

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

---

### **CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children, Families & Education - Resources and Infrastructure Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Medway Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 19th November, 2009.

PRESENT: Mr C J Capon (Chairman), Mr T Gates (Vice-Chairman), Mr D L Brazier, Mr R J Parry, Mr K Pugh, Mrs J A Rook, Mr K Smith, Mr R Tolputt, Mr B J Sweetland, Mr M Whiting and Mr I S Chittenden

PARENT GOVERNORS: Mr P Myers

PRESENT: Mr G Cooke

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr K Abbott (Director, Finance & Corporate Support), Mr G Ward (Director Resources), Mrs A Gamby (Head of Early Years & Childcare), Mrs C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer) and Ms R Turner (Managing Director Children, Families and Education)

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

**11. Membership**  
*(Item. A1)*

RESOLVED that Mr K Pugh had replaced Mr Bayford on this Committee be noted.

**12. Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this meeting**  
*(Item2)*

Mr Chittenden declared an interest in Item B6 as he was a Trustee of Howard de Walden, Maidstone mentioned within the addendum to the report.

**13. Minutes - 18 September 2009**  
*(Item. A4)*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

**14. Deputy Cabinet Member's Verbal Update**  
*(Item. B1)*

*(Verbal Report by Mr G Cooke, Deputy Lead Member for Resources, Capital Programme and Infrastructure)*

(1) Mr Cooke advised the Committee of activities undertaken since the last meeting of the Committee within his portfolio *(excluding those items due to be discussed at the meeting to prevent duplication)*, which included; regular visits he

and the other Deputy Lead Members had made to Kent schools, an Informal Member Group which looked at possible savings on the Medium Term Plan, whilst minimising the impact on front line services, schools and young people; the Informal Members Group to look at Special Educational Needs Transport would be meeting on Friday, 20 November. He concluded advising that data was currently being gathered on School Admissions to allow any pressures to be managed as they arose.

(2) The Chairman thanked Mr Cooke for his update and reminded him of the protocol that local Members should be informed of school visits in the electoral area to give them the opportunity to attend the visit. Mr Cooke advised that this was happening Mr Sweetland concurred advising that he had been invited to such a visit and attended.

(3) RESOLVED that the verbal report be received.

## **15. Service Directors' Verbal Updates**

*(Item. B2(a) and (b) were taken together)*

*(Verbal update by Mr K Abbott, Director of Resources and Planning Group and Mr G Ward, Director - Capital Programme and Infrastructure)*

### **Mr G Ward, Director of Capital Programme**

(1) Mr Ward gave a presentation using overheads, (attached as appendix 1 to these Minutes). He highlighted the wide range of responsibilities covered by the 135 staff in his division, which included; Building Schools for the Future Group, School Meals, Health and Safety in the KCC Estates and the approval of Outdoor Education eg residential trips. This activity was covered within a divisional Revenue Budget of £20.5m. He went on the outline the activities of Capital Investment. Members noted that recent successes included Kent gaining the ISO 14001 Environment Award, and an increase in the take up of waste contracts, introducing recycling.

(2) In response to a question by Mr Gates, Mr Ward advised that the schools food waste was taken away and composted.

(3) In response to a comment by Mr Tolputt, Mr Ward said that he would follow up on the request he made at the last meeting for detailed information on the Academies, and would include information on those academies that KCC had representation on. In replied to a question raised by Mr Pugh, he highlighted that the Academies were independent state schools.

(4) Mr Smith advised that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Learning and Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on standards in schools.

(5) In response to a question raised by Mr Brazier, Mr Abbott advised that if an Academy started to fail there was no intervention that could be made by KCC. One of the causes of concerns with the creation of the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA), with the demise of the Learning Skills Council, was the responsibility for funding being moved to the YPLA, which was part of the new Bill passed last week and how this would operate was not clear at present.

(6) Mr Cooke undertook to respond to Mr Pugh's question on the process of admissions to Academies and the implication for KCC if the Academies operated an exclusion, of anything up to 10%, to the children in that area, outside the meeting.

(7) In response to how Home to School Transport was dealt with for Academies, Mr Ward advised that KCC was responsible for Home to Schools Transport. The Academies had exactly the same entitlements as any other school.

(8) The Chairman thanked Mr Smith for his invitation to join the Learning and Development POSC on a visit to an Academy before its next meeting in February 2010.

(9) Mr Ward concluded his presentation with a film entitled 'Did You Know?' which included a host of facts highlighting how our world was changing.

**Mr K Abbott, *Director of Resources and Planning Group***

(10) Mr Abbott gave his presentation using overheads (*attached as appendix 2 to these Minutes*). Mr Abbott highlighted the responsibilities of his service division, which included; Communication and Information Governance that included the work across the Directorate and electronic communications across schools, Workforce Development of the Advisory Service, for the work with staff in schools and the Children's Social Services, School Crossing Patrols, Free School Meals and Student Loans. His team also had a wide range of responsibility for the management of the Directorate's budget, schools budgets and managing the Medium Term Planning and Freedom of Information requests.

The service division had a budget of £27m gross and £22m net and an income of £5m, of which £1.2m was through selling financial services to Kent schools and some contracts with Medway and Sussex.

He highlighted key headlines and statistics which included; that there were five Freedom of Information requests in the first year, 2005, to date this had risen to 417 in 2009, for which one and half full time staff had to be employed to deal with those enquiries, and the bulk of the enquiries were mainly from the public.

The number of applications for free school meals had risen, he felt due to the recession, from 20,000 to 26,000 applications per year.

CRB checks had risen in supporting schools in recruiting qualified teachers.

The successes included; the first Finance Annual Conference was held this year, which brought together county wide bursars. There had also been positive responses on the consultation process of the Early Years Providers Review. The Kent workforce and the Annual Census went well which had been a huge demand on schools and KCC, but there had been a 100% response.

(11) Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments which included the following:

(12) In response to a question by Mr Tolputt, Mr Abbott explained that there was a long wind down since the announcement that Local Authorities were losing the responsibility for supporting student loans. The Government was moving this service to Student Finance England with a 3 year wind down. Kent use to support 20,000 students and families on student loans and guidance; including 3000 face to face interviews. Kent was now down to 3000 existing students as all new students had to use the online service of Student Finance England. In two years time Kent would no longer be dealing with student loans. However there was concern, which Kent had raised nationally, on what would happen to students like those that Kent had helped through the process during this summer that could not easily access the online system as their family circumstances were more complex and did not fit into the drop down questions on the online system.

(13) In response to a question by Mrs Rook, Mr Abbott advised that where charges could be made, for Access to Information requests (*where 18 hours of work was undertaken to research information*) this was carried out although, the bulk of the requests did not reach that threshold. Mrs Rook gave her congratulations to the Awards Team for the superb service they provided.

(14) The Chairman requested that on behalf of the Committee congratulations be passed on to the Awards Team for all their excellent work.

(15) In reply to a question by Mr Smith, Mr Abbott explained that the balance control mechanism for schools was where reserves were above the thresholds and criteria that had been agreed with the Funding Forum. Money had been clawed back from school reserves and that had been redistributed. £1½ m in 2007/08 and £3000k this year. In some cases Primary schools had to give back one third of their budget. Mr Abbott felt that the key was to get the schools to recognise that money would not be sitting there for ever but was to be spent on pupils in schools now. Mr Abbott said there was a need for new partnerships with schools. He advised that this was being achieved by Officers working closely with the Schools Funding Forum and with the schools when their budgets were issued at the start of the school's current year. At this time it was disclosed what the schools' limit would be regarding claw back and the consequences of the schools going above a certain level would mean that they were at risk of claw back. Each school would receive this in a detailed letter; to date this had been working. Mr Cooke added that the exception to this was where a school had identified and needed to save for capital projects this funding was excluded.

(16) Mr Myers said that he had received positive feedback on the consultation with special schools.

(17) In response to concerns raised by Mr Pugh regarding the schools on the Isle of Sheppey claiming that they had received little professional support with the changes from a two tier to a three tier system, Mr Cooke asked Mr Pugh to let him have the details to allow him to deal with the issue outside the meeting.

(18) In response to a question by Mr Sweetland, Mr Abbott agreed to forward any feedback, on the impact of screening of the Headteachers' Conference on Kent TV to Members.

- (19) RESOLVED that the Members comments and requests and the verbal reports be noted.

**16. CFE: Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2009/10**  
(Item. B3)

*(Report by Mr K Abbott, Director Resource and Planning Group, Mr G Ward, Director Capital Programme and Infrastructure Group and Mrs S Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education)*

(1) Members considered the third report to this Committee on the forecast outturn against the budget for the Children, Families and Education (CFE) Directorate for the 2009/10 financial year based on the exception monitoring report, which was presented to Cabinet on 12 October 2009.

(2) The Chairman asked Mr Abbott to introduce the report. He highlighted the areas under the various headings within the report that required further updates which included; Schools - It was the intention to provide Members with an update of the half year monitoring position, however, Officers were still chasing a number of returns from schools, which meant that the work on assessing the overall position was still taking place. Mr Abbott offered to forward a briefing note to Members outside the meeting as the next meeting was not due until January 2010.

Directorate Revenue Budget – The Directorate was projecting a balanced budget for the end of the year excluding asylum and including management action of £1.571m, the position of the Directorate was largely the same as reported at the last meeting. Asylum – The new grant rules that came into effect from the end of August had a lot of clauses that came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> October this meant the grant rules had changed after one month, which meant the forecast shortfall increased from £0.369m to £3.969m for the end of the year. At the time of writing the report Officers were waiting for proposal from the UK Borders Agency (UKBA) following a meeting held with them and the Leader of KCC in September. Outlined proposal had been received that were broadly what was expected in trying to find a way forward to provide KCC and the other main gateway authorities; Hillenden and Croydon, with a contractual arrangement for 3-5 years to essentially fund core costs and allow for some variation for changes in numbers in each year. The first meeting involving Hillenden, Croydon and KCC with the UKBA was being held in Croydon 19 November KCC was being represented by Mr B Anderson accompanied by an Officer from the finance team from Asylum Services. Mr Abbott agreed to give Members an update at the joint meeting in January 2010. Members were advised that a Member of the UKBA had been seconded to KCC, until the end of March 2010, to work within the Children, Families and Education Directorate in the Finance Team and the Unaccompanied Children's Team to look at the funding and service issues that KCC was facing and dealing with the issues where UKBA and KCC interpretations differed. Mr Abbott hoped that this would also strengthen the partnership the UKBA and feed into discussions.

(3) In response to a question by Mr Chittenden that referred to page 10 of the report on the 'ongoing' increase in expenditure for mobile classrooms in schools with regard to the changes in special educational needs requirements. Mr Ward explained that the figures within the capital programme were anticipated at the end of the programme 2013/14 published County Council budget. There was a commitment to provide additional accommodation in relation to post 16, it was

hoped that this was not the end result but that they were fit for purpose facilities to allow the school to provide post 16 on site. On some of the other schools KCC was incurring additional costs of providing mobiles in advance of the final solutions, he gave the example of the Ridgeview and Portall schools where additional mobiles were provided due to the additional building work as part of the Building Schools for the Future. In this case the mobiles were an interim solution to allow the schools to meet the requirements to their public notice etc.

(4) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the Members comments be noted ;
- (b) a further update on Asylum be brought back to the joint January meeting of the three CFE POSCs ; and
- (c) the projected outturn figures for both the revenue and capital budgets for the directorate as at the August exception monitoring report be noted.

**17. Budget 2010/11 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2010/11 To 2012/13 (powerpoint presentation)**  
*(Item. B4)*

*(Report by Mrs Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education Directorate, Mrs Sarah Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education)*

(1) The Committee received a report that identified the proposed strategy for determining next year's budget and the financial plans for the following two years. This included the latest indications of likely pressures facing the Children, Families and Education portfolio, suggested areas for service improvements and the savings that may be needed in order to set a realistic three year budget plan.

(2) The Chairman reminded Members that an Informal Member Group (IMG) to discuss the Medium Term Plan had been commissioned at the meeting held on 18 September with a Membership of 6, *(2 Members from each of the 3 Children, Families and Education Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees (POSCs))*. Chaired by Mr K Smith, the IMG met on Tuesday, 17 November to discuss suggested savings and priorities to inform this Committee.

(3) The Chairman asked Mr Abbott to introduce the report. Mr Abbott advised that the report set out the latest information on the known pressures for the portfolio and highlighted areas of possible service improvements, which were needed to set a realistic budget for the next three years. The format of the papers was in the standard form for all the POSCs.

(4) Mr Abbott explained that it was already in the public domain that KCC had to reduce its spending by £200m over the next 3 years and as part of that all Directorates were set targets for efficiency savings in respect of staffing and procurement activity. The CFE Directorate's target was £9.4m and savings totalling that had been identified and included in the report.

(5) Delivery of those efficiency savings and a robust stance on pay and prices in light of the current inflation still left savings of £130m needed across the County Council. Each of the POSCs had been tasked to find 10% savings of £130m.

(6) The issues for the CFE Directorate included; the Directorate was in a unique position as 85% of its spending, £1.36b on revenue came from central government grants and 15% equal to £210m was funded directly by KCC. The set of challenges were to identify savings of 2/3rds part funded by KCC related to Home to School Transport and Children Social Care and included a number of risks of a high level of dependency on government specific grants given the financial climate.

(7) At recent staff and school briefings the key principles were advised in setting the Medium Term Plan, which were primarily; to protect the front line services, reduce overheads and administration, increase efficiency and maximise income. The priorities for CFE were set out in the Young Person's Plan, (summarised in appendix 4 of the report). Mr Abbott advised that the financial climate was going to be difficult over the next 3 years especially with the rise in expectation on the services.

(8) The County Council had identified as part of the £200m that there could be a loss of 600-700 posts across the County Council. CFE Directorate had already advised its staff that there could be a reduction of 160 – 200 posts over the next 3 years.

(9) Mr Abbott explained that page 49 of the report sets out the efficiency and restructuring savings of £7.5m for staffing and £1.9m for procurement activity. The £7.5m gave the target figures for the new Service Groups that were set up under the interim arrangements for the Directorate following the County Council meeting in October following the approval to the Senior Structure in June. The Directors were still working on proposals for the new structure which would be finished at the end of December 2009. At the time when the County Council budget proposals were published the Directorate would be able to move into a formal consultation with staff about the staffing impact.

(10) Mr Smith who chaired of the IMG on Medium Term Plan (IMG MTP) that met on 17 November spoke on the deliberations and the conclusions of the IMG MTP. He advised that the IMG considered 45 areas where savings could be made and areas that they wished to remove from the overall list of savings options presented by Officers. The table below totalling £13m represented those savings which Members of the IMG would not want to be taken forward:

Saving on Connexions	£ 5.8m
Removal of discretionary Services including denominational, Selective, subsidised post 16 transport	£ 5.1m
Disband Member Appeal Panel for Transport	£ 0.1m
Remove base funding for Kent Music School	£ 0.4m
Reduce Educational Psychology service by 10%	£ 0.3m
Halve Section 17 payments (tied in with front line social Workers)	£ 0.3m

Reduce staffing budget for 25 vacant posts	£ 1.0m
Total	£13.0m

(11) Mr Smith advised that each of the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees (POSCs) were looking at the budgets within their portfolios and as a result of the preparations of the Officers Members were able to follow this complex exercise for which he thanked them. He felt that the process for Members to scrutinise the budget needed to be developed with an aim to form best practise for the future.

(12) In response to a question by Mr Tolputt, Mr Abbott advised that about 10% of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded the Local Authority and the rest went directly to schools and the early years providers. He agreed to provide a summary of this to Members outside the meeting. The government settlement for next year had confirmed that the DSG would be increased by 4.2%. The budgets set for schools this year would hold good for next year. For the Local Authority this meant for the services currently funded from DSG there would be a £3m increase, Kent had to deal with the pay increase in line with inflation. There was ongoing work undertaken with other local authorities on what to charge the DSG. Mr Abbott explained that the government was consulting with service users on what could and could not be charged to the DSG and the role and remit of the Schools Funding Forum. It was difficult at present to charge integrated services to the DSG this would need approval by the DCSF.

(13) In response to a question by Mr Chittenden, Mrs Turner explained that the headings that were discussed by the IMG MTP were both discretionary and statutory items but the issue was at what level those services were delivered; eg Educational Psychology was statutory, Kent Music School was discretionary but there must be an entitlement to music education in schools. Mr Cooke added that the discussions of the IMG were mindful to avoid any impact on vulnerable children and frontline services. He wished to thank Officers for all the work that they had undertaken to produce the budget papers.

(14) In reply to a question by Mr Pugh, Mrs Turner advised that there was still recruitment to Social Worker vacancies. There had been a delay in the additional investment in frontline social work and getting the staff in post which was being resolved. There was a national shortage of Social Workers. There had been success in recruiting newly qualified English Social Workers as well as from abroad; Canada and the USA, who would be well supported and trained on procedures and the cultural expectations. She assured Members that although there was a real deficit in retaining and having enough experienced qualified Social Workers eg Senior Practitioners in Kent a great deal of effort was being applied to retraining existing Social Workers. Unfortunately, this was exacerbated with the increase in referrals that were meeting the requirement for a child protection plan that was leading to pressures on fostering services and Looked After Children (LAC) services.

(15) In response to questions by Mr Sweetland on the Children's Occupational Therapy Service (OTS), Mrs Turner explained that following the separation of the Adult Social Services and Children Social Services there was a deficit in the children's OTS element of the service and there had been difficulties in getting that back to a proper level in terms of funding, which had now been found and in finding



experienced staff. Mrs Turner had been assured that recruitment was underway and would be shortly back up to speed. There was still concern with the back log of cases, which Officers would be working to bring down which may entail bringing in agency staff. Referring to funding Mrs Turner advised that this was complex as it involved funding from both KCC for assessments, Health Authorities for equipment and funding that the Districts held in regard to housing. Officers had been carrying out work with Housing and Health to look at working in a more efficient way by pooling resources. She was optimistic that this was the way forward for total place for children and families.

(16) In response to a question by Mrs Rook, Mr Ward replied that there was a real challenge on how much was being spent on protecting our empty facilities. Officers in Corporate Property Services were doing what they could to; dispose of some sites, retain sites until the property prices rose or change of use was agreed for a site. The aim was to keep the expenditure down but also to protect the Local Authority's interest with regard to liability and protect those that go on those sites. Mr Cook added that this partly came about because of the success and expansion of the capital programme as more renovation work was being carried out through Building Schools for the Future (BSF) more buildings became redundant from prior use, he felt that the pressure was a good thing and indicative of the excellent work being carried out in other areas.

(17) In response to a further question by Mrs Rook, Mr Abbott explained that the pressure on maternity pay within the report did not include paternity pay because those figures shown were regarding schools and through the Dedicated Schools Grant the Authority funded certain costs for maternity pay. The scheme only covered maternity, if schools wished it to cover paternity this would have to be discussed with the Schools Funding Forum as this would be a budget pressure. With regard to the units within the Directorate any cost of maternity or paternity leave had to be funded from within the units' budget.

(18) In reply to a question by Mr Sweetland, Mr Abbott explained that the information on page 31 of the report referred to the whole range of staff in the Local Children Services Partnerships (LCSPs) at present, what this would look like in the future would be part of the restructuring proposals that were currently being worked on, details would be available in January as part of the Directorate review. Mrs Turner added that everything we did should be based on excellent outcomes for children. The review of the LCSPs was a commitment to driving forward the Kent Children's Trust that had been in existence for a year. The schools were part of the Partnership and were being listened to as part of the LCSPs review. Mr Abbott concluded that more work had to be carried out on how the school representatives on the Partnerships fed back the issues to the group of schools that they represented.

(19) Mr Smith suggested that the schools should be asked "what is the service doing for you?" The services were there to help the schools and the pupils. Mrs Turner suggested that this issue needed to be discussed at a future meeting of the Vulnerable Children and Partnerships POSC as the issue dealt with part of the Kent Children's Trust. Mr Smith added that a school visit could be included too. The Chairman gave permission for Mrs Allen, Chairman of the Vulnerable Children and Partnerships POSC to speak. Mrs Allen advised that the POSC was due to discuss the LCSPs at a future meeting.

(20) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the comments and request made by Members in the paragraphs above be noted;
- (b) the proposals in the report be noted; and
- (c) the 7 areas of savings, which were considered by Members of the IMG to be omitted from the overall list of savings to be taken forward as detailed in paragraph (10) above be noted.

**18. Building Schools for the Future (BSF) - (DVD)**  
*(Item. B5)*

*(Report by Mr G Ward, Director, Capital Programme & Infrastructure and Mrs S Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education Directorate)*

(1) The Committee considered a report that provided an update on the Authority's current progress with its BSF Programme, which Kent entered in September 2005 with an estimated overall capital allocation, provided the Programme lasted to the end, of £1.8 billion.

(2) Mr Ward gave a detailed presentation using overheads *(as attached to these Minutes)* and played a DVD on BSF. He advised that the driving force was to have building facilities for secondary education fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, putting learning first and being the centre of the community. Members noted that a video on BSF was also available to watch on Kent TV.

(3) Members were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions which included the following:

(4) In response to questions by Mr Pugh, Mr Ward advised that the first BSF contract was drawn up in 2008 for the first Local Education Partnership schools in; Gravesham, Swale, Thanet and two in Canterbury Coastal, the contract gave exclusivity to the partner to deliver those schools. In Wave 3 there were ten schools being constructed at present, which were all on schedule. In Wave 4 the issue to the Local Education Partnership (LEP) to take up the schemes to be developed had be made, the process was outlined in appendix 2 of the report. A letter had now been received from the LEP indicating a willingness to take them up. The contract closed at the end of the summer next year and the facilities would come on line in 2013. Discussions were due to start with the Projects for Schools (PfS) about starting on Wave 6 of the programme but this would be dependent on what happened in the general election in 2010.

(5) Mr Ward respond to a further question by Mr Pugh advising that up until two years ago the Academies were dealt with by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and a sponsor. KCC was a sponsor and had no more involvement. The PfS was given the whole remit to look after the BSF and the Academy Programme. Since then KCC was responsible for the physical delivery of the building, funding was made available to KCC as the Local Education Authority,

it was KCC's responsibility to deliver the building to the Academy Trust and we effectively license them to occupy the buildings and the use of the land on a lease of 125 years. In the case of Sheppey because it was in the Let 1 patch a decision was made that it would be picked up through the BSF oppose to going elsewhere with a contractor and it was in Wave 4. Mr Ward advised that there was an error in the report indicating that the 2 sites in Sheppey were in Wave 6 this should be altered to read Wave 4.

- (6) RESOLVED that the comments and questions by Members and the progress of the BSF programme in Kent be noted.

**19. Children's Centres Review (to follow)**

*(Item. B6)*

*(Report by S Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education and Mrs R Turner, Managing Director of Children, Families & Education Directorate)*

*(Mrs A Gamby, Head of Early Years and Childcare (Operations) and Mrs R Tickle, Children's Centre Project Officer were present for this item)*

- (1) The Committee received a report regarding the Review of Children's Centres, with a particular focus on Round Three.

- (2) The Chairman welcomed Mrs Gamby and Mrs Tickle to the meeting and asked Mrs Gamby to introduce the report.

(3) Mrs Gamby explained that the Children's Centres agenda was a major national initiative. The Children's Centres role was about the leadership and management of a range of services for children and their families in an area in a joined up way. A Children's Centre was not a nursery although a nursery may be a provision at the Centre. The government's aim was for 3500 Children's Centres nationally by 2012. What this meant for Kent was that originally there would be 102 Children's Centres, which would be delivered in three rounds; Round 1 had 20 Centres (2004-2006) and Round 2 had an additional 52 Centres (2006-2008) and in Round 3 up to 30 Centres. There was a need for Round 3 to connect and join up with Rounds 1 and 2 for universal coverage. Cabinet agreed to a review of the Children's Centres to ensure that in the current economic climate that the capital portfolio was the best that it could be to deliver universal children's services. The revenue funding for Children's Centres came through a grant and at present there was no confirmation of what that grant would be after 2011. The aim of the review was to; minimise the number of new builds, maximise the number of centres delivering existing facilities, further explore whether some centres might deliver and manage through contractual arrangements with voluntary or private organisations and identify whether there was potential to provide universal coverage for the children and families of Kent with fewer Centres than the potential 30 in Round 3 and fewer than the original 102 Children Centres.

- (4) Mrs Gamby then spoke on the two tabled papers headed 'Revised Round Three Proposals 11/09', which highlighted that following the review there could potentially be 25 Children Centres instead of 30 in Round 3 and therefore county wide 97 Children's Centres in total instead of 102, and 'Children's Centres Capital Funding and Predicted Spend', which provided the predicted spending on Rounds 2 and 3 and the infrastructure and signage around all three rounds. This gave a

predicted spend with the revised proposals of £30,708,986 with a balance of £3,824,950 to be reinvested.

(5) Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments which included the following:

(6) In response to questions by Mr Pugh on Rounds 1 and 2, Mrs Gamby advised that KCC was the accountable body for all Children's Centres, most were delivered in house through a KCC Children's Centre Manager, a few were delivered on a service level agreements to different organisations such as Seashells, but it remained KCC's responsibility. Mrs Tickle explained that there were sites identified for Queenborough and Rushenden and Leysdown and Warden but both were involved in complex land swap negotiations with Swale Borough Council, which was in the hands of KCC's legal team. For Queenborough and Rushenden the land swap was imminent and for Leysdown and Warden there had to be an archaeological dig commissioned on adjacent land, once that had been concluded the necessary documents could be signed and swapped.

(7) In reply to questions by Mr Chittenden, Mrs Gamby advised that the Children's Centres were revenue funded entirely through the Sure Start Grant. The Children's Centres Review had slowed down the Round 3 programme, although, it still had to deliver designation by the end of March 2010 and a full core offer by 2012. The freed up revenue funding had not had to be called on. In answer to the send question, Mrs Gamby said that part of the work of the Children's Centres included an annual cycle of self evaluation against a series of indicators, which were reported up to Cabinet and the government.

(8) Members congratulated Mrs Gamby and her team for all their work and requested a progress report on Children's Centres in a year.

(9) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the Members comments and the request for a progress report in one year be noted; and
- (b) the recommendations arising from the Children's Centres Review be noted.

## **20. Select Committee - Update** *(Item. C1)*

*(Report by Mr P Wickenden, Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager)*

(1) Members received a report on the progress with establishing a Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme for 2009/2010.

(2) The Democratic Services Officer advised that the Policy Overview Coordinating Committee agreed that the following topics would form part of the work programme for 2009/2010:-

- Extended Schools
- Renewable Energy – What should Kent's role be?

- Dementia
- Educational Attainment of Pupils and Schools in Areas of High Deprivation

(3) Mr Sweetland requested an overview of the Local Children's Services Partnerships at a future meeting of this Committee.

(4) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the request by Mr Sweetland be noted; and

(b) the topics to be included in the new Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme for 2009/2010 as set out in paragraph (2) above be noted.