

4811/14 ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER UPDATE [Item 11]

Witnesses:

- Simon Moore,
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
- Sally Wilson,
Corporate Planning and Improvement Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

- 1. Officers informed the Committee there was a transformation programme running in the service because central government had expressed views on how fire services across England should be adapting to changing circumstances. Along with other fire services, in Surrey there has been a decline in traditional services. Officers noted that aspects in the Public Safety Plan (PSP) are no longer relevant hence the work being carried out to refresh the plan. While this work is under way there are two pieces of work being carried out including workforce reform which is looking at all aspects of the service. The second is to generate income, with the main element of this being engagement with a private commercial company to use their knowledge and capital to generate income. The new PSP should be in place by April 2016, by this time new systems would have been piloted.

2. Sunbury and Staines fire stations will be closed down and a single site built. One fire engine will remain on whole time and one will convert to on call. 20 staff will be identified and trained to become on call fire fighters. In the mean time work is being undertaken to support income generation including work with Heathrow airport and collaboration with other fire services and emergency services.
3. The Committee was informed that work is under way on an electronic system to address the delay when an incident requires more than one emergency service.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

None.

Recommendation

- The Committee endorses the continuation of the Member Reference Group on Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Transformation and Public Safety Plan.

Resolved

- The Committee agreed the recommendation.
- The Committee noted the update on the Fire Service and Public Safety Plan from the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

Committee Next Steps

None.

Meeting end: 13:27

4812/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 12]

The next full meeting of the Communities Select Committee will be held on Wednesday 14 January at 10.00am.

Meeting ended at: 13.27

Chairman