

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 25 September 2017.

PRESENT: Mr M A C Balfour, Miss S J Carey, Mr P B Carter, CBE, Mr M C Dance, Mr G K Gibbens, Mr R W Gough, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr E E C Hotson, Mr P J Oakford and Mr J D Simmonds, MBE

ALSO PRESENT:

IN ATTENDANCE:

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

30. Apologies and Substitutions

(Item 2)

Apologies were received from Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport who was substituted by Roger Wilkin, Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste.

The Chairman welcomed Anu Singh, newly appointed Corporate Director of Adult Social Care to her first Cabinet meeting.

31. Declarations of interest

(Item)

No declarations of interest were received.

32. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 June 2017

(Item 4)

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 26 June 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman accordingly.

33. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring - July 2017-18

(Item 5)

Cabinet received a report providing the budget monitoring position up to 31 July 2017-18 for both revenue and capital budgets, including an update on key activity data for KCC's highest risk budgets.

Mr John Simmonds, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the item for members; in particular he referred to the following:

- i. That the predicted overspend had been reduced by management action from £18.9million in the last report to just under £11million in the report being

considered but that this was still considered to be significant and would be very difficult to reduce to zero in order to deliver a balanced budget.

- ii. That delivering a balanced budget was becoming harder owing to the sustained period of government grant and funding cuts and would be more difficult year on year if it continued. He welcomed the extra monies that had been received for work in Social Care but reminded members that it was not sufficient to keep pace with the increase in demand.

He concluded by reassuring members that he was confident a balanced budget could still be achieved this year.

Mr Paul Carter, Leader and Cabinet Member for Traded Services and Health Reform, spoke to the item; he agreed with Mr. Simmonds comments and concerns and particularly the assertion that each year would become increasingly difficult owing to the cumulative effect of 7-8 years of funding reductions and related expected savings. He hoped that the government would reflect on funding levels for local government and increase the offer, in particular to the upper tier councils in two tier authorities such as KCC who had been under particular pressure.

Andy Wood, Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement assured members that all Corporate Directors and their management teams were fully committed to reducing the predicted overspend. He reported that it was still his opinion, in light of the absolute commitment demonstrated by Corporate Directors, that moratoria were not necessary or desirable at this stage but would be kept under monthly review.

He believed that, though difficult, a balanced budget would be achieved in this financial year.

In response to a request from the Leader, Andy Wood reported the slippage on the Capital Programme, at Page 24 of the report. There was currently £12million of rephasing expected and this slippage was likely to increase. As a percentage of the overall programme the slippage was modest and not overly concerning.

In response to questions from Mr. Eric Hotson, Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services, the Leader assured members that much pressure was being exerted on government regarding the need for increased funding. The Local Government Association in particular, was lobbying for several billion of additional funding over the next 2-3 years. Mr. Carter argued that evidence showed County Council's in two tier authorities to have been hardest hit by funding reductions and therefore should be considered first for financial relief should any be forthcoming. He assured members that he had made, and continued to make these points at the highest levels of government.

Mr Balfour, Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste thanked on behalf of Cabinet those working for the county council who had made such efforts to make savings to date and was supported in his thanks by the Leader.

CABINET	
Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report July 2017- 2018	
1.	That the revenue budget realignment set out in Appendix 6 be AGREED

2.	That the changes to the capital programme as detailed in section 5.4 or the report be AGREED
3.	That the forecast revenue budget monitoring position for 2017-18 and capital budget monitoring position for 2017-18 to 2019-20, and that the forecast pressure on the revenue budget needs to be eliminated was NOTED.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED	None.
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	None.
DISPENSATIONS GRANTED	None.

34. Quarterly Performance Report, Quarter 1, 2017/18

(Item 6)

Cabinet received a report informing members of the key areas of performance for the authority over the first quarter of the 2017/18 council year.

Ms Susan Carey, Cabinet Member for Customers, Communications and Performance introduced the item for members; she referred to the previous item and the comments that had been made regarding budget cuts and service delivery and reported that despite difficult financial times the performance report highlighted areas where progress had been made to do more for less. In particular she referred to two areas of the council's work:

- i. The LED replacement of the county's street lights which was progressing well with almost all residential areas now complete. This investment would result in better performance for residents while also making financial savings for the council
- ii. That as a result of the improved digital offer that the council provided more people were choosing to contact KCC online rather than by phone. This was convenient for the customer and efficient for the council and it was important that the digital offering continued to be improved.

Richard Fitzgerald, Business Intelligence Manager, KCC, spoke to the item, in particular he referred to the following:

- i. That performance was generally good, with the majority of indicators recorded as 'green'; on or ahead of business plan target.
- ii. That the net direction of travel was also generally positive, being improved or sustained.
- iii. Where performance was below expectation, close monitoring was being undertaken alongside management actions to improve.

He referred to individual service area information within the report in particular highlighting areas of improved or sustained performance.

The item was opened for discussion and the following comments were received from members:

The Leader referred to performance in the area of 'delayed transfers of care' and welcomed the comprehensive breakdown of causes which was useful for further improvement to be achieved.

Mr. Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, spoke to the item. He reported that the summer results that had been seen so far had been in line with the overall rising trend in attainment and for schools considered good and outstanding on inspection. He referred to pressures from increased demand in the areas of Education Health Care Plans and school places, particularly at Secondary level, that would need to be addressed in the future to ensure good performance was maintained.

Mr. Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services referred to the welcome announcement that the Arts Council had awarded grants to 11 organisations in Kent. Many of the successful recipients had been supported over the years by KCC and it was encouraging that they were now receiving such public recognition.

It was RESOLVED that the report be NOTED.