



AGENDA

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 26th March, 2008, at 10.00 am Ask for: **Peter Sass**
Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Telephone **(01622) 694002**
Maidstone

Refreshments will be available from 9.45 am.

Timing of items as shown below is approximate and subject to change.

County Councillors who are not members of the Committee but who wish to ask questions at the meeting are asked to notify the Chairman of their questions in advance.

Please note that this meeting will be webcast

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

A. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- A1 Substitutes
- A2 Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- A3 Minutes
 - a) 23 January 2008 (Pages 1 - 8)
 - b) 1 February 2008 (Pages 9 - 14)
- A4 Action Taken on Committee's Recommendations (Pages 15 - 18)
- A5 Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues - 10 March 2008 (Pages 19 - 22)

B. CABINET/CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS AT VARIANCE TO APPROVED BUDGET OR POLICY FRAMEWORK

No items.

C. CABINET DECISIONS

- C1 Kent Health Watch (Pages 23 - 42)

Mr G K Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Public Health; Ms M Peachey, Kent Director of Public Health; and Mr M Lemon, Policy Manager, Kent Department of Public Health, will attend the meeting from 10.15 am to 11.15 am to answer Members' questions on this item.

C2 A21 and East Kent Access Phase 2 - Cost Increases (Pages 43 - 48)

Representatives of the Highways Agency have been asked to attend the meeting from 11.15 am to 12.15 pm to answer Members' questions on this item. Mr K A Ferrin MBE, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste, and Mr A Wilkinson, Managing Director, Environment and Regeneration Directorate, will also attend.

D. CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

See Item F2 below.

E. OFFICER AND COUNCIL COMMITTEE DECISIONS

E1 Modernisation of Queen Elizabeth's Resource Centre, Dartford (Pages 49 - 54)

Mr K G Lynes, Cabinet Member for Kent Adult Social Services, and Mr O Mills, Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services Directorate, will attend the meeting from 12.15 pm to 1.00 pm to answer Members' questions on this item. Some service-users may also attend to give evidence.

E2 Other Officer and Council Committee Decisions

No other Officer or Council Committee decisions have been proposed for call in but the Committee may resolve to consider any decision taken since its last meeting by an Officer or Council Committee exercising functions delegated to it by the Council.

(Members who wish to propose that the Committee should consider any Officer or Council Committee decision are asked to inform the Head of Democratic Services of the decision concerned in advance.)

F. EXEMPT ITEMS

Please note that the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public for Item F2

F1 Motion to Exclude the Press and Public

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following business of the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

F2 Award of Construction Contract for 24 New Build Children's Centres (Decision 08/01144) (Pages 55 - 64)

Mr M C Dance, Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources and Skills (CFE); Mr G Badman, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education Directorate; and Mr M Austerberry, Director of Property, Chief Executive's Directorate, will attend the meeting from 1.00 pm to 1.30 pm to answer Members' questions on this item.

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
(01622) 694002

Friday, 14 March 2008

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 23 January 2008.

PRESENT: Dr M R Eddy (Chairman), Mr D Smyth (Vice-Chairman), Mr A R Bassam, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr J R Bullock MBE, Miss S J Carey, Mr A R Chell, Mr B R Cope, Mrs T Dean, Mr C Hart, Mr G A Horne MBE, Mr P W A Lake, Mr C J Law, Mrs M Newell, Mr J E Scholes, Mr J D Simmonds (substitute for Mrs P A V Stockell) and Mr R Truelove.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Wale, Assistant to the Chief Executive and Mr S C Ballard, Head of Democratic Services.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**42. Minutes**
(Item A3)

(1) The Chairman tabled the reply he had received from the Minister to the letter about the future of the National Fruit Collections at Brogdale which he had sent in accordance with Minute 37(10)(b).

(2) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman;
- (b) on Minute 33(1), the Leader's agreement (reported by Mr Law) to meet the Committee's Chairman and Spokesmen to discuss concerns that, at its meetings, Cabinet did not appear to be giving any consideration to Committee's recommendations, be welcomed;
- (c) on Minute 37(d) and (e), the Informal Member Group on Member Information be asked to look particularly at the quality of information being provided to local Members about all KCC proposals or decisions affecting (indirectly, as well as directly) their Division.

43. Informal Member Group on Community Safety Unit Business Plan – 4 December 2007
(Item A4)

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the proposal in Note 1 (24)(c) be agreed and the Cabinet Member for Community Services be recommended that KCC representation on the District CDRPs should be reviewed to ensure fuller participation from the CFE Directorate, participation from the Kent Adult Social Services Directorate and in general, representation of the right Directorates at the right level of seniority;
- (b) the remaining notes of the Informal Member Group on the Community Safety Unit Business Plan held on 4 December 2007 be noted.

44. Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues – 10 January 2008

(Item A5)

RESOLVED that the notes of the Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues held on 10 January 2008 be noted.

45. Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – Standing Report to January 2008

(Item A6 – Report by Assistant to the Chief Executive)

RESOLVED that the report on the actions taken as a result of the Committee's decisions at previous meetings, the responses of Cabinet to those decisions, and the updated report on progress with Select Committee Topic Reviews, be noted.

46. Audit Commission Inspection of the Kent Supporting People Programme

(Item C1)

(1) Mr K G Lynes, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services; Mr O Mills, Managing Director; Miss C Highwood, Director, Resources; and Ms C Martin, Head of Supporting People Unit, Kent Adult Social Services Directorate, attended the meeting for this item.

(2) Mr Lynes and Mr Mills explained that Supporting People was a central Government programme which was administered by the County Council through a partnership comprising the County Council, the Kent District Councils, Health and Probation. In accordance with the rules laid down by Government, governance was through the Supporting People Commissioning Body (SPCB) which, as the name implied, was responsible for **commissioning** services against a specification defined by Government. Mr Lynes was the current KCC Member representative on the SPCB. He had been elected Chairman of the SPCB but there was no rule that said that the SPCB had to be chaired by the KCC representative. Officer support was through the Core Strategy Development Group (CSDG).

(3) Members' questions covered the following issues:-

Response to Audit Commission Recommendations

(4) In answer to a question from Dr Eddy, Mr Mills emphasised that the Audit Commission's overall finding had been that the Kent Supporting People Programme was "good with promising prospects for improvement". The CSDG had met recently to consider the Audit Commission's recommendations and was preparing a response for Mr Lynes, as Chairman of the SPCB, to sign off by 29 January under powers delegated to him by the SPCB. The response would be reported to the SPCB and to the Adult Social Services Policy Overview Committee (ASSPOC) at their next meetings.

Partnership Approach

(5) In answer to a question from Mr Chell, Mr Lynes said that the SPCB was a good example of two-tier partnership working. The SPCB had robust debates but aimed to reach decisions by consensus.

Involvement of Members

(6) In answer to questions from Mrs Newell and Mr Law, Mr Lynes said that the relevant Audit Commission recommendation was "continuing to involve the wider body of elected members" in the development of the Supporting People Programme and he felt that the key word was "continuing". The wider body of Members was already

involved but he accepted that this needed to be stepped up. Within KCC, the headlines of SPCB business would continue to be reported to Cabinet and ASSPOC. SPCB meetings were held in public and the papers for them were widely distributed within KCC. He had also briefed Members on specific SPCB issues at District briefings and ASSPOC meetings.

(7) Mr Mills said that, by its nature, the Supporting People Programme was complex and unique and he accepted the need to ensure that KCC Members had a good understanding of it. On this point, Miss Highwood said that the CSDG at its recent meeting had recognised that one of the barriers to Members' understanding of the Supporting People Programme was the jargon involved, and so it had decided that:-

- (a) future SPCB papers would include a glossary of terms; and
- (b) an Induction Pack would be produced for new Members of the SPCB and new staff involved with the Supporting People Programme.

(8) In response to a suggestion from Dr Eddy, Mr Lynes said that he would be happy to circulate the planned Induction Pack to all KCC Members and to arrange briefings for them. In return, he hoped that, when Members were out and about in their electoral divisions, they would be able to identify Supporting People issues and feed them back to the Supporting People unit.

(9) In response to a suggestion from Mr Horne, Mr Lynes said that he would consider whether Local Boards could be used as a vehicle for getting information to Members about the Supporting People Programme or for carrying out specific consultations.

Supporting People Funding

(10) In answer to a question from Mr Lake, Mr Mills said that there had been frustrations in the past when Government funding for Supporting People, and the conditions relating to that funding, had varied from year to year. However, the introduction of a three-year funding announcement had given much greater stability. Mr Lynes said that his concern for the future was that Supporting People funding was to be part of the area-based grant from April 2009. As such, it would no longer be ring-fenced and priorities would be determined not just by the SPCB.

Service-User Choice and Monitoring of Service-Providers

(11) In answer to questions from Mr Smyth, Mr Lynes said that providers of the Floating Support service had all gone through a rigorous selection process and their subsequent performance was fully monitored.

(12) Ms Martin explained that Floating Support service-users were given a choice of service-provider wherever possible. If a user was not happy with their service-provider or their support worker, then the Supporting People unit would try to provide another. Service provision was subject to rules laid down by the Government. These required service-providers to submit quarterly workbooks. There was also an outcomes regime and a client record process run by the University of St Andrews. In addition, officers of the Supporting People unit visited schemes in order to monitor them.

(13) Mr Mills said that performance data was already reported to the SPCB but, in the light of the Audit Commission's recommendations, the CSDG was looking at ways in which monitoring could be strengthened.

Facilitation of Service-User Comments and Complaints

(14) In answer to a question from Mrs Dean, Ms Martin said that all service-providers were required to have a complaints procedure and service-users could complain either to their provider or direct to the Supporting People unit.

(15) Mr Lynes said that the need to enable service-users to complain or comment independently of their service-provider or support worker was recognised. User groups were being established. The Supporting People unit employed two ex-service-users who visited current service-users to discuss the standards of service they received. "Mystery shopping" was being considered. Focus groups were used to discuss specific topics (eg, alarms) with service-users and a service-user conference had recently been held at Kings Hill.

Consultation on Older Persons' Review

(16) In answer to a question from Mrs Dean, Mr Lynes said that he accepted that there had been problems with the consultation on the Older Persons' review, and he gave an assurance that lessons had been learned. However, he felt that it had been right to carry out the review because it was a condition of Supporting People funding that systematic reviews should be carried out on every part of the service from time to time to ensure that the funding was spent in the most effective and efficient way.

(17) Unfortunately, as soon as the Older Persons' review was announced, a number of providers of sheltered accommodation rushed to consult their residents, without informing or involving the Supporting People unit. As a result, many residents of sheltered accommodation – elderly and vulnerable people – were unnecessarily scared by being given a very unbalanced view of what the review was about, suggesting that 24/7 warden cover would be withdrawn. As soon as the Supporting People unit realised what was happening, they sent a leaflet to every resident of sheltered accommodation setting out the true purpose of the review and inviting their comments.

(18) The outcome of the consultation had been reported back to the SPCB meeting, attended by the Audit Commission inspectors and Mrs Dean, who also spoke on the Older Persons' Review. It was unfortunate that, whilst the decision to undertake the Older Persons' Review had been agreed unanimously by SPCB and CSDG members; once the review was underway, some of the partners seemed unwilling to accept their part in that decision. This had been noted at a recent meeting of the SPCB and it was hoped that the situation would not recur.

Conclusions

(19) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Mr Lynes, Mr Mills, Miss Highwood and Ms Martin be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Members' questions.
- (b) the Managing Director, KASS, be asked to circulate to all Members of the Committee in due course the Action Plan to be prepared in response to the Audit Commission recommendations;

- (c) the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services' offer to distribute the planned Supporting People Commissioning Body (SPCB) Member Induction Pack to all Members of KCC, and to arrange briefing meetings on the Supporting People Programme for KCC Members, be welcomed;
- (d) the Cabinet Member and Managing Director be requested to ensure that the planned SPCB Member Induction Pack included an explanation of the process by which service-users could give feedback or express concerns about the Supporting People services provided to them;
- (e) the proposals to do more to facilitate independent feedback from users of Supporting People services through 'mystery shopping', user groups, etc, be welcomed and the Managing Director be asked to inform Members of the Committee of the outcome.

47. The Case for Establishing a Credit Union for Kent (Item C2)

(1) Mr K A Ferrin MBE, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste; Mr R W Gough, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence; Mr A Wilkinson, Managing Director; Mrs E Haswell, Economic Development Officer, Environment and Regeneration Directorate; and Mrs C Toher, Kent First, Chief Executive's Directorate, attended the meeting for this item.

(2) Mr Ferrin explained the background to the Credit Union proposals. Cabinet had felt that there was a real problem of financial exclusion for deprived people in Kent and that Credit Unions should be looked at as a way of tackling that problem. Mrs Toher had been commissioned to research the subject. She had found that there were a variety of different Credit Union models and she had looked in detail at four existing Credit Unions – Bristol, Portsmouth, Canterbury and Thanet. Her findings suggested that one of the most successful Credit Unions was the one at Portsmouth. Unlike many others, it had professional managers, operated from town centre premises, and offered a variety of financial products, not just low-interest loans. As such it appealed to a wide market, not just the financially excluded. It had proved successful and was now in the process of expanding across Hampshire. Mrs Toher also found that the existing Credit Unions in Canterbury and Thanet, both of which were run by volunteers, would welcome the establishment of a Kent-wide, professionally managed, Credit Union. As a result of Mrs Toher's findings, it had been decided to pursue the idea of a Credit Union, hence the report to Cabinet which was now before the Committee.

Financial Commitment by KCC

(3) In answer to questions from Mr Law and Mr Horne, Mr Gough clarified that the Feasibility Study was expected to cost approximately £20k. If the Feasibility Study suggested that further work on establishing a Credit Union should not be pursued, then that would be all that the Council would spend. However, if the Feasibility Study suggested that further work should be undertaken – and Mr Ferrin gave an assurance that this would be subject to a new Cabinet decision – then the other £80k mentioned in the Cabinet report would be required for the staffing and other expenses needed to complete a full business plan.

Risks to KCC

(4) In answer to questions from Mr Simmonds, Mr Bullock, Mr Chell and Mr Lake, Mr Gough accepted that there would be risks to KCC – both financial and reputational – in

establishing a Credit Union. However, KCC had so far committed only £20k in order to carry out a Feasibility Study, one of the purposes of which was to identify and analyse the risks, so that these could be used to inform the decision on whether to proceed any further.

(5) Mr Gough added that, if it was decided to proceed with the establishment of a Credit Union, it was likely to be on the basis of a free-standing body, with funding from sources other than KCC, and which would start operation in a relatively small area and then expand gradually to cover the whole of Kent. Proceeding in this way would greatly minimise the risks to KCC.

(6) Mr Ferrin pointed out that, while there were risks, there were also great potential benefits – for individuals, for KCC, and for Kent society as a whole – from tackling financial exclusion through measures such as the establishment of a Credit Union. Financial exclusion, and the stresses it caused, was a significant source of family breakdown and was also a factor in criminal behaviour.

Services to be Provided by a Credit Union

(7) In answer to a question from Mr Bullock, Mr Gough said that, as well as low-interest loans, a Credit Union would be expected to provide cash-processing services (eg cheque cashing), and could also encourage the financially excluded to take up the Child Trust Funds provided by the Government, and then assist them to build up those Funds.

“Common Bond Area”

(8) In answer to a question from Mr Simmonds, Mrs Toher explained that the “common bond” was the factor that members of any Credit Union had in common. Thus the “common bond area” could be a geographical area or it could be the workforce of a particular employer, etc.

Other Sources of Assistance to the Financially Excluded

(9) In answer to a question from Mr Simmonds, Mrs Toher said that the Credit Union alone would not solve the problems of the financially excluded. There would be a need for other complementary services, such as the provision of financial advice by organisations like the CAB.

Other Sources of Information on Credit Unions

(10) In response to suggestions from Mr Bullock and Mr Scholes, Mr Gough said that he would arrange for the outcomes of the research into the possibility of establishing Credit Unions previously undertaken by Kent District Councils, Kent voluntary organisations, and academic institutions, to be obtained.

(11) In answer to a question from Mr Smyth, Mr Gough said that the Association of British Credit Unions (ABCUL) had been contacted and had provided information which had been included in the report to Cabinet. He confirmed that they were one of the bodies which would be invited to bid for the task of carrying out the Feasibility Study. Mr Gough added that discussions had also taken place with the Financial Services Authority (FSA), which was supportive.

Possible Partnership with District Councils

(12) In answer to a question from Mrs Newell, Mr Gough said that he was willing to explore the possibility of working in partnership with Kent District Councils, and with Medway Council, which already had its own Credit Union. Mrs Haswell said that she would be discussing the Credit Union proposal with District Council colleagues through the Kent Economic Development Officers' Forum.

Member Involvement

(13) In response to points made by Mr Scholes and Mr Smyth, Mr Gough offered to establish an all-party Informal Member Group to contribute to the Council's work on Credit Unions.

Conclusions

(14) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Mr Ferrin, Mr Gough, Mr Wilkinson, Mrs Haswell and Mrs Toher be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Members' questions;
- (b) in the light of the assurance by the Cabinet Members for Environment, Highways & Waste, and Regeneration & Supporting Independence, that the feasibility study was expected to cost approximately £20k, and that the incurring of any further expenditure on pursuing the Credit Union proposal would be subject to a further formal decision by Cabinet, the decision by Cabinet on 14 January be supported;
- (c) the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Supporting Independence's agreement to establish an all-party Informal Member Group (IMG) of Members with knowledge of and/or interest in Credit Unions to oversee the feasibility study be welcomed, and the Cabinet Member be urged to:-
 - (i) include also on the IMG, Members representing areas of high deprivation; and
 - (ii) establish the IMG as quickly as possible;
- (d) Cabinet be advised that, while the Committee was concerned at the potential risks of proceeding with the Credit Union proposal, it hoped that these risks could be mitigated by the carrying out of the feasibility study and the establishment of an all-party IMG to monitor that study.

48. Mr John Wale

(1) The Committee noted that this would be the last of its meetings to be attended by Mr John Wale, Assistant to the Chief Executive, prior to his retirement on 31 January.

(2) RESOLVED that the Committee place on record its thanks to Mr Wale for his advice and support to the Committee since its establishment in 2001, and its best wishes for his retirement.

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Special Budget meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday 1 February 2008.

PRESENT: Dr M R Eddy (Chairman), Mr D Smyth (Vice Chairman), Mr A R Bassam, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr J R Bullock MBE, Miss S J Carey, Mr A R Chell, Mr B R Cope, Mrs T Dean, Mr C Hart, Mr G A Horne, MBE, Mr C J Law, Mrs M Newell, Mr R J E Parker (substitute for Mr R Truelove), Mr J E Scholes, Mr J D Simmonds (substitute for Mr E E C Hotson) and Mrs P A V Stockell

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S C Ballard, Head of Democratic Services

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

49 Draft Medium Term Plan 2008-11 (incorporating the Budget and Council Tax Setting for 2008/09)
(Item 3)

(1) Mr N J D Chard, Cabinet Member for Finance; Mr A Wood, Head of Financial Management; and Mr B Smith, Group Manager, Financial Planning and Budget, attended the meeting to answer Members' questions about the draft medium-term plan and budget proposals.

(2) The Head of Democratic Services reported that the five Policy Overview Committees had met during the week leading up to the meeting to consider the medium-term plan and budget proposals relating to their service areas but that none had made any proposals which, if accepted, could have an impact on other parts of the Budget.

(3) Mr Chard made a brief introductory statement in which he explained that, in presenting the Budget, Cabinet had attempted to achieve the following objectives:-

- Protect services for the most vulnerable;
- Support KCC's priorities; and
- Affordability for the Council Taxpayer.

(4) Mr Chard also announced that the Audit Commission had recently published the results of its Use of Resources Assessment. KCC had achieved Level 4 (the highest). The Assessment was made up of five individual elements and KCC had achieved Level 4 in four of the five elements, a better result than any other County Council had achieved.

(5) Members' questions covered the following issues:-

Proposed Council Tax Increase

(6) In answer to a question from Dr Eddy, Mr Chard explained that 3.9% was considered to be an affordable increase because it was the rate at which the Government had announced that pensions would be uplifted for 2008/09. Any lower increase would have impacted on the Cabinet's other two objectives (protecting services for the most vulnerable and supporting KCC's priorities).

Area-based Grant (ABG) System

(7) In answer to questions from Mr Smyth, Mr Bullock, Mrs Newell and Mr Chell, Mr Chard said that he supported the ABG concept because it was designed to achieve outcomes for the area which had been agreed jointly by KCC and its partners with Government. However, while some aspects of the proposed new ABG System were clear, such as:-

- What would be included in it (Mr Wood confirmed that there had been a transparent transfer of specific grants to ABG);
- That ABG would not increase in line with inflation so there would be increasing budgetary pressure (Mr Wood said that, overall, provision had been made for a 0.7% increase in 2008/09; a 5.5% increase in 2009/10; and a 3% reduction in 2010/11);
- That KCC would be accountable for the ABG allocated to Kent,

the detailed arrangements for allocation of ABG, including the local partnership governance structure, were not yet clear.

Capital Receipts

(8) In answer to a question from Mr Parker, Mr Wood said that he was confident that the planned level of Capital Receipts for 2008/09 (£21m) was achievable, because the new figure reflected the recent re-phasing of the capital programme.

PFI

(9) In answer to a question from Mr Bullock, Mr Wood explained that PFI schemes were not shown in the Prudential Indicators because they were not normally funded by borrowing. Instead, they were funded mainly through PFI grant, with some funding from Capital Receipts and this was shown separately elsewhere in the Budget Book.

Strategic Management

(10) In answer to questions from Mr Hart and Dr Eddy, Mr Chard and Mr Wood said that one of the reasons for the apparent increase in strategic management costs in CFE was because of a realignment between budget headings. This had been made necessary by changes between the portfolios of the two CFE Cabinet Members and an £8m addition from ABG.

(11) Mr Wood said that, overall, additional funding was being put into front-line services and efficiencies were being sought from back-office functions.

(12) In answer to a question from Mr Smyth, Mr Chard accepted that each Directorate seemed to define “strategic management” in a different way and suggested that the IMG on Budgetary Issues could consider a standard definition to be recommended for use by all Directorates.

Income generated by Commercial Services’ (CSD) Operations

(13) In answer to questions from Mr Simmonds and Mr Law, Mr Chard said that CSD’s commercial operations were not just designed to make a profit for KCC; they also helped to regulate the market (e.g. in school transport) thus reducing KCC’s costs. He believed that CSD’s commercial operations were in the interest of Kent residents, although he accepted that they were unpopular with some commercial operators in the market sectors concerned. He would be taking part in a public debate on this matter organised by the Kent Messenger on 13 February.

Other ways of increasing KCC income

(14) In answer to a question from Mr Chell, Mr Chard said that while KCC had been treated less favourably in funding terms than some other local authorities by Government, there was no doubt that the financial pressures this had caused had fostered greater efficiency and entrepreneurialism within KCC.

Advertising costs

(15) In answer to a question from Mrs Dean, Mr Chard pointed out that the £6m figure for advertising costs was planned to reduce by 27% over the next two years. In any case, more than 50% of the figure related to recruitment advertising. In response to a suggestion from Mrs Dean he said that he would be happy for a meeting to take place between KCC’s external auditors and representatives of the Kent newspaper industry to discuss the implications of KCC placing more of its advertising (particularly Highways Public Notices) with Kent on Sunday.

Loan to NHS

(16) In answer to questions from Mr Smyth, Mr Chard said that, although the possibility of KCC loaning £5m to the NHS had been suggested in the past, he had no knowledge of any current proposal to make a loan to the NHS. If such a proposal was made in the future, it would require a formal Cabinet or Cabinet Member decision, and thus be subject to scrutiny.

Investments in public access/communications initiatives

(17) In answer to a question from Mr Simmonds, Mr Chard confirmed that the performance of initiatives such as Gateways, Kent TV, etc, would be monitored in order to assess their effectiveness.

Member Support

(18) In answer to questions from Mrs Dean and Mr Bowles, Mr Chard pointed out that there was provision in the Budget for an increase in the funding for localism. He added that if the Selection and Member Services Committee recommended at its next meeting that additional support should be provided to backbench Members at the centre it was possible, subject to Cabinet’s agreement, that the cost could be met from the 2007/08 Budget underspend.

2007/08 Budget Underspend

(19) In answer to a question from Mr Bullock, Mr Chard accepted that there had been a similar level of underspend in both 2006/07 and 2007/08, but pointed out that there was a protocol in place under which each Directorate had the first call on the underspend within its own budget.

Grants to Voluntary Organisations

(20) In answer to questions from Mr Simmonds and Dr Eddy, Mr Chard confirmed that he regarded voluntary organisations as important in delivering front-line services. Whilst it was true that grants had not been increased, none had been cut, and this was all part of trying to strike the right balance in preparing the Budget.

Deprivation

(21) In answer to a question from Mr Bowles, Mr Chard confirmed that deprivation had been taken into account in the preparation of the Budget and he offered to look at whether this could be made clearer in the text.

School Building Projects

(22) In answer to a question from Mr Hart, Mr Chard said that it was not correct that income from the disposal of school sites in East Kent was being used to fund developments at schools in West Kent. In fact, for the school projects shown on page 12 of the Budget Book, the Capital Receipts were planned to come from land disposal at the school concerned, and this money would then be reinvested in the development at that school.

Asylum Costs

(23) In answer to questions from Dr Eddy and Mr Smyth, Mr Chard said that the budget was predicated on a successful conclusion to the negotiations with Government about KCC's special circumstances bid of £10.5m. Although the PwC report on this (commissioned by KCC and three other councils) was not expected until the next week, Mr Chard was hopeful that it would be possible to conclude negotiations with the Government before the Council's budget meeting on 19 February.

(24) In answer to a question from Mr Law, Mr Wood explained that accounting regulations required the £10.5m to be shown as an outstanding debt in KCC's accounts until the matter was resolved. The accounts did include a bad debt provision to reflect the fact that some outstanding debt would not, in the end, ever be recovered.

Climate Change

(25) In answer to a question from Mrs Dean, Mr Chard confirmed that the recommendations of the Climate Change Select Committee had been taken into account in the preparation of the Budget.

Countryside Access

(26) In answer to a question from Mrs Dean, Mr Chard said that the Budget did include some additional funding for issues relating to countryside access, but he accepted that it was not regarded as one of the highest budget priorities.

Kent Regeneration Fund

(27) In answer to a question from Mr Smyth, Mr Chard explained that the reasons why decisions to make contributions from the Kent Regeneration Fund were now to be taken by full Cabinet were that:-

- Regeneration was cross-cutting and not confined to a single Cabinet Member portfolio or Directorate;
- It was in the interests of openness and transparency that proposals for use of the Kent Regeneration Fund should be discussed publicly in Cabinet.

Domiciliary Care Charges

(28) In answer to a question from Mrs Newell, Mr Chard pointed out that while it may have been necessary to increase charges for domiciliary care, no change had been made by KCC in its eligibility criteria.

Adult Social Services Debt and Benefit-Maximisation Strategy

(29) In answer to a question from Mrs Newell, Mr Wood said that Adult Social Services' client debts were treated very sensitively and reviewed on a regular basis. There was a strong connection between the work on debt and KCC's continuing work with the Department for Work and Pensions and other partners to maximise the take-up of state benefits.

Continuous Improvement

(30) In answer to a point made by Miss Carey, Mr Chard said that although KCC had achieved a Level 4 assessment in Use of Resources, he was not complacent. His aim was for KCC to remain at the highest level and he planned to do that by continual challenge; by constantly looking for better value for money; and by using more peer challenge from other local authorities.

(31) Mr Chard said that he was constantly seeking to improve the budget-making process and would welcome constructive input from Members of all political parties. He said that he found the Topic Review process very helpful for informing policy-making.

Conclusions

(32) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Mr Chard, Mr Wood and Mr Smith be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Members' questions; and they and the staff concerned be thanked for the work put into the preparation of the Budget, and congratulated on producing it in such a clear and easy-to-read form.
- (b) the Council be congratulated on achieving Level 4 in the Audit Commission's recently-published Use of Resources Assessment.

- (c) the Council be congratulated on its entrepreneurial initiative and innovative ways of increasing income, which had allowed Council Tax and charges to clients to be kept to a minimum.
- (d) the apparent increases in “strategic management” costs in many Directorates be noted and the Cabinet Member for Finance be requested to provide a detailed breakdown of those costs.
- (e) The Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues be asked to consider a common definition of “strategic management” for adoption by all directorates to ensure consistency in future years’ budgets.

By: Head of Democratic Services
 To: Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – 26 March 2008
 Subject: Action Taken on Committee’s Recommendations
 Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To note the action taken as a result of the Committee’s decisions and recommendations at its meetings on 23 January and 1 February 2008.

1. The Committee is asked to note the action taken as a result of its decisions and recommendations at its meetings on 23 January and 1 February 2008, as shown in italics below.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AT 23 JANUARY MEETING

42. Minutes – 12 December

(2) RESOLVED that:-

- (b) On Minute 33(1), the Leader’s agreement (reported by Mr Law) to meet the Committee’s Chairman and Spokesmen to discuss concerns that, at its meetings, Cabinet did not appear to be giving any consideration to Committee’s recommendations, be welcomed.

The meeting has taken place and the Chairman and Spokesmen will report orally on the outcome.

- (c) On Minute 37(d) and (e), the Informal Member Group on Member Information be asked to look particularly at the quality of information being provided to local Members about KCC proposals or decisions affecting (indirectly, as well as directly) their Division.

This matter is to be considered by the IMG on Member Information at its next meeting (being arranged for late March).

46. Audit Commission Inspection of Kent Supporting People Programme

(19) RESOLVED that:-

- (b) The Managing Director, KASS, be asked to circulate to all Members of the Committee in due course the Action Plan to be prepared in response to the Audit Commission recommendations.

The formal response to the Audit Commission was circulated to all Members of the Committee on 8 February. The more detailed action plan was revised by the Core Strategy Development Group at its meeting in February and is due to be agreed by the Commissioning Body at its next meeting on 20 March, after which time it will be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

- (c) The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services’ offer to distribute the planned Supporting People Commissioning Body (SPCB) Member Induction Pack to all

Members of KCC, and to arrange briefing meetings on the Supporting People Programme for KCC Members, be welcomed.

The Induction Pack is currently being drafted and is due to be delivered by April 2008.

- (d) The Cabinet Member and Managing Director be requested to ensure that the planned SPCB Member Induction Pack included an explanation of the process by which service-users could give feedback or express concerns about the Supporting People services provided to them.

The Induction Pack will include information regarding the methods and processes by which service users can give feedback or express concerns.

- (e) The proposals to do more to facilitate independent feedback from users of Supporting People services through 'mystery shopping', user groups, etc, be welcomed and the Managing Director be asked to inform Members of the Committee of the outcome.

A number of means of facilitating independent feedback from service users are currently being explored. The feasibility of a mutual mystery shopping regime with other Supporting People partnerships in other Administering Authorities and departments with Kent Adult Social Services is being examined. Existing service user groups, such as residents' groups, are being used to gain service user feedback. The Programme has indirectly employed two ex-services users as monitoring and review officers to talk directly to users about their experiences of funded services.

47. The Case for Establishing a Credit Union for Kent

(14) RESOLVED that:-

- (b) In the light of the assurance by the Cabinet Members for Environment, Highways & Waste, and Regeneration & Supporting Independence, that the feasibility study was expected to cost approximately £20k, and that the incurring of any further expenditure on pursuing the Credit Union proposal would be subject to a further formal decision by Cabinet, the decision by Cabinet on 14 January be supported.
- (c) The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Supporting Independence's agreement to establish an all-party Informal Member Group (IMG) of Members with knowledge of and/or interest in Credit Unions to oversee the feasibility study be welcomed, and the Cabinet Member be urged to:-
- (i) include also on the IMG, Members representing areas of high deprivation; and
- (ii) establish the IMG as quickly as possible.

The IMG for Credit Unions was duly established and held its first meeting on 14 February. Its membership comprises Mr Simmonds (Chairman), Miss Carey, Mr Cowan, Mr Gough, Mr Marsh, Mr Scholes, Mr Smyth and Mr Vye. Since the 14 February meeting a consultant has been commissioned to undertake the feasibility study. The IMG will meet again when the first phase of the consultant's report on the feasibility study is ready. In the meantime, arrangements are being made for visits by IMG Members to credit unions across the country.

- (d) Cabinet be advised that, while the Committee was concerned at the potential risks of proceeding with the Credit Union proposal, it hoped that these risks could be mitigated by the carrying out of the feasibility study and the establishment of an all-party IMG to monitor that study.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AT 1 FEBRUARY MEETING

49 Draft Medium Term Plan 2008-11 (incorporating the Budget and Council Tax Setting for 2008/09)

(32) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Mr Chard, Mr Wood and Mr Smith be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Members' questions; and they and the staff concerned be thanked for the work put into the preparation of the Budget, and congratulated on producing it in such a clear and easy-to-read form.
- (b) the Council be congratulated on achieving Level 4 in the Audit Commission's recently-published Use of Resources Assessment.
- (c) the Council be congratulated on its entrepreneurial initiative and innovative ways of increasing income, which had allowed Council Tax and charges to clients to be kept to a minimum.
- (d) the apparent increases in "strategic management" costs in many Directorates be noted and the Cabinet Member for Finance be requested to provide a detailed breakdown of those costs.

The detailed breakdown was circulated to all Members of the Committee in e-mails dated 13 and 14 February.

- (e) The Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues be asked to consider a common definition of "strategic management" for adoption by all directorates to ensure consistency in future years' budgets.

The IMG on Budgetary Issues considered this matter at its meeting on 10 March. Following discussion, the IMG requested a report to its next meeting (on 10 April) setting out:-

- (i) *alternative scenarios for a common definition of Strategic Management (eg, including and excluding support staff);*
- (ii) *the numbers of staff and associated payroll costs for each Directorate within each scenario.*

S C Ballard
Head of Democratic Services
01622 694002

Background Documents: None
08/o&s/csc/032608/action on CSC reccs.doc

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NOTES of a meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee's Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues held on Monday, 10 March 2008.

PRESENT: Mr D Smyth (Chairman), Mr C J Law and Mrs T Dean.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr N J D Chard, Cabinet Member for Finance.

OFFICERS: Ms L McMullan, Director of Finance; Mr A Wood, Head of Financial Management; Mr R Fitzgerald, Performance Monitoring Officer; Mr P Sass, Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership elect; and Mr S C Ballard, Head of Democratic Services.

1. Notes of Previous Meeting

(Item 1)

Subject to an amendment to note 2(4)(a) so that it reads:-

“(a) because the allocation of funding to the school was more than needed to run it, in which case the Schools' Forum needed to review the allocation; or”

the notes of the 10 January meeting were noted.

2. Revenue and Capital Budgets, Key Activity and Risk Monitoring

(Item 2)

(1) Mr Chard introduced the report. The revenue budget position was continuing to move in the right direction although the Asylum funding issue had still not been resolved because there had not yet been any response from Government to the Council's most recent submission. The capital budget had been adjusted to reflect the re-phasing of capital projects built into the 2008-11 Medium Term Plan.

(2) The IMG discussed the following issues:-

Format of Report

(3) The Group expressed their liking for the current format of the quarterly report, and said that they were not concerned about its length. Ms McMullan said that she wanted to look at integrating the performance data with the financial data in order to increase the usefulness of the report. **(Action: AW)** Mrs Dean asked that the figures for this year's budget be added to the graphs in next year's reports so that budget changes could be clearly seen. **(Action: AW)**

Redundancy Costs

(4) In answer to a question from Mr Smyth, Mr Wood said that, for non-school staff, redundancy costs, where redundancy was on the grounds of efficiency, were normally met centrally from the Workforce Reduction Fund. However, costs relating to early retirement, such as additional pension payments, were met by the Directorate concerned. Mr Wood offered to circulate a briefing note on the subject. **(Action: AW)**

Capital Receipts (paragraph 4.7.2 (page 13))

(5) In answer to a question from Mr Law, Ms McMullan offered to circulate a recent Property Board report explaining the process for using capital receipts to fund projects. **(Action: AW)**

(6) In answer to a question from Mr Smyth, Mr Chard said that sales of assets, including their timing, were carefully managed to ensure that the County Council obtained the best possible return.

CFE Revenue Budget (Annex 1, paragraph 1.1.7 (page 29))

(7) In answer to a question from Mr Smyth, Mr Wood said that, of the underlying pressure in the Directorate's base budget of £4m, approximately £2.5m had been addressed in the 2008-11 MTP, leaving the balance to be dealt with as a 2008/09 in-year issue.

Kent Adult Social Services Revenue Budget (Annex 2, paragraph 1.1.7 (page 49))

(8) In answer to a question from Mr Smyth, Mr Chard confirmed that the Directorate is unlikely, on this occasion, to be required to carry-forward its residual variance of £1.9m.

Chief Executive's Directorate's Revenue Budget (Annex 5, paragraph 1.1.2 (page 85))

(9) The Group asked to see a copy of the report on Corporate Branding. **(Action: AW)**

Kent Property Enterprise Fund (KPEF) (Annex 5, paragraph 2.2 (page 93))

(10) In answer to a question from Mr Smyth, Ms McMullan confirmed that the £3.3m contribution from the KPEF to support the revenue budget in 2007/08 was a one-off provision, although a further one-off sum of £0.7m is included in the 2008/09 budget.

3. BVPI Comparative Data 2006/07 *(Item 3)*

(1) Mr Fitzgerald introduced the report. BVPIs were to be abolished from 31 March 2008, to be replaced by the new 198 national indicator-set for local government and its partners, which would form a central role in Corporate Area Assessment (CAA), the new assessment framework for local government which was to replace CPA from April 2009.

(2) The IMG noted the contents of the report and the detailed analysis of the comparative data for each indicator for 2006/07.

4. Revised Reporting Timetable for Remainder of 2007/08 *(Item 4)*

(1) Mr Wood explained that a monitoring report would not normally be produced for May Cabinet unless a particular issue arose.

(2) The IMG agreed the revised reporting timetable for the remainder of 2007/08 and decided that its meeting arranged for May should only take place if a monitoring report was produced that month.

5. Strategic Management

(Item 5)

(1) In scrutinising the 2008/09 budget, Cabinet Scrutiny Committee had expressed concern that each Directorate seemed to have included different items under its Strategic Management heading. The Committee had therefore asked the IMG to consider a common definition for adoption by all Directorates to ensure consistency in future years' budgets.

(2) Mr Wood suggested that a simple definition of Strategic Management would be:-

“Senior managers on the Directorate Management Team and their direct support staff.”

(3) The IMG discussed whether or not support staff should be included, and whether, given the variation in the size of Directorates, the resulting Strategic Management figure would be meaningful across all Directorates.

(4) The IMG requested a report to its next meeting setting out:-

(a) alternative scenarios for a common definition of Strategic Management (eg, including and excluding support staff);

(b) the numbers of staff and associated payroll costs for each Directorate within each scenario. **(Action: AW)**

6. Arms-length Companies Established by Commercial Services

(Item 6)

(1) The IMG discussed this issue at Mrs Dean's request. She said that she had previously raised the matter at the Governance and Audit Committee on 5 March and, as a result, the Committee had requested a report to its next meeting. However, the Committee was not due to meet again until 30 June, and Mrs Dean was concerned that this would be too late, given the extent of the current interest in the matter by local newspapers and businesses.

(2) Mrs Dean emphasised that she had seen no evidence that KCC or its arms-length companies were acting wrongly but she felt that KCC needed to respond fully and speedily to the concerns being expressed by the local press and businesses. However, she accepted that this should not involve the release of any commercially-sensitive information.

(3) Mr Chard said that KCC had set up arms-length companies for two purposes:-

(a) as market regulators (ie, to compete, entirely fairly, in the market in order to reduce the costs incurred by KCC in contracting for the provision of certain services);

(b) to provide certain services.

The arms-length companies were not intended to generate income per se.

(4) Mr Chard said that the arms-length companies had proved successful in reducing costs to KCC and thus to the Council Taxpayer but, not surprisingly, this had upset competitors in the same markets whose profits had been reduced as a result.

(5) Ms McMullan said that most of the information required for a report on this subject, including a report from PwC as the Council's external auditor, was already available, and so the report requested by the Governance and Audit Committee could be produced quite quickly.

(6) The IMG requested that the report should come to its next meeting on 10 April; that the Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee should be informed of this; and the Commercial Services Director should be invited to attend the meeting. **(Action: LM)**

7. Stuart Ballard

Members thanked Mr Ballard, who was retiring from KCC on 31 March, for his advice and support to the IMG over the past 5 years, and offered their best wishes for his retirement.

08/so/BudlssIMG/031008/Notes

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 MARCH 2008

Report Title:	Kent Health Watch
Document Attached:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Report to Cabinet, 17 March (Item 8) <i>Cabinet agreed the implementation of Kent Health Watch as proposed in the report.</i> (b) Two letters referred to in discussion at Cabinet (the second letter is from a private individual and has been anonymised). <i>(Dr Eddy asked for these to be circulated).</i> (c) Previous Recommendations by Committee on the subject.
Purpose of Consideration:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) to examine what extra value Kent Health Watch will offer the public over and above the proposed new statutory Local Involvement Network (LINK); (b) to examine in more detail the risk that the existence of Kent Health Watch may cause confusion to the public in an area where the existing processes are already complicated; (c) to obtain details of the proposed cashflow for implementing Kent Health Watch.
Possible Decisions:	<p>The Constitution (<i>Appendix 4 Part 8</i>) requires the Committee to take one of the following decisions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) make no comments; or (b) express comments but not require reconsideration of the decision; or (c) require implementation of the decision to be postponed pending reconsideration of the matter by the Cabinet in the light of the Committee's comments; or (d) require implementation of the decision to be postponed pending reconsideration of the matter by full Council.
Previous Consideration:	20 July 2005 (Minute 13) and 24 October 2007 (Minute 29) (<i>recommendations attached</i>).
Background Documents:	None.

By: Graham Gibbens – Cabinet Member for Public Health
To: Cabinet 17th March 2008
Subject: Kent Health Watch
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report updates Cabinet Briefing on progress towards implementation of Kent Health Watch following discussions between the Chief Executives of KCC and the two Kent
Primary Care Trusts.

For Decision

1. Introduction

Kent Health Watch (KHW) was proposed by KCC in response to public concerns about the NHS in Kent. KHW builds upon KCC policy from 2005 and is designed to provide 'signposting' and information about the existing and planned mechanisms whereby the public can make representations and complaints or compliments about the NHS and, by the end of 2008, adult and children's social care. (The inclusion of social care services will be considered within the context of the introduction of both LINKs in 2008 and the new proposals for joint health and adult social care services complaints procedures from April 2009).

There are various ways in which the public can make their views about the NHS and social care known. As with all public services it is sometimes difficult for people to understand the most effective method for their purposes. KHW will provide information and assistance in ensuring the public and patients are aware of what avenues are available and which might be the most appropriate. KHW will monitor the number and type of complaints that it receives and report this to the relevant NHS bodies and the KCC Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In this way it will help identify particular issues that arise and highlight repeated problems, although it is recognised that KHW information will need to be supplemented by other information.

1.1 Principles

KHW is based upon 4 guiding principles:

- That KHW will act in a manner to promote public confidence in the NHS in Kent and in social care commissioning and provision
- That KHW provides information to assist health and social care services in responding to the issues raised by the public
- That KHW complements existing and planned methods for the public to make representations about the NHS in Kent and KCC social services
- That KHW will function in a way that promotes better partnership working and demonstrates KCC's community leadership, and commitment to improve health and social care services in Kent

1.2 Scope and Purpose

The current agreed position is that the scope and purpose of KHW will be to:

- Cover all NHS and, from 2009, social care services delivered within the administrative area of Kent County Council, to both the residents of Kent and anyone who comes into the County to receive NHS and social care services. This includes services commissioned within Kent although delivered outside the County area, as long as the person receiving the service is a Kent resident
- Handle telephone calls and emails from the public
- Inform customers on how to progress complaints and representations through the various systems that currently exist for the NHS and social care within Kent including the further avenues and appeals processes available to complainants dissatisfied with initial responses to complaints.
- Log the details of the question, compliment or complaint. Each case will be logged onto the Contact Centre's CRM (Customer Relationship Management) database with a unique reference number enabling individual clients and contacts to be followed up if necessary
- Provide quarterly statistical and other data to the NHS, social services and KCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and make such data available to the public. Where particular issues become apparent these will be reported on an exceptional basis as and when appropriate, acknowledging that KHW information may need to be supplemented by other data.

Enquiries, compliments or complaints concerning the NHS and by 2009 social care that are received by KHW will be directed to the relevant existing customer services and/or complaints procedure.

The service will be available 24/7 through the Contact Centre and will be implemented by the first half of 2008 in health and the end of 2008 for social care, subject to approval at Cabinet and sign off by PCT Boards.

1.3 Governance of the Service

KHW currently has a Steering Group to oversee implementation. The membership is under review but consists of Graham Gibbens, Mike Hill and Keith Ferrin with Clive Bainbridge and Mark Lemon. 2 PCT Board members will also join the Steering Group. The inclusion of representatives from other directorates of KCC such as KASS and CFE, and other organisations within the NHS will be a priority for consideration. Terms of Reference will be agreed between the nominated members. Decisions will need to be agreed by all parties to be implemented.

KHW will be delivered by the Contact Centre as part of the Communities Directorate within the division managed by Clive Bainbridge, Director of Community Safety & Regulatory Services at KCC. Derek Smith, the Head of the Contact Centre will have operational responsibility.

During 2008 the Local Involvement Network (LINK) will be established on a national basis, replacing the current Patient and Public Involvement Forums across the country. LINK will have a statutory requirement to

establish a system to monitor complaints about NHS and social care services. KHW will be established independently from LINKs but there are obvious connections between the two and it is envisaged that the information the KHW gathers will be of assistance to the LINK as it carries out its own responsibilities. Any more formal relationship between KHW and LINKs will be dependent upon agreement between all parties including the host organisation for LINKs which is independent of both KCC and the NHS.

Operation of KHW may also be affected by the new proposals for streamlining the complaints procedures of the NHS and social care services by 2009, especially if Kent becomes an early adopter to trial this system this year. It will not be helpful for KHW staff to require retraining in new procedures very shortly after becoming operational and, if necessary, the launch of KHW may be slightly delayed to avoid this.

The inclusion of social care – children and adults, local authority, people who fund their own care, and other agency placements – will be considered as described above and after KHW and the LINK are established and operating effectively.

1.4 Budget

£300,000 has been allocated as the budget for KHW (subject to the usual budget approval processes). The budget will fund the staffing required to implement KHW. This amount may be varied according to demand experienced when KHW becomes operational. Potential changes to costs for PCTs will also be kept under review.

1.5 Risks

There are some risks associated with KHW:

- That KHW complicates and confuses existing processes rather than complements them. If KHW is not agreed and set up in such a way as the PCTs and other NHS organisations can engage, the information available and given to callers may not be accurate if changes to procedures occur, including the planned integration of NHS and social care complaints processes by 2009. This will also apply to ICAS, the Healthcare Commission and the Health Ombudsman who all have key roles in the NHS complaints procedure

In order to prevent this protocols will be established with colleagues in the NHS to ensure that the right interfaces with their procedures are in place from the start. KHW will be set up in collaboration with colleagues in the PCTs to ensure compatibility with existing arrangements. The issue of when a complaint is deemed to have been made, and therefore when the statutory timescales for responses are activated, will need particular clarification.

- That KHW becomes implicated in financial compensation issues between patients and the NHS arising from complaints about treatment

It will be very clear that KHW responsibilities extend to signposting people to and giving information about the right avenue for their complaints. There is no intervention or advocacy involved on behalf of the individual customer. Public expectations of KHW will be managed through the publicity and marketing for the services, which will be agreed by the Steering Group.

- That the demand for KHW will fluctuate and unnecessary costs ensue. This may include unforeseen increases in demand in response to particular health issues that arise, including during 'out of hours'

KHW will be established using very flexible staff resources that can be disengaged or reassigned easily to meet short-term changes in demand. This will ensure that any cost implications are minimised. The effects of fluctuations for PCTs will also be need to be monitored.

The consequence of these risks and concerns are such that KHW will be considered a pilot and be jointly evaluated by KCC and PCTs after one year of operation.

1.6 Publicity and Marketing

An extensive publicity and marketing programme that will incorporate a media launch, publicity through various media, advertising and marketing of Kent HealthWatch, hopefully with the co-operation of NHS colleagues, is currently being prepared and costed by Corporate Communications.

An indicative marketing and PR strategy for KHW is attached. The final strategy will contain elements of those listed but will be subject to further discussion and available resources.

1.7 Policy Process

KHW will be presented at KCC Chief Officer Group, and to Cabinet Members at Cabinet Briefing and Cabinet within KCC. It will also be taken to the Corporate and Communities Policy Overview Committees and the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Kent PCT Boards will consider proposals in March.

1.8 Timescales

KHW will be operational by 30 June 2008

Proposals discussed at Chief Officer Group - 9 January 2008

Meeting between KCC and PCT Chief Executives - 16 January 2008

Principles, scope and purpose and timescales will be formally discussed and agreed with the Kent PCTs - by end March 2008

Proposals discussed and agreed by Cabinet – March 2008

Proposal to Communities Directorate, KASS and/or Corporate Policy Overview Committees subject to Committee schedules

Consideration by PCT Boards and other internal committees such as Clinical and Corporate Governance Committees and Complaints Review Groups subject to PCT schedules.

1.9 Implementation

Scoping work to estimate likely demand and volume of calls – immediate and on-going based on a flexible response to probably fluctuations in the number of calls received and the potential impact on call centre and PCT resources

Design and adoption of interface protocols between KHW and PCTs – immediate and ongoing

Training of staff in call centre – April/May 2008

Publicity and marketing – May 2008

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

(i) AGREE the implementation of Kent Health Watch as proposed in this report.

Background Papers

Kent Health Watch – Report to Cabinet 11 July 2005

Contact

Mark Lemon
Policy Manager
Kent Department of Public Health
Ext 4853

By: Graham Gibbens – Cabinet Member for Public Health
To: Cabinet 17th March 2008
Subject: Kent Health Watch
Classification: Unrestricted

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Enquiries, compliments or complaints concerning the NHS and by 2009 social care that are received by KHW will be directed to the relevant existing customer services and/or complaints procedure.

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Operation of KHW may also be affected by the new proposals for streamlining the complaints procedures of the NHS and social care services by 2009, especially if Kent becomes an early adopter to trial this system this year. It will not be helpful for KHW staff to require retraining in new procedures very shortly after becoming operational and, if necessary, the launch of KHW may be slightly delayed to avoid this.

The inclusion of social care – children and adults, local authority, people who fund their own care, and other agency placements – will be considered as described above and after KHW and the LINK are established and operating effectively.

1.4 Budget

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In order to prevent this protocols will be established with colleagues in the NHS to ensure that the right interfaces with their procedures are in place from the start. KHW will be set up in collaboration with colleagues in the PCTs to ensure compatibility with existing arrangements. The issue of when a complaint is deemed to have been made, and therefore when the statutory timescales for responses are activated, will need particular clarification.

- That KHW becomes implicated in financial compensation issues between patients and the NHS arising from complaints about treatment

It will be very clear that KHW responsibilities extend to signposting people to and giving information about the right avenue for their complaints. There is no intervention or advocacy involved on behalf of the individual customer. Public expectations of KHW will be managed through the publicity and marketing for the services, which will be agreed by the Steering Group.

- That the demand for KHW will fluctuate and unnecessary costs ensue. This may include unforeseen increases in demand in response to particular health issues that arise, including during 'out of hours'

KHW will be established using very flexible staff resources that can be disengaged or reassigned easily to meet short-term changes in demand. This will ensure that any cost implications are minimised. The effects of fluctuations for PCTs will also be need to be monitored.

The consequence of these risks and concerns are such that KHW will be considered a pilot and be jointly evaluated by KCC and PCTs after one year of operation.

1.6 Publicity and Marketing

An extensive publicity and marketing programme that will incorporate a media launch, publicity through various media, advertising and marketing of Kent HealthWatch, hopefully with the co-operation of NHS colleagues, is currently being prepared and costed by Corporate Communications.

An indicative marketing and PR strategy for KHW is attached. The final strategy will contain elements of those listed but will be subject to further discussion and available resources.

1.7 Policy Process

KHW will be presented at KCC Chief Officer Group, and to Cabinet Members at Cabinet Briefing and Cabinet within KCC. It will also be taken to the Corporate and Communities Policy Overview Committees and the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Kent PCT Boards will consider proposals in March.

1.8 Timescales

KHW will be operational by 30 June 2008

Proposals discussed at Chief Officer Group - 9 January 2008

Meeting between KCC and PCT Chief Executives - 16 January 2008

Principles, scope and purpose and timescales will be formally discussed and agreed with the Kent PCTs - by end March 2008

Proposals discussed and agreed by Cabinet – March 2008

Proposal to Communities Directorate, KASS and/or Corporate Policy
Overview Committees subject to Committee schedules

Consideration by PCT Boards and other internal committees such as Clinical
and Corporate Governance Committees and Complaints Review Groups
subject to PCT schedules.

1.9 Implementation

Scoping work to estimate likely demand and volume of calls – immediate and
on-going based on a flexible response to probably fluctuations in the number
of calls received and the potential impact on call centre and PCT resources

Design and adoption of interface protocols between KHW and PCTs –
immediate and ongoing

Training of staff in call centre – April/May 2008

Publicity and marketing – May 2008

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

(i) AGREE the implementation of Kent Health Watch as proposed in this
report.

Background Papers

Kent Health Watch – Report to Cabinet 11 July 2005

Contact

Mark Lemon
Policy Manager
Kent Department of Public Health
Ext 4853

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Kent Health Watch Draft Marketing and PR Strategy – February 2008

Objective

- To raise awareness of the Kent Health Watch call centre number and website and what it can do for the people of Kent.

Target market

- Public of Kent
- Hospital patients, people visiting GP's/hospitals etc
- Ex-patients, relatives of ex-patients
- NHS/PCT staff

Messages (these need to be carefully clarified)

- Any unresolved complaints or issues about the NHS or Social Care - contact The Kent Health Watch.
- They will help you find your way through the red tape and point you in the right direction.

Unique Selling Point – make one phone call to find the route to take. Only advice line offering this service?

PR strategy

- Given the high news value of this issue, good PR (ie free) should be easily achievable.
- We need to make links with the media partners in Kent and aim for cross media co-operation and backing for this service, ideally signing all media partners up to a campaign. If this is not achievable, we suggest approaching the KM group (it has the largest circulation in Kent) in the first instance to run a campaign similar to Kent on Sunday's Clean Hands Campaign which can include a regular plug for Kent Health Watch.
- We propose getting a high profile supporter such as Cheryl Baker to support Kent Health Watch and the campaign and help to launch it.
- Case studies could be found of people who needed help but didn't know where to go, and once Kent Health Watch was up and running we could find case studies of people who were helped by the service.
- Promotion through hospital radio if we can get permission – unknown whether there is a cost for this.
- We would target local, national media and trade press for a sustained publicity campaign through the excellent contacts we have.
- The launch would see the media invited to the call centre where Cheryl Baker (if we get her on board) and Paul Carter can be interviewed and images/filming of them taking calls.
- We would run an article in Around Kent and could carry a free advert in subsequent issues.
- We would approach Invicta Radio (it reaches 35 % of the population of Kent) to see if we could do a deal whereby we carry their logo on adverts we place and they give us free publicity throughout the day over a set period.

Other areas:

- Articles in-house medical newsletters/hospital magazines aimed at staff
- Articles in First to target KCC staff and on team briefing
- Networking with partners and agencies to raise awareness of Kent Health Watch
- Link website with all relevant partners/agencies, reciprocal links on NHS/PCT websites and other partner websites.
- Consider placing on other relevant websites aimed at hospital/ GP patients?
- Free publicity at events such as County Show where we can put up posters and hand out leaflets (cost of leaflets and posters in addition to costings below though).
- Kent TV coverage (determined by Ten Alps)

Marketing strategy (paid for publicity)

- Posters/leaflets in GP surgeries/hospitals/children's centres/ council offices (district and county)/ libraries – approx 350 sites across Kent – 2,000 posters costs around £500/200,000 leaflets (500 approx in each location) range from £2,500 to £6,000 depending on what we want the leaflet to be like – we suggest A5 double sided which is the cheapest option.
- May be further poster and leaflet costs if we want to publicise at County Show and other events.
- Adverts in medical magazines/newsletters – costs being investigated
- Adverts just after launch on billboards/bus stops - approx £20,000 for two week campaign.
- Radio advertising on Invicta – month long campaign approx £3,500 per week.
- KM campaign - £16,744 per full page ad (covering all paid fors and frees)
- Kent on Sunday ad campaign (quarter page ad) = £648 per week = £4,000

Follow-up publicity/marketing

After the initial launch has been publicised, we would need a sustained publicity campaign which could be achieved through the media if they were to come on board for a campaign, through Around Kent which goes through every door in Kent. There could be additional ongoing advertising costs, perhaps sporadically, and evaluation of numbers of calls and customer satisfaction levels monitored through the call centre and feedback on the web would ascertain when we needed extra publicity and the effectiveness of it.

KCC Communication and Media Centre

Our Ref: AS/sc

Your Ref:

13th March 2008

Graham Gibbens
Member for Canterbury City North East Cabinet
Member for Public Health
Kent County Council
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
ME14 1XQ

Trust Headquarters
Brook House
John Wilson Business Park
Reeves Way
Chestfield
Whitstable
Kent CT5 3QT

Tel: 01227 795021
Fax: 01227 795025
Email: ann.sutton@shepwaypct.nhs.uk

Dear Graham

Kent Health Watch – KCC Cabinet : Monday, 17 March 2008

Thank you for your letter of 7th March 2008 and the invitation from Paul Carter to attend KCC Cabinet next Monday when the final report on Kent Health Watch is being presented for formal adoption by the County Council.

On that day my senior staff and I already have full unchangeable diary commitments so it will not be possible for us to attend.

I thought that it would be helpful to let you have some personal comments from me as Chief Executive on aspects that Cabinet may want to take into account in reaching the decision to adopt and implement their Kent Health Watch system.

I recognise the complexity of complaints systems across public sector organisations and there is clearly value in being able to offer clear signposting. It is critical that any new system does not add further complexity.

PCTs and NHS Trust Boards have specific statutory responsibilities in dealing with complaints therefore the implementation plan and resources for implementation will need to reflect the requirements of all local NHS organisations and ensure that this does not result in disruption to current complaints services and departments.

A number of local PCTs, NHS Trusts and KCC Adult Social Services have been invited to participate in the national Making Experiences Count – Early Adopter Programme to implement new, joint arrangements for handling complaints across health and social care. The launch event for this programme is 2nd April 2008 and further details of the likely impact on Kent Health Watch will then be known and will need to be taken into account. I would like us to agree how to get the best from these two concepts in an integrated way.

Once Cabinet has reached its decision on the paper I look forward to receiving details on how KCC proposes to move forward, which will I can then communicate within the PCT. I would also be interested in hearing how the communication with NHS Trusts will be taken forward.

As you know I am committed to working in partnership to make sure that this initiative adds value for the population of Kent.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Sutton". The script is cursive and fluid.

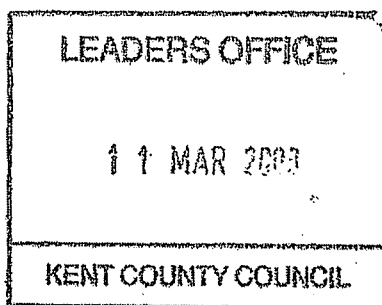
Ann Sutton
Chief Executive

cc Colin Tomson Chairman Eastern and Coastal Kent Primary Care Trust

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ter Acknowledged
13-03-08

POST 117

Cllr Paul Carter Leader
Kent County Council
County hall
Maidstone
ME14 1XQ



8th March 2008

Dear Cllr Carter

I am writing to very much support your proposed scheme to monitor Kent Hospital complaints. I know not everybody supports the idea or cost, however when you have experienced problems first hand you realise how important it is to follow a complaint through, and importantly have some follow on monitor against repeat happenings.

I am enclosing copies of correspondence for information, these copies show that despite all the recent adverse publicity, things are still short of satisfactory. I have been looking after the gentleman in question for many years, albeit he is now resident in a nursing home, and very happy. During this time I have had many dealings with your Social Services (excellent throughout) and of course care agencies where regretfully there were regular and sometimes serious shortfalls in service.

Complaining and achieving satisfactory outcomes can be awesome, daunting and difficult particularly for the less articulate. Similarly ensuring the complaints reach the right ears, and even more importantly ensuring satisfactory action is taken is equally difficult. I think also there are often a bewildering number of channels to use for a complaint. Therefore any collation process and follow through at 'high level' is to be applauded, and as sadly has been seen is very necessary.

I have been following the 'Links' process with great interest but sadly are of the view that it will drown in it's own bureaucracy.

Yours sincerely

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CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO KENT HEALTH WATCH

Meeting held on 20 July 2005 – Minute 13 – Proposals for Kent Health Watch

- (5) RESOLVED that:-
- (a) Mr Lake, Mr Mills and Mr Lemon be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Members' questions;
 - (b) concern be expressed to the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Community Health and the Interim Strategic Director of Social Services about the lack of empirical information and analysis contained in the report to Cabinet;
 - (c) the assurance from the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Community Health that there were no plans for KCC to become involved with individual complaints against the NHS be welcomed;
 - (d) Cabinet be recommended that, initially, guidance to those wishing to make a complaint about the NHS should be limited to a briefing note prepared for Contact Centre agents and an article published in the next edition of "Around Kent" (and the possibility of the NHS funding this as a paid-for advert should be explored). Publication of a KCC leaflet about the NHS complaints procedure should only be considered at a later date in the light of:-
 - feedback from the public on the "Around Kent" article/advert;
 - the outcome of the review to be undertaken by the NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Meeting held on 24 October 2007 – Minute 29 – Clostridium Difficile Outbreaks at Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Hospitals Trust – Report by the Healthcare Commission

- (43) The Committee RESOLVED by a majority (12 votes to 3) that:-
- (c) Cabinet be recommended to make every effort to establish the Local Involvement Network (LINK) for Kent by 1 April 2008, or before, rather than establishing any other non-statutory fora such as a "Healthwatch".

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CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 MARCH 2008

Report Title:	A21 and East Kent Access Phase 2 Cost Increases
Document Attached:	Report to Cabinet, 17 March (Item 10) <i>Cabinet accepted the recommendation in the report.</i>
Purpose of Consideration:	(a) to question representatives of the Highways Agency about the reasons for the significant increases in the estimated cost of the two A21 schemes; (b) to consider how best to pursue speedy implementation of these schemes with all the agencies involved, in order to prevent further delay which will inevitably result in further increased costs and a delay in tackling a major safety issue.
Possible Decisions:	As this report was simply for noting by Cabinet, the Committee may either:- (a) make no comments; or (b) make suggestions to the Cabinet about how this matter should be progressed.
Previous Consideration:	None.
Background Documents:	None.

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By: Mr K Ferrin, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste
Adam Wilkinson, Managing Director, Environment & Regeneration

To: Cabinet: 17 March 2008

Subject: A21 and EKA Phase 2 Cost Increases

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To report on the implications of the recent announcement of cost increases of the two trunk road schemes on the A21 – Pembury Bypass to Tonbridge Bypass and Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst and of KCC scheme East Kent Access Phase 2.

For Information

1. Introduction

1.1 Following criticism that the actual costs of many completed trunk road schemes were significantly higher than the estimated costs of the schemes when entering the Targeted Programme of Improvements, the Department for Transport commissioned the Nicholls Report to recommend, inter alia, changes in procedures. This has the potential of delaying Highway Agency schemes in Kent as well as the County Council's own major schemes.

2. Regional Transport Board

2.1 The Nicholls Report has led to the re-estimation of some Highways Agency schemes which have reached a key stage in their delivery and, as a result, the Regional Transport Board (RTB) has considered three schemes in the South East at its meeting last Wednesday, 12 March, two of which are in Kent:

- A21 Tonbridge Bypass – Pembury Bypass Dualling: a rise from £64m to £112m
- A21 Kippings Cross – Lamberhurst Improvement: a rise from £40m to £103m

2.2 The RTB has a Regional Transport Programme up to 2018, containing Highways Agency schemes on the non-strategic network and, in Kent, features the two A21 schemes and the A2 Bean Interchange. The two A21 schemes are currently shown (at the old costs) to be programmed to start in 2010/11 and 2011/12 respectively. Schemes on the strategic trunk road network (in Kent, the M25, M20 and M26) are not included in the RTB programme, but it also contains local authority major schemes (ie in Kent, East Kent Access Phase 2, the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road and Ashford Smartlink).

2.3 At the meeting on 12 March, the RTB resolved that:

- the A21 Tonbridge Bypass – Pembury Bypass Dualling scheme remains a regional priority and that the Highways Agency should proceed with its development (ie the

next stage is the appointment of Early Contractor Involvement) and;

- The A21 Kippings Cross – Lamberhurst Improvement scheme continues to be a regional priority and that the Highways Agency should proceed with its development, but notes the DfT has requested that the value for money of the scheme is reassessed due to the scale of the increase.

2.4 The RTB has written to the Secretary of State for Transport emphasising its concern over the scale of the cost increases, stating that it is looking at the DfT to make an appropriate contribution to the cost increases. Without this contribution, or an increase in the Regional Funding Allocation the RTB gets from Government, the Regional Programme will be delayed and the delivery of the sustainable economic growth set out in the South East Plan and Regional Economic Strategy will be jeopardised.

3. Value of the A21 Schemes

A21 Pembury - Tonbridge

- 3.1 This scheme was supposed to have been opened to traffic last year, but changes in the process of prioritisation (ie the RTB giving recommendations to Government) has further delayed the scheme so that a start is not now envisaged until 2010/11
- 3.2 The A21 between the Tonbridge and Pembury Bypasses is an appalling stretch of single carriageway road with very poor vertical and horizontal alignment. It links two sections of dual carriageway and carries 46,500 vehicles/day - way over its design capacity. Consequently there are serious delays and a bad accident record. The Benefit to Cost Ratio for this scheme is very high, even at the higher cost - far above the accepted threshold for good value for money schemes.
- 3.3 There is no alternative way of improving traffic conditions – the road has to be dualled to take the volume of traffic and is on-line to reduce impacts on the surrounding area.
- 3.4 The accessibility to and from the north to the new hospital at Pembury, now under construction, depends on the improvement of this road. Concentration of key services at this hospital from Maidstone, including the accident centre, increases the need to have the good accessibility afforded by this scheme.
- 3.5 Serious delays on this section of the A21 undermine the effects to regenerate Hastings and surrounding area, not only because of the increase in journey times but also because of the inherent unreliability of travelling along its length.

A21 Kippings Cross - Lamberhurst

- 3.6 The Kippings Cross - Lamberhurst scheme would replace a very poor section of single carriageway road which suffers a very poor accident record. It would also provide a section of dual carriageway linking to the existing dual carriageways either side - Pembury and Lamberhurst Bypasses. The scheme would be off-line, as widening on line is not possible due to very poor horizontal alignment of the existing road. Traffic flows are some 24,000 vehicles/day. The Benefit to Cost Ratio is still considered as 'high' and the scheme also improves accessibility to Hastings and Pembury Hospital

3.7 Furthermore, developing these two schemes together represents good value for money by reducing overhead costs and providing a cut/fill balance - excess material from Kippings Cross - Lamberhurst would be used on Pembury - Tonbridge which has a deficit. Without the linkage, Pembury - Tonbridge would have to import fill material from some distance away (it being in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), incurring additional expense.

4. East Kent Access (EKA) Phase 2

4.1 The cost estimate of EKA Phase 2 has risen from £64m to £73m, mainly due to construction inflation of around 6%. Of this £9m difference, KCC is already funding £2.25m to progress the scheme, leaving a £6.75m real shortfall. The draft new DfT Major Scheme Guidance says that they expect KCC, as the scheme promoter, to bear 25% of the shortfall – ie under £2m.

4.2 The overall cost includes £3m of LCA Part 1 claims and it is hoped that this is where the contribution can be made - in future years and able to be spread. Internal discussion with Corporate Finance still to be had.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The implications of these cost increases could be slippage in the delivery of Kent's schemes in the Regional Programme and a long delay, or possible cancelling, of the A21 Kippings Cross – Lamberhurst scheme. These outcomes are unacceptable to KCC and the communities of Kent and Sussex.

Recommendation

Cabinet is requested to note this report and asks that the Managing Director for Environment & Regeneration investigates the issue further, with a view to lobbying vigorously for the retention of existing timescales.

Contact Officer

Mick Sutch (01622) 221612, mick.sutch@kent.gov.uk

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CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 MARCH 2008

Report Title:	Modernisation of Queen Elizabeth's Resource Centre, Dartford
Documents Attached:	Briefing note and chronology prepared by Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services.
Purpose of Consideration:	(a) to establish what consultation, if any, has taken place with service-users; (b) if consultation has taken place, to establish what information service-users were given and, in particular, whether they were advised of the options for alternative provision.
Possible Decisions:	The Constitution (<i>Appendix 4 Part 8</i>) requires the Committee to take one of the following decisions:- (a) make no comments; or (b) make comments to the Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services; or (c) report to the Council; or (d) refer any issues arising from its debate for consideration by the Adult Social Services Policy Overview Committee or the Cabinet.
Previous Consideration:	None.
Background Documents:	None.

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**Modernisation of the Queen Elizabeth's Resource
Day Centre, Brent Way, Dartford**

The changes to QEF are part of a much wider change programme within KASS designed to ensure that we provide services that improve peoples independence and ability to integrate into the wider community and do this very much on an individual personal basis. This vision is clearly stated in "Active Lives", which was drawn up in full consultation with service users and complements national policies including "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say" and "Putting People First".

The Queen Elizabeth Resource Centre is a traditional day centre for physically disabled people. The service operates from a building which is owned by Kent County Council and is leased to Queen Elizabeth Foundation. KASS pays QEF a total grant per annum is £473,137.33. The notional rent for the building is £58k per annum although this is not collected.

The centre is open five days a week. There are currently 161 service users on the books of the centre the vast majority of whom live in Northwest Kent. Many of the Service Users have been attending for several years. The service has not met its objectives in respect of moving people on and supporting them into independent activities, or getting them back into work. The average unit cost of a day's service is between £65-£70. There are 10 people who attend from Medway and whilst QEF invoices Medway separately for these people the full cost is not recovered.

The capacity of the service is for 80 people a day, although approximately 30 people a day attend the centre. People normally attend for 2 days per week. 76% of service users are over the age of 46. Very few service users are from the BME communities. The cohort of service users represents a minority of the total population of disabled people in Northwest Kent.

Activities at the centre include Art and Craft, Gardening, Woodwork, Computers, Jewellery and a gym. People also meet at the centre to go bowling, bird-watching, to lunch clubs and bingo. The activities are not structured courses designed to help people get back to work or access services in the community they are however greatly enjoyed by the users.

Consultation with Service Users indicated that the single most important aspect of the service for many of them was the social networking element to the centre; watching television, reading the paper and playing pool, and having the opportunity of meet with friends and acquaintances. Carers have also stressed how important the respite element of the service is.

The plans for new services have evolved as a direct result of the service user consultation, and the 'social networking opportunities' will provide opportunities for recreation and 'club like' activities, as well as advice and support and providing a base for outings such as bowling and shopping trips. Accessible gym and other sporting facilities are being developed in partnership with colleagues in District Councils, and work has been taking place with colleagues in Adult Education to enhance the accessibility of mainstream Adult Education opportunities for disabled people. In this way there will be more opportunities for disabled people to take advantage of a range of integrated activities, whilst we

continue to offer opportunities for those people who currently wish to retain the peer support they currently value. Each existing service user is being offered an individual assessment when they will be able to talk through with a qualified professional their needs and aspirations, and also to assess their eligibility for services, including Direct Payments. There will be alternative services available for all Kent current users.

One of the key benefits of this change is to make better use of resources allowing the £475k to stretch to a much wider number of disabled people, and contribute towards the Council's objectives in respect of supporting independence and choice.

The site in Brent Way is being redeveloped and K.C.C is looking at using Section 106 opportunities within the Thames Gateway to develop integrated services, as well as working with colleagues in the District Councils to ensure that mainstream leisure and recreational facilities are accessible to all.

QEF Service Modernisation Chronology 2002-date

- 25th November 2002 – letter from Andrew Ireland, Area Director for West Kent Social Services to Cynthia Robinson the Chief Executive of the Queen Elizabeth Foundation. The letter clearly sets out the Council's intended direction for services for people with physical disabilities to maximise their independence and move away from global provision of leisure and recreational activities. There is mention of person centred planning and modernisation. These proposed changes are in line with the Council's policy of Active Lives
- October 2003 - consultation with Service users (including one to one interviews) was carried out.
- October 2005 - there was an exchange of correspondence with the Foundation in respect of a forthcoming workshop about the future of the site at Brent Way and the need to re-provide and redesign services. This correspondence emphasised that this was an opportunity to reshape and modernise existing services.
- June 2006 - Steve Leidecker, Area Director, briefed Kevin Lynes. This was copied to Oliver Mills. The briefing discussed the site at Brent Way and the opportunities for redevelopment. It highlights the media interest attracted from previous attempts to modernise the service.
- September 2006 - a letter from Steve Leidecker to Cynthia Robinson setting out the context for the work to be completed between 2006 and 2008, based on the briefing to Cllr. Lynes in June 2006 which also discussed a meeting which is required to agree an over-all strategy for the re-provision of the service.
- October 2006 - a paper was presented to the West Kent Area Management on 6th November 2006 which was the basis of the proposals and discussions for modernisation with QEF. The decision for re-commissioning was made by AMT.
- March 2007 - a briefing meeting was held with local members: Cllr Muckle and Cllr Christine Angel and attended by Steve Leidecker, Jan Bumstead and Teresa. They were informed of the modernisation agenda and the opportunities in Kent Thameside.
- Written briefings were provided for Members in August, November 2007, January 2008 and February 2008. A presentation was made in October 2007 to all local members (Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley together with the portfolio holder).
- 5th November 2007 - Margaret Howard attended a Local Board meeting with service users and representatives of the Newtown Residents Association.

- August 2007 and November 2007 - meetings were held at the centre with service users and carers.
- From February 2007 to date, regular meetings held of the Service Modernisation Project Board and Service Modernisation Groups. These included representation from service users and staff from the centre, together with colleagues from West Kent Primary Care Trust and a disabled person who does not attend the centre. The post meeting communications are displayed in the entrance hall of the centre and individual copies made available to service users and carers by the service provider.
- 15th January 2008 - Dartford Borough Council Scrutiny Committee discussed the proposals – a report was submitted
- 29th January 2008 - the Adult Social Services Policy and Overview Committee discussed the proposals
- 17th January 2008 - Cllr. Jeremy Kite, Leader of Dartford Borough Council visited the centre and subsequently on 1 February 2008, met with Cllr. Lynes and Margaret Howard.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda Item F2

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