

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

30 November 2010

Report of Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Executive Non Key Decisions

1 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL - RESTRUCTURING OF DIRECTORATES

Summary

A report advising of a proposed re-structuring of KCC Directorates and seeking Members' instructions on the nature of any response sent.

- 1.1.1 The County Council's Chief Executive and Leader have published a report proposing changes to the structure of the Directorates within KCC.
- 1.1.2 The report is extremely lengthy with numerous appendices. Much of what is proposed is non controversial and clearly a matter for KCC to determine. However, there is one element that could have far reaching consequences and, given that KCC has invited comment on its proposals, I felt Members would wish to consider the matter.
- 1.1.3 I have supplied at **Annex 1** and **Annex 2** the reports that set out the KCC thinking behind the re-structuring. **Annex 3** shows the proposed structure.
- 1.1.4 As Members may be aware, the report that followed the inquiries into the circumstances surrounding the death of Victoria Climbié resulted in recommendations for a new approach in local government that produced a holistic approach to children, families and education. In particular, children's social services, which previously were housed alongside adult social services, were recommended to be separated and placed with education and family support functions. KCC duly adopted this model with the formation of a Children, Families and Education Directorate and a Kent Adult Social Services Directorate.
- 1.1.5 **Annex 3** shows a new model which is essentially a return to the former position with a Learning and Skills Directorate and a Families, Health and Social Care Directorate. Social work for children will therefore again sit alongside that provided for adults.

- 1.1.6 It is not clear why this change is being proposed as it seems to run counter to the approach recommended in the Laming Report. I strongly suspect the change will not be universally welcomed by those working within the professions.
- 1.1.7 I think this change must also be seen against the outcome of the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission's findings following their joint inspection of safeguarding and looked after children's services in Kent. The judgements reached were that the overall effectiveness of services in Kent was inadequate and that the capacity for improvement is also inadequate.
- 1.1.8 Clearly there has to be a huge focus on remedying this situation within the County Council and other agencies as children are clearly at risk. It is difficult to see how a major reorganisation taking place simultaneously is going to assist the process of improvement and I would also have concerns if the sharp focus on children's services is diluted within the new Directorate because of the pressures on adult services brought about by an ageing population.
- 1.1.9 I believe there is a case for questioning the wisdom of combining children's and adult social services in principle and, if the County Council is set upon the change, urging for a timetable that enables Children's Services to be dramatically improved prior to any change being made. It is a risky enterprise to embark upon a restructuring with a service so important having been found to be not fit for purpose.
- 1.1.10 In expressing the above views I am, of course, reflecting a personal view and Members may hold an opposing view.
- 1.1.11 In the circumstances, therefore, I am not making a recommendation but seeking Members' instructions as to whether they wish to make a response and, if so, the nature of that response.

1.2 Legal Implications

- 1.2.1 None for the Borough Council.

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.3.1 None for the Borough Council.

1.4 Risk Assessment

- 1.4.1 N/A for the Borough Council

1.5 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.5.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.6 Recommendations

1.6.1 Members' instructions are requested.

Background papers:

contact: David Hughes

Nil

David Hughes
Chief Executive

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The decision ultimately rests with the County Council
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	No	This is a response to a consultation and the County Council is the decision maker
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		N/A

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.