

ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

5 FEBRUARY 2019

7:35 pm – 8:31 pm

Councillors Jon Tolley (Chair), Liz Green (Vice-Chair), Olivia Boulton, Kevin Davis, Lorraine Dunstone*, Mark Durrant, Ian George, Dennis Goodship, Caroline Kerr, Katrina Lidbetter and John Sweeney

* Absent

24. Public Questions

A number of questions were submitted by members of the public and elected Members concerning matters within the Committee's remit including:

- A query about the effectiveness of the Council's consultation on its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transformation Plan, particularly the fact that it had included the Christmas holiday period. By way of response it was emphasised that the consultation had extended from 13th December to 20th January and extensive efforts had been made to reach out to parents and all stakeholders including social media messaging, children and young people focus groups, three community drop in events, an online survey and communications through every school, voluntary organisation and provider of relevant services.
- An enquiry about the future of the Contact Kingston twitter account. It was noted that the account was to be retained and the Customer Access Plan, to be submitted to the March meeting of the Committee, would provide further details on the proposals for it.
- A request for the wording of the online survey on the Council's Autism Strategy to be amended in order that all who wished to respond could meaningfully do so
- A request that the template letter from the Information Commissioner be considered sufficient to submit a Subject Access Request application.
- An enquiry as to why the Forward Plan was not presently being regularly updated. It was noted that the procedures for its production and publication were being reviewed and it would be back online very shortly.
- A request for a mechanism to provide residents with the outcomes of cases raised through the Council's Contact Centre.

25. Apologies for Absence and Attendance of Substitute Members

Apologies were received from Councillor Lorraine Dunstone.

26. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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27. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th November 2018 were confirmed and signed.

28. Medium Term Financial Plan 2019-20 to 2022-23 and Detailed Budget and Council Tax 2019-20 Appendix A

The Committee received details of the budget proposals for 2019/20 in respect of services within its remit and, in particular, gave consideration to the relevant proposals for budgetary growth and reductions, together with the Capital Strategy. In so doing Members had regard for the content of the Budget Report 2019/20 to 2022/23 which set out, amongst other things, the financial context, the comments of the Council’s S151 Officer, the medium term financial strategy, details of risk and equalities impact assessments and their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

By way of response to Members queries it was noted that the Council was continuing to put pressure on Microsoft with a view to the reduction of the cost of licences for its products and was reviewing ways of driving down associated expenditure. Use of the Windows operating system for Modern Desktop and other back end systems would continue to be required for the foreseeable future. The proposed savings in respect of the Contact Centre arose from economies of scale arising from the centralisation of customer contact for all areas of the Council, a move designed to enhance overall customer service provision.

RESOLVED that –

The proposals in the budget report regarding the 2019/20 budget for Communications, Kingston Partnership, Voluntary Sector and Voluntary Sector Commissioning, Consultation and Engagement, Customer Contact, Connected Kingston, Strategic Partnerships, Emergency Planning, Business Continuity, Economic Development, Business Support and Development, Business and Skills, Tourism be RECOMMENDED to the Finance and Contracts Committee.

Voting

For: Councillors Tolley, Green, Boulton, Durrant, Goodship, Kerr, Lidbetter and Sweeney (8)

Against: None

Abstentions: Councillors Davis and George (2)

29. Urgent Items Authorised by the Chair

There were no urgent items.

Signed

(Chair)