



Summons to and
Agenda for a
Meeting on
**Thursday, 22nd
October, 2015**
at **10.00 am**



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
SESSIONS HOUSE
MAIDSTONE

Wednesday, 14 October 2015

To: All Members of the County Council

Please attend the meeting of the County Council in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 22 October 2015 at **10.00 am** to deal with the following business. **The meeting is scheduled to end by 4.30 pm.**

Webcasting Notice

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for the live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site or by any member of the public or press present.

By entering into this room you are consenting to being filmed. If you do not wish to have your image captured please let the Clerk know immediately.

Voting at County Council Meetings

Before a vote is taken the Chairman will announce that a vote is to be taken and the division bell shall be rung for 60 seconds unless the Chairman is satisfied that all Members are present in the Chamber.

20 seconds are allowed for electronic voting to take place and the Chairman will announce that the vote has closed and the result.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests in items on the agenda
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2015 and, if in order, **(Pages 5 - 16)** to be approved as a correct record
4. Chairman's Announcements
5. Questions

6. Report by Leader of the Council (Oral)
7. Kent's response to the Syrian refugee crisis
8. Motion for Time Limited Debate
Universal Infant Free School Meals

(Pages 17 - 24)

Mr M Vye will propose and Mr R Bird will second,

“That this Council supports the Universal Infant Free School Meals initiative brought in by the last Coalition Government, and welcomes the news that, despite earlier reports, funding for such a vital scheme will not after all be cut in the Spending Review to be announced on the 25th of November.

We recognise the importance of the initiative, which education professionals affirm is helping so many young Kent children to be more focused in their learning, is giving them a nutritious and healthy meal each day, and has avoided the stigma of means testing.

We propose that, at this time when there continues to be uncertainty about where the significant cuts to Government funding will fall, the Chairman should write to the Prime Minister stating how valuable this scheme has been for the young children and families of Kent.”



Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent County Council held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 17 September 2015.

PRESENT:

Mr M J Harrison (Chairman)
Mr T Gates (Vice-Chairman)

Mrs A D Allen, MBE, Mr M J Angell, Mr M Baldock, Mr M A C Balfour, Mr R H Bird, Mr H Birkby, Mr N J Bond, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr D L Brazier, Mrs P Brivio, Mr R E Brookbank, Mr C W Caller, Miss S J Carey, Mr P B Carter, CBE, Mr N J D Chard, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr B E Clark, Mrs P T Cole, Mr G Cooke, Mr G Cowan, Mrs M E Crabtree, Ms C J Cribbon, Mr A D Crowther, Mrs V J Dagger, Mr D S Daley, Mr M C Dance, Mr J A Davies, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Dr M R Eddy, Mr J Elenor, Mrs M Elenor, Mr G K Gibbens, Mr R W Gough, Mr P M Harman, Ms A Harrison, Mr M Heale, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr C P D Hoare, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr S Holden, Mr P J Homewood, Mr E E C Hotson, Mrs S Howes, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr G Lymer, Mr B E MacDowall, Mr T A Maddison, Mr R A Marsh, Mr F McKenna, Mr B Neaves, Mr M J Northey, Mr P J Oakford, Mr R J Parry, Mr C R Pearman, Mrs E D Rowbotham, Mr J E Scholes, Mr W Scobie, Mr T L Shonk, Mr C Simkins, Mr J D Simmonds, MBE, Mr C P Smith, Mr D Smyth, Mrs P A V Stockell, Mr B J Sweetland, Mr A Terry, Mr N S Thandi, Mr R Truelove, Mr M J Vye, Mrs C J Waters, Mr J N Wedgbury, Mrs J Whittle, Mr M E Whybrow, Mr M A Wickham and Mrs Z Wiltshire

IN ATTENDANCE: David Cockburn (Corporate Director Strategic & Corporate Services), Geoff Wild (Director of Governance and Law) and Peter Sass (Head of Democratic Services)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

25. Apologies for Absence

The Director of Governance and Law reported apologies from Mr Burgess, Mr Kite, Mr Manion, Mr Ozog and Mr Ridings.

26. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests in items on the agenda

- (a) Mr Cowan declared an interest in that both he and his wife were foster carers.
- (b) Mr Gibbens declared an Other Significant Interest in agenda item 7 (Treasury Management Annual Review 2014/15 – Page 25) as he was in receipt of a pension from the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd and left the meeting during consideration of item 31.

27. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2015 and, if in order, to be approved as a correct record

- (1) In response to questions on the accuracy of the recording of the voting in relation to the Motion on Time Limited debate (minute no 24) the printed record of the votes cast was checked by the Director of Governance and Law who confirmed that the voting had been accurately reflected in the minutes.
- (2) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2015 be approved as a correct record.

28. Chairman's Announcements

(a) HMS Kent – Visit

- (1) The Chairman introduced Commander Daniel Thomas, Captain of HMS Kent, and Lieutenant Commander Angela Forbes, his Logistics Officer.
- (2) Commander Thomas addressed the County Council and stated that they were on a two day visit to reaffirm HMS Kent's relationship with the County. The Ship had returned from a busy deployment and would be going through open sea training prior to being deployed in the new year around the UK and Europe. Commander Thomas emphasised HMS Kent's link to the County and extended an invitation to Members to visit and have a tour of the ship.

(b) Points of Order and Personal Explanation

- (3) The Chairman referred to the tabled paper which set out the provisions in the Constitution relating to points of order and personal explanation and clarified the way in which he intended to deal these at County Council meetings.

(c) The Chairman's Long Service Award for Members

- (4) The Chairman presented a long service award to Mr James Scholes (Elected Member for Tunbridge Wells South).

(b) Allan Willett, former Lord-Lieutenant of Kent

- (5) The Chairman stated that it was with much sadness that he had to inform the County Council that Allan Willett, former Lord-Lieutenant of Kent, had died on Saturday 18 July, following a long illness.
- (6) There would be a Memorial Service which would take place in Canterbury Cathedral on Friday 2 October at 11.30am. Available space at the Cathedral was already limited but if any Member wished to attend they should contact the civic office.
- (7) Mr King, Mr Latchford, Mr Cowan, Mr Vye and the Chairman paid tribute to Mr Willett

(c) Kent Volunteers Advisory Group

(8) The Chairman stated that he had had the pleasure of chairing the Kent Volunteers Advisory Group which was a partnership between Kent County Council, statutory agencies and representatives of the voluntary sector working to promote volunteering across the county. The overall aim of Kent Volunteers Advisory Group was to support the development of volunteering and volunteering opportunities in Kent.

(9) The Chairman explained that volunteers provided hours of service to our communities in Kent and he intended to spend some time this year visiting sites and organisations to see the activities that were being undertaken. He encouraged colleagues to visit and support the work of organisations in their own divisions and Kent Volunteers Advisory Group.

29. Questions

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.17(4), ten questions were put and answers given at the meeting are available [online](#) with the papers for this meeting.

30. Report by Leader of the Council (Oral)

(1) The Leader stated his intention to update the Council on events since the previous meeting including, operation stack, unaccompanied asylum seeking young people and local government devolution.

(2) Mr Carter referred to operation stack and the increase in unaccompanied asylum seeking children into the County. He expressed his thanks to staff in highways and children's services who had done an extraordinary job in supporting all these pressures.

(3) In relation to operation stack, Mr Carter stated that the deliberations of the stakeholder group chaired by Mr Balfour were now being considered by the Department of Transport and Highways England. It was hoped that government investment would be able to deliver a marshalling park able to hold 3,000 to 4,000 lorries and further work on the strategic logistics of managing in excess of 7,000 HGVs at any one time. A solution needed to be achieved which, kept the Queen's Highway in Kent open at all times to remove disruption to travellers and businesses.

(4) Mr Carter then referred to the asylum issue and set out the context of the challenge facing the County Council. Up until approximately 9 months ago the County Council had been responsible for 250 to 350 unaccompanied asylum seeking young people both below and above the age of 18. The County Council now had a duty of care for 1122 young people and this duty would continue in a number of cases for up to 4 years. This was generating an additional revenue cost to the County Council in the region of £6m to £7m. He mentioned the announcement that had been made by Mr Clark, MP, acting on behalf of the Cabinet, that all reasonable costs placed on local authorities by accommodating those asylum seeking young people arriving in Kent would be met by Central Government as part of a voluntary

distribution mechanism. A Cabinet Sub-Committee chaired by Mr Clark, MP and including David Simmonds from the LGA was working closely on a national dispersal system. He had written to the Home Secretary and made it clear that it was impossible to continue to manage the ongoing responsibilities of that number of asylum seekers and that the voluntary distribution mechanism had not worked. Therefore the Cabinet Sub-Committee needed to work on a solution for a national distribution network. This was a matter of urgency for Kent as the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people coming into the County would start to disrupt the placement of Kent's own vulnerable young people due to the impact upon the number of foster care placements, accommodation etc. In this time of local government austerity, Kent's reasonable cost for asylum seeking young people needed to be met.

(5) Mr Carter referred to the 20,000 Syrian refugees that had been promised entry to the UK during the life of this Parliament. These would be vulnerable people from the camps who had been displaced from their homes due to the crisis in that area. The LGA anticipated that local authorities would take the lead in co-ordinating the settlement plans for these individuals when they arrived in the UK.

(6) Mr Carter then moved on to the Annual Spending Review and expressed concern about the sustainable medium term plan for this authority. It was essential to make sure that central government understood the implications of further draconian cuts being placed upon local authorities especially those with social care responsibilities, including the inextricable link between hospital services, hospital discharges and good quality care provision. It was important to have investment and support from a strong domiciliary care market and most importantly for local government to have the funding to support those services. He stated that in his new role as Chairman of the County Council's Network (CCN) he was making the Treasury and Government Ministers aware of the consequences of further draconian local government cuts and what the consequences of those cuts would be over the medium term.

(7) Mr Latchford, the Leader of the Opposition, congratulated Mr Carter on his appointment as Chairman of the CCN. In relation to local government devolution, he referred to the government's aim to devolve powers from Whitehall which was the most radical change to local government in a generation. As at 4 September 2015, 38 devolution proposals had been put forward for UK cities and counties, which illustrated that central government was serious about devolution. He referred to the Leader's stated first priority being devolution, although Kent had not been one of the first 38 Councils who had submitted an application. He asked the Leader when Kent would be submitting an application for consideration.

(8) Mr Latchford then referred to the serious moral issue of the refugee crisis which needed to be addressed. He highlighted the major role that Kent had already played in support for unaccompanied young people and also refugees who had chosen to locate in Kent. He mentioned the sensible approach taken by government in taking refugees from the camps on the Syrian border. Local government, especially in Kent had an excellent record of supporting refugees, but this did place an additional burden on already over stretched education, health and housing services.

(9) In relation to the spending review, Mr Latchford referred to the extreme pressures that the County Council were under in trying to provide services with annual reductions in government grant. He expressed acceptance of the need to change the way that things were done including commissioning of services. He stated that his Group would be looking in detail at the draft Budget.

(10) Regarding operation stack, Mr Latchford reminded the Council that it had been 27 years since its introduction and referred to the serious effect that it had had on the national and international haulage industry and on UK imports and exports. He stated that the solution was lorry parks, not just in Kent, funded by central government who received an enormous income from the haulage industry in road tax, fuel tax and foreign vehicle tax. The Government had selected Manston as a lorry park and he referred to the facilities being placed there for lorries. He had been assured by the Leader that the facilities were being provided at no cost to the County Council. He referred to the six month Government Development Order that had been placed on Manston which would help Thanet District Council with their Compulsory Purchase Order negotiations. He referred to the proposed route via the A299 for lorries using Manston and the traffic implications and stated that the MP for Thanet and local residents did not support this plan. He concluded by stating that operation stack was not new and what was needed was a clear plan and government investment.

(11) Mr Cowan, Leader of the Labour Group, agreed with Mr Carter regarding the excellent work of staff in relation to operation stack and asylum seeking young people. He referred to the increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children using figures from the Kent Children's Safeguarding Board annual report. This had showed an increase of almost 100% from 31 March 2015 to 3 September 2015. He understood that the government had paid a contribution toward unaccompanied asylum seeking children in general. However, he considered the most important issues were making sure that these children were assessed within the stipulated time and given the care and attention that they needed at an extremely difficult time in their lives. He also mentioned the KCC buildings, such as Millbank and the Swattenden Centre, which were being used to house young asylum seekers and the part played by communities to support refugees.

(12) In relation to operation stack, he referred to the previous County Council meeting where he had made it clear that he did not support the use of Manston as a lorry park. He emphasised the local traffic disruption caused by lorries using the A256, and the A2 in addition to the impact that this would have on Jubilee Way at Dover Docks. He mentioned that the 32 days of operation stack in 2015 had cost in the region of £700k with the loss of £250m a day to the economy. He asked who would be paying for the long term solution and when it would start. He referred to the new funding stream of £200m available to the government since 1 April 2014 and expressed the view that the funding for the lorry parks should come from this source, with the lorry parks being free or the price included in the ferry etc. ticket to encourage their use.

(13) Mrs Dean, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, also congratulated Mr Carter on his position at the CCN and she had been pleased to see some of the statements that he had made on behalf of Kent in relation to asylum seekers and operation stack.

(14) Regarding operation stack, she asked Mr Carter whether KCC thought that using Manston as a lorry park was a good or bad idea, as she had not seen any statement to that effect. KCC as the Highway Authority should have a view. She congratulated Mr Balfour and Mr Carter for convincing government that operation stack was not just a Kent problem and hoped that they would be able to convince government that the cost of meeting it should come from the Dartford Crossing and the Brit Disc not KCC.

(15) In relation to asylum seekers, she referred to previous promises from government to pay for all burdens on local government and therefore she was not convinced that government would meet all reasonable costs. She asked for clarification of whether this government's commitment took into account that before the latest asylum seekers situation, the government had cut the funding for asylum seeking children by 20%.

(16) In conclusion, she referred to devolution, she questioned the commitment of government to devolution based on its relationship with local government, for example capping of local authority budgets and enabling the setting up of free schools and academies.

(17) Mr Whybrow, Leader of the Independents Group, stated that in relation to the refugee crisis he hoped that we would start to receive refugees sooner rather than later and expressed concern at the government's 5 year time span for receiving 20,000 refugees. He was also not convinced that the government would provide full funding for the massive increase in the number of young asylum seekers. He commended the work of Mr Oakford and officers in setting up centres at Ladesfield and Swattenden and stated that Kent could be proud of the welcome given to groups and individual refugees. He welcomed the support given to refugees by residents who had set up a welcome to Ladesfield group. He referred to the wonderful work done by the Kent Residents Action Network, the Red Cross and local residents to support and mentor refugees.

(17) In relation to devolution he expressed the view that there was a risk that more powers would be devolved to local government but without the associated funding.

(18) In replying to the other Leaders' comments, Mr Carter referred to devolution, he explained that there had been a deadline of 4 September 2015 for those local authorities that wanted to come together as a combined authority and supported a directly elected mayor for their area. He stated that no application for Kent had been submitted as Kent Districts and Medway Council did not have an appetite for a combined authority and he did not think that many County Councillors wanted a directly elected Mayor for Kent. At the CCN he had not found one County Council which was in favour of a directly elected mayor. The House of Lords had rejected the idea of enforcing directly elected mayors and it would be interesting to see what happened when the bill got its first reading in the House of Commons.

(19) He stated that it was his role on behalf of the CCN to convince Government Ministers of the impact that having local government, with its extraordinary track record of delivering efficiency and reform could have on public sector reform in their areas, using Health and Social integration skills money as a prime example. He hoped early in the New Year that Kent would set out its ambitious proposals as to how public sector performance could take place in Kent with the agreement of

partners in order to spend the £8 billion of public money in this county to deliver better and improved outcomes for residents. His plea to Ministers was not to get caught up in the governance arrangements but to start to explore the art of the possible, with local government having greater reach and influence in how public sector services were delivered in their area. It was necessary to work on this with Kent Districts who had different ambitions for joint working and putting that together into a good proposition from Kent and Medway which would not involve a combined local authority nor a directly elected mayor.

(20) In relation to the asylum and refugee issues he hoped that local government could respond on a voluntary basis but that would depend upon government meeting all reasonable costs. Government were talking about using the foreign aid budget for the first year and he hoped that in the spending review the Chancellor would announce additional revenue to support the 20,000 refugees as they arrived in the Country. He referred to the vulnerability and age group of the people who would be arriving. It would be difficult to scope what was needed across the county of Kent, to support very young to elderly people with complex needs. He hoped that Kent would be able to respond on a voluntary basis but a re-assurance from government that costs would be met was needed. He expressed his gratitude to those local authorities who had voluntarily placed 33 young asylum seekers in their areas but expressed disappointment that other local authorities had not volunteered.

(21) Regarding operation stack, Mr Carter explained that the decision to use Manston had been made by government. Thankfully operation stack had not taken place since this decision had been taken and therefore this temporary solution had yet to be tested. He stated that he had mentioned to the Secretary of State for Transport that a whole network of lorry parks across the country was much needed but particularly in Kent. Kent was materially affected by being the main corridor route to mainland Europe through the port of Dover and Folkestone. Mr Balfour and his team were working on how to get an increased network of lorry parks, and Mr Carter expressed the opinion that if these were properly implemented they could be self-funding.

31. Treasury Management Annual Review 2014 - 15

(1) Mr Simmonds moved and Miss Carey seconded the motion that the report be noting.

(2) In proposing the motion Mr Simmonds informed the County Council that £48.8m of the £50m had been recovered from Iceland and it was anticipated that the remainder was likely to be received by the end of the year along with a contribution to cover the lost interest. Kent was the only local authority to have achieved this.

(3) The motion was agreed without a formal vote.

(4) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

32. Members' Allowance Scheme

(1) The Chairman moved and the Vice-Chairman seconded the following motion:

“The County Council is asked to receive and consider the conclusions of the Member Remuneration Panel, as set out in paragraph 3 of the attached report.”

(2) Mr Carter moved and Mr Simmonds seconded the following amendment:

“That the report of the independent Member Remuneration Panel be noted and referred to the Selection and Member Services Committee for consideration with the Remuneration Panel members present; and that the matter be re-considered by this County Council at a future meeting.”

(3) Following a debate the Chairman put the amendment set out in paragraph (2) to the vote and the votes cast were as follows:

For (43)

Mrs A Allen, Mr M Angell, Mr M Balfour, Mr A Bowles, Mr D Brazier, Mr R Brookbank, Miss S Carey, Mr P Carter, Mr N Chard, Mrs P Cole, Mr G Cooke, Mrs M Crabtree, Mrs V Dagger, Mr M Dance, Mr J Davies, Mr T Gates, Mr G Gibbens, Mr R Gough, Mr M Harrison, Mr M Hill, Mrs S Hohler, Mr S Holden, Mr P Homewood, Mr E Hotson, Mr A King, Mr R Long, Mr G Lymer, Mr A Marsh, Mr M Northey, Mr P Oakford, Mr R Parry, Mr C Pearman, Mr J Scholes, Mr C Simkins, Mr J Simmonds, Mr C Smith, Mrs P Stockell, Mr B Sweetland, Mrs C Waters, Mr J Wedgbury, Mrs J Whittle, Mr M Whybrow, Mr A Wickham

Against (32)

Mr M Baldock, Mr H Birkby, Mrs P Brivio, Mr N Bond, Mr C Caller, Mr B Clark, Mr G Cowan, Ms J Cribbon, Mr A Crowther, Mr D Daley, Dr M Eddy, Mr J Elenor, Mrs M Elenor, Mr P Harman, Ms A Harrison, Mr M Heale, Mr C Hoare, Ms S Howes, Mr G Koowaree, Mr R Latchford, Mr B MacDowall, Mr T Maddison, Mr F McKenna, Mr B Neaves, Mrs E Rowbotham, Mr W Scobie, Mr T Shonk, Mr D Smyth, Mr A Terry, Mr N Thandi, Mr R Truelove, Mr I Chittenden

Abstain (4)

Mr R Bird, Mrs T Dean, Mr M Vye, Mrs Z Wiltshire

Amendment carried

(4) The Chairman put the substantive motion as set out in paragraph (2) to the vote and the voting was as follows:

For (40)

Mrs A Allen, Mr M Angell, Mr A Bowles, Mr D Brazier, Miss S Carey, Mr P Carter, Mr N Chard, Mrs P Cole, Mr G Cooke, Mrs V Dagger, Mr M Dance, Mr J Davies, Mr J Elenor, Mr T Gates, Mr G Gibbens, Mr R Gough, Mr M Harrison, Mr M Hill, Mrs S Hohler, Mr S Holden, Mr P Homewood, Mr E Hotson, Mr R Long, Mr G Lymer, Mr A Marsh, Mr M Northey, Mr P Oakford, Mr R Parry, Mr C Pearman, Mr J Scholes, Mr C Simkins, Mr J Simmonds, Mr C Smith, Mrs P Stockell, Mr B Sweetland, Mrs C Waters, Mr J Wedgbury, Mrs J Whittle, Mr M Whybrow, Mr A Wickham

Against (31)

Mr M Baldock, Mr H Birkby, Mrs P Brivio, Mr N Bond, Mr C Caller, Mr I Chittenden, Mr B Clark, Mr G Cowan, Ms J Cribbon, Mr A Crowther, Mr D Daley, Dr M Eddy, Mrs M Elenor, Mr P Harman, Ms A Harrison, Mr M Heale, Mr C Hoare, Ms S Howes, Mr G Koowaree, Mr R Latchford, Mr B MacDowall, Mr T Maddison, Mr F McKenna, Mr B Neaves, Mrs E Rowbotham, Mr W Scobie, Mr T Shonk, Mr D Smyth, Mr A Terry, Mr N Thandi, Mr R Truelove

Abstain (4)

Mr R Bird, Mrs T Dean, Mr M Vye, Mrs Z Wiltshire

Substantive motion carried

RESOLVED that the report of the independent Member Remuneration Panel be noted and referred to the Selection and Member Services Committee for consideration with the Remuneration Panel members present; and that the matter be re-considered by this County Council at a future meeting.

(Post meeting note – Selection and Member Services Committee meeting on 21 October 2015 will consider this item).

33. Kent Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report

(1) Mr Oakford moved and Mrs Whittle seconded the following motion:

“County Council is asked to:

- (a) COMMENT on the progress and improvements made during 2014/15, as detailed in the Annual Report from Kent Safeguarding Children Board
- (b) NOTE the 2014/15 Annual Report attached. Following this meeting, this document will be available for download at the KSCB website.”

(2) Ms Gill Rigg, Independent Chairman of the Kent Safeguarding Children’s Board addressed the meeting and answered a number of questions from Members.

(3) Following further debate, the motion was agreed without a formal vote.

(4) RESOLVED that the 2014/15 Annual Report and the comments made on the progress and improvements made during 2014/15, as detailed in the Annual Report from Kent Safeguarding Children Board’s, be noted.

34. Motion for Time Limited Debate

(1) Mr Baldock moved and Mr Latchford seconded the following motion:

“This Council agrees to amend the Constitution in order that Questions asked in Council meetings and the answers given are included in the minutes of the Council Meeting.

In the absence of any provision in the Constitution, the matter is left to the Chairman’s discretion. Whereas the immediate past Chairman agreed to include questions and answers in the minutes, which was most welcome and appreciated by elected Members and members of the public alike, the current Chairman does not.

This Motion would ensure that the minutes are a true record of the complete meeting and the procedure is firmly embedded in the Constitution, rather than it being at the Chairman’s discretion.”

(2) Mr Long moved and Mr Wedgbury seconded the following amendment:

“This Council agrees to amend the Constitution in order that Questions asked in Council meetings and the answers given are included in the online minutes of the Council Meeting.

In the absence of any provision in the Constitution, the matter is left to the Chairman’s discretion. Whereas the immediate past Chairman agreed to include questions and answers in the minutes, which was most welcome and appreciated by elected Members and members of the public alike, the current Chairman does not.

This Motion would ensure that the minutes are a true record of the complete meeting and the procedure is firmly embedded in the Constitution, rather than it being at the Chairman’s discretion.”

(3) Mr Parry moved and Mr Holden seconded the procedural motion “that the question be put” and the votes cast were as follows:

For (49)

Mrs A Allen, Mr M Angell, Mr M Balfour, Mr D Brazier, Mrs P Brivio, Mr R Brookbank, Miss S Carey, Mr P Carter, Mr N Chard, Mrs P Cole, Mr G Cooke, Mrs M Crabtree, Mrs V Dagger, Mr D Daley, Mr M Dance, Mr J Davies, Mr T Gates, Mr G Gibbens, Mr R Gough, Ms A Harrison, Mr M Harrison, Mr M Hill, Mrs S Hohler, Mr S Holden, Mr P Homewood, Mr E Hotson, Mr A King, Mr R Long, Mr G Lymer, Mr T Maddison, Mr A Marsh, Mr M Northey, Mr P Oakford, Mr R Parry, Mr C Pearman, Mrs E Rowbotham, Mr J Scholes, Mr W Scobie, Mr C Simkins, Mr J Simmonds, Mr C Smith, Mrs P Stockell, Mr B Sweetland, Mr N Thandi, Mrs C Waters, Mr J Wedgbury, Mrs J Whittle, Mr A Wickham, Mrs Z Wiltshire

Against (30)

Mr M Baldock, Mr R Bird, Mr H Birkby, Mr N Bond, Mr A Bowles, Mr C Caller, Mr I Chittenden, Mr B Clark, Mr G Cowan, Ms J Cribbon, Mr A Crowther, Mrs T Dean, Dr M Eddy, Mr J Elenor, Mrs M Elenor, Mr P Harman, Mr M Heale, Mr C Hoare, Ms S Howes, Mr G Koowaree, Mr R Latchford, Mr B MacDowall, Mr F McKenna, Mr T Shonk, Mr D Smyth, Mr B Neaves, Mr A Terry, Mr R Truelove, Mr M Vye, Mr M Whybrow

Abstain (0)

Procedural motion carried

(4) The Chairman then put the amendment outlined in paragraph (2) above to the vote and the votes cast were as follows:

For (47)

Mrs A Allen, Mr M Angell, Mr M Balfour, Mr R Bird, Mr A Bowles, Mr R Brookbank, Miss S Carey, Mr P Carter, Mr N Chard, Mr I Chittenden, Mr B Clark, Mrs P Cole, Mr G Cooke, Mrs M Crabtree, Mr A Crowther, Mrs V Dagger, Mr D Daley, Mr M Dance, Mr J Davies, Mrs T Dean, Mr T Gates, Mr G Gibbens, Mr R Gough, Mr M Harrison, Mr M Hill, Mrs S Hohler, Mr S Holden, Mr E Hotson, Mr A King, Mr G Koowaree, Mr R Long, Mr G Lymer, Mr A Marsh, Mr M Northey, Mr P Oakford, Mr R Parry, Mr C Pearman, Mr J Scholes, Mr C Simkins, Mr J Simmonds, Mr C Smith, Mrs P Stockell, Mr B Sweetland, Mrs C Waters, Mr J Wedgbury, Mrs J Whittle, Mr A Wickham

Against (25)

Mr H Birkby, Mrs P Brivio, Mr C Caller, Mr G Cowan, Ms J Cribbon, Dr M Eddy, Mr J Elenor, Mrs M Elenor, Mr P Harman, Ms A Harrison, Mr M Heale, Mr C Hoare, Ms S Howes, Mr R Latchford, Mr B MacDowall, Mr T Maddison, Mr F McKenna, Mr B Neaves, Mrs E Rowbotham, Mr W Scobie, Mr D Smyth, Mr A Terry, Mr N Thandi, Mr R Truelove, Mr M Whybrow

Abstain (6)

Mr M Baldock, Mr N Bond, Mr P Homewood, Mr T Shonk, Mr M Vye, Mrs Z Wiltshire

Amendment carried

(5) The Chairman put the substantive motion as set out in paragraph (2) above to the vote and the votes cast were as follows:

For (45)

Mrs A Allen, Mr M Angell, Mr M Balfour, Mr R Bird, Mr A Bowles, Mr D Brazier, Mr R Brookbank, Miss S Carey, Mr P Carter, Mr N Chard, Mrs P Cole, Mr G Cooke, Mrs M Crabtree, Mr A Crowther, Mrs V Dagger, Mr D Daley, Mr M Dance, Mr J Davies, Mrs T Dean, Mr T Gates, Mr G Gibbens, Mr R Gough, Mr M Harrison, Mr M Hill, Mrs S Hohler, Mr S Holden, Mr E Hotson, Mr A King, Mr G Koowaree, Mr R Long, Mr G Lymer, Mr A Marsh, Mr M Northey, Mr P Oakford, Mr R Parry, Mr C Pearman, Mr C Simkins, Mr J Simmonds, Mr C Smith, Mrs P Stockell, Mr B Sweetland, Mrs C Waters, Mr J Wedgbury, Mrs J Whittle, Mr A Wickham

Against (26)

Mr H Birkby, Mrs P Brivio, Mr C Caller, Mr B Clark, Mr G Cowan, Ms J Cribbon, Dr M Eddy, Mr J Elenor, Mrs M Elenor, Mr P Harman, Ms A Harrison, Mr M Heale, Mr C Hoare, Ms S Howes, Mr R Latchford, Mr B MacDowall, Mr T Maddison, Mr F

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McKenna, Mrs E Rowbotham, Mr W Scobie, Mr T Shonk, Mr D Smyth, Mr A Terry,
Mr N Thandi, Mr R Truelove, Mr M Whybrow

Abstain (4)

Mr N Bond, Mr P Homewood, Mr B Neaves, Mr M Vye,

Substantive motion carried

RESOLVED that this Council agrees to amend the Constitution in order that Questions asked in Council meetings and the answers given are included in the online minutes of the Council Meeting.

By: Peter Oakford, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children’s Services.
Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director, Social Care, Health and Wellbeing.

To: County Council – 22 October 2015.

Subject: Kent’s response to the Syrian refugee crisis

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme was set up in 2014 in response to the current refugee crisis emanating from Syria. Under the scheme, Syrian refugees who are particularly at risk are brought to the UK direct from the camps in the Middle East. They are given five years Humanitarian Leave to Remain which enables them to work and claim public funds. On 7 September the Government announced an expansion to the scheme with a target to resettle 20,000 vulnerable refugees over the next five years. Local authority participation is key to the success of the scheme.

Following the announcement of the expansion to the scheme, the issue was briefly discussed during the Leader’s Report at the previous meeting of the County Council on 17 September. It was acknowledged that local authorities would be expected to take the lead (on a voluntary basis) in the resettlement of the 20,000 refugees. Following discussions with Kent Leaders and Chief Executives, the County Council is currently working with the district/borough councils, health and other key partners to agree where and to what extent support may be offered.

In response to the crisis there have been overwhelming offers of support for refugees from members of the public, community and voluntary organisations and businesses in Kent. Everything possible is being done to harness these offers in coordination with the district and borough councils.

Local authorities wishing to take part in the Syrian scheme are able to state the profile of the refugees they are able to accept, both in general and in individual cases, depending on level of need. In this regard the County Council is keen to play its full part in the scheme provided this does not add to the enormous burden it currently faces looking after the unprecedented numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).

Recommendations:

The County Council is asked to COMMENT on the report and ENDORSE:

- The proposal to support those districts that wish to take part in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme with the caveats outlined in section 7 of the report AND
- The continuing efforts to persuade Government to develop a sustainable national dispersal scheme for UASC.

1. Introduction

1.1 The current crisis in Syria has led to approximately 250,000 deaths with almost 12 million people being forced to leave their homes since the outbreak of civil war in 2011. It is estimated that between 7-8 million are internally displaced within Syria and about 4 million are in refugee camps in the surrounding countries (mainly in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt). In addition many thousands are in the process of moving across Europe to what they consider to be safe countries in which to claim asylum.

1.2 As part of its response to the situation in Syria, the Government set up the Syrian Vulnerable persons Relocation Scheme in February 2014. This scheme involves taking particularly vulnerable refugees straight from the camps and resettling them in the UK. The refugees are given five years Humanitarian Leave to Remain and as such are able to work and claim benefits and other public funds.

1.3 By June this year 216 people had been supported by the above scheme. In addition (and not part of the scheme) almost 5,000 Syrians (including dependents) have been granted asylum or other forms of leave under the normal asylum procedures, whereby they claim once in the UK. It is important to note that Kent does not currently participate in the dispersal scheme for adult asylum seekers in the UK but, as is well known, takes a very disproportionate number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

1.4 On 7 September 2015 the Prime Minister announced that the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme will be expanded so that up to 20,000 people will be assisted under the scheme by the end of the Parliament. Local authorities are key to the delivery of this offer. A purely arithmetic calculation of what Kent's share should be would mean we might expect about 4-500 individuals over the next 5 years. However participation in the scheme is voluntary and local authorities are being asked to consider if they wish to participate in the scheme.

2. How the scheme works and the role of local authorities

2.1 The scheme is based on need. Working closely with the UNHCR, it prioritises those who cannot be supported effectively in their region of origin, including:

- women and girls at risk
- survivors of violence and/or torture
- refugees with legal and/or physical protection needs
- refugees with medical needs or disabilities
- children and adolescents at risk
- persons at risk due to their sexual orientation or gender identity

2.2 Individuals accepted onto the scheme will be able to bring their immediate family with them.

2.3 Once cases have been referred from the UNHCR, the Home Office checks that the individual meets the eligibility criteria, carries out medical and security checks and arranges the necessary visas. At the same time, the cases are passed to a local authority that has asked to participate in the scheme. The referral will include details on family make up, age and specific needs. Further detail on any medical needs will follow shortly after via a full medical health assessment report. The Local

Authority is asked to accept or reject the case. If accepted the local authority will need to arrange housing, school places and any additional support that is required. An arrival date would be agreed with the Home Office.

2.4 It is important to point out that the Government has stated that local authorities wishing to participate in the scheme can specify the profile of individuals and families they are willing to accept (for example ages and needs of children).

2.5 Although the Government is not being prescriptive about this, it is highly likely that accommodation will in most cases be arranged in the private rented sector provided this can be rented at Housing Benefit rates. Clearly if a member of the household is able to work the Housing Benefit awarded will reduce and may not even be necessary in the future depending on earnings.

3. Funding for the scheme

3.1 Currently funding for the scheme is given partly upfront and partly as expenditure is incurred. It includes two months void costs to help secure accommodation, funding for adaptations and furnishings, orientation costs (including language training), a one off allowance until benefits kick in, amounts for health, education and specialist support if required.

3.2 Initially funding for the scheme was only available for the first year. However the Government has just announced (on 2 October 2015) that it will “also provide additional funding to assist with costs incurred in future years” (letter to Local Authority Chief Executives and Leaders on 2.10.15). It should be borne in mind, however, that there may be some degree of unfunded costs in future years.

3.3 We hope to receive further details soon about the process for drawing down the additional funding. The County Council will then work with the districts to agree the best way to administer this.

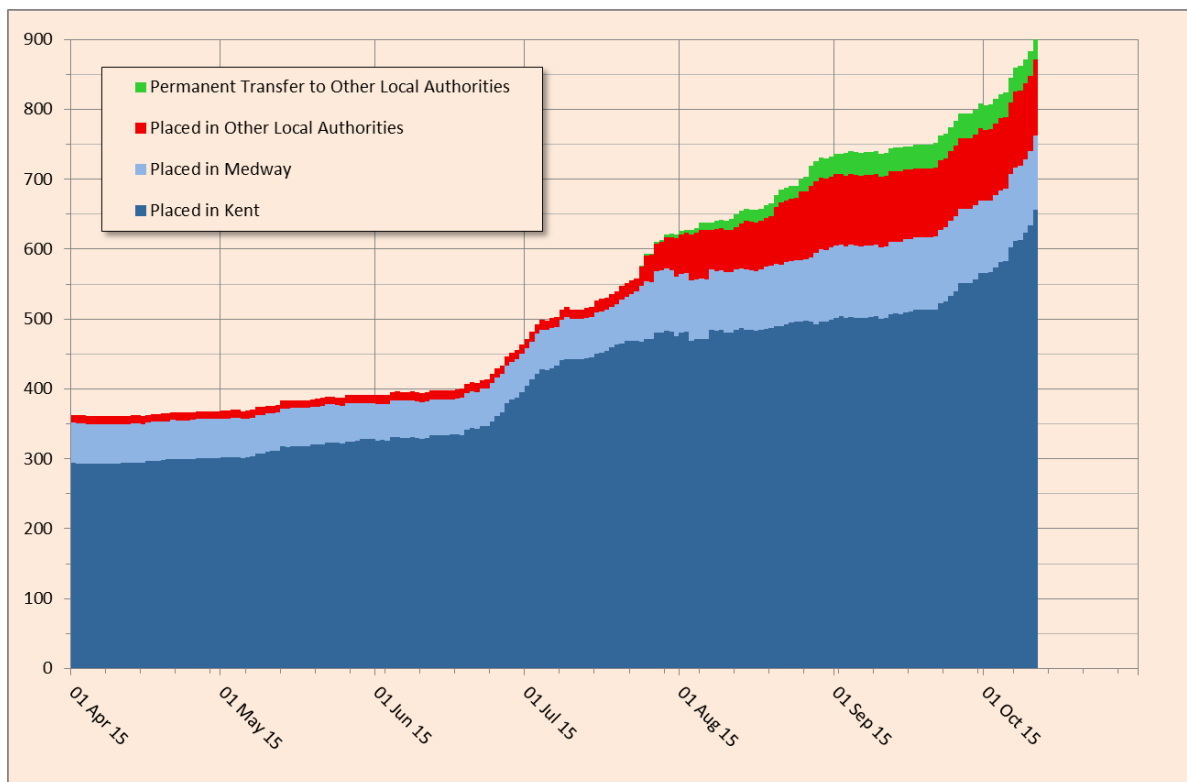
4. Wider context of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in Kent

4.1 It is necessary that Kent’s response to the request from Government to assist with the Syrian Relocation Scheme is considered in the context of the unprecedented numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) currently being looked after by Kent County Council.

4.2 As at 14 October, the total number of UASC in KCC’s care is 895, with 93 children coming into Kent’s care in the previous 10 days. UASC now make up more than a third of all children that KCC looks after. Additionally KCC is supporting 400 young people who are 18 plus, who were UASC and for whom KCC has statutory responsibilities as care leavers.

4.3 It is interesting to note that of the 224 UASCs that have arrived in the last 6 Weeks (as at 14 October), only 8% are from Syria. The largest group (38%) are from Eritrea, followed by Afghanistan (17%). Other significant groups are Sudanese (7%) and Vietnamese (6%).

4.4 As the table below shows, the current numbers of UASC present more than a 260% increase from the situation in April this year.



4.5 The above situation is causing severe strain on KCC's Children's Services. Due to the limited supply of suitable foster or supported living placements in Kent, we are increasingly having to place unaccompanied children in more expensive independent foster care or supported placements in other local authority areas, whilst retaining Corporate Parent responsibility. Following a request to all 150 other English local authorities with social services responsibility, 15 authorities have agreed to take full responsibility for 35 UASC. This voluntary support to Kent is very welcome however it is clear that this alone is not going to deal with the pressure on the county.

4.6 In order to try to cope with the increasingly difficult situation two new Reception Centres (creating another 80 places) were opened in September, in addition to the centre at Millbank. All centres are now completely full.

4.7 The Council has for many years been underfunded by the Home Office, and has never been able to reclaim all of the costs of supporting UASC and former UASC who are Care Leavers. In the current year the weekly grants proposed for UASC have been reduced greatly from those paid in 2014-15. For Under 16s we are receiving £798 per week compared to the £1,085 per week last year and our costs for new arrivals are on average £1,211 per week. For 16-17 year olds we are receiving £637 per week compared to £784 per week last year and our costs for new arrivals are on average £733 per week. For Care Leavers (18+) we have been funded at £150 per week since 2010, with no increase and our costs are currently at £274 per week.

4.8 Based on our numbers of young people in September plus an estimate of future arrivals based on previous trends we anticipated a shortfall of almost £7 million in grant funding. However as the numbers of arrivals in the last 2 weeks have greatly exceeded our estimates it is likely that this shortfall is now in excess of £8 million.

4.9 There are a number of UASC in KCC's care who are still awaiting full assessment, the situation being exacerbated by the need to assess children who have been placed outside Kent. The backlog is now reducing but only following the recruitment of additional staff (including an agency Service Manager, 3 Team Leaders and 23 Social Workers).

4.10 It is clear from the above, that any participation in the Syrian Relocation Scheme must not add to the burden KCC currently faces looking after Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. Although there are not expected to be many unaccompanied children arriving in the first few months of the scheme, this may change and therefore KCC needs to make it clear that we cannot accept such children under this scheme.

4.11 Clearly KCC will still have duties to UASC that come through the usual route. Kent County Council has for some time been in discussions with the Home Office about the urgent need for a national dispersal scheme but to date satisfactory progress has not been made. As mentioned above other local authorities have agreed so far to take on the legal responsibility for 35 UASC. Whilst this is much appreciated by Kent it falls far short of a workable solution and further negotiations with the Home Office are taking place.

4.12 The Leader of the County Council has on several occasions highlighted the need to the Home Secretary for a national dispersal scheme and for full reimbursement of the costs associated with UASC and Care Leavers. It is to be hoped that solutions will be found in the near future.

5. Wider context of services for children/young people with complex needs

5.1 With regard to children and young people who have Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) the current impact of having to work under a dual statutory framework (the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Education Act 1996) has stretched existing resources to the extent that there is no immediate spare capacity. The new legal duties have increased the age range KCC is responsible for (from age 19 to 25). Further, in the last year, there has been a 10% increase in the number of pre-school children requiring statutory support and a 20% increase in demand for supporting early intervention for younger children with SEND. Virtually all of our special schools are at capacity, which has led to a further increase in the number of children we have to place in the independent special school sector.

5.2 With regard to mental health services for children and young people, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is currently working at full capacity.

5.3 Given the above pressures, although each case will be considered on its merits, if the children in families coming to Kent through the scheme have particularly high/complex needs, we will need to ensure the extra funding required can be accessed and is sustainable before agreeing that they be placed in Kent.

6. Kent County Council and district/borough councils' response to date

6.1 The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme was discussed at the Kent Council Leaders meeting on 23 September, at which Chief Executives were also

present. Roy Millard, the Partnership Manager for the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration, briefed Leaders and Chiefs about the scheme. Leaders were supportive in principle, wanting Kent to play its part, but agreed that it was vital for there to be a co-ordinated approach to ensure that the needs of any Syrian Refugees placed in Kent would be properly met. There were concerns that the areas with the most available accommodation were also the areas that were most stretched in terms of wrap-around public services. It was resolved at the meeting that KCC should work closely with the districts and boroughs to ensure there is a coordinated approach. This is being done, as recommended, by working closely with the Kent Housing Group, Health, JobCentre Plus, the voluntary sector and other key partners.

6.2 Since the above meeting, KCC has brought together a co-ordination group which met on 7 October and is meeting again on 19 October. The group is developing a multi-agency process for agreeing which families should be taken and how they will be supported. Actions being taken forward by the group include:

- Learn from other authorities with more experience of taking in refugee families (e.g. Coventry, Colchester, Brighton)
- Work with the SE Strategic Partnership for Migration to influence the UNHCR assessment process, to ensure that authorities are given relevant information about particular families before making the decision about whether to take them.
- Develop a process/protocol for the decision-making process for individual families, to ensure that a comprehensive assessment involving all relevant agencies is made, and that organisations commit to providing the necessary support before a decision is taken to accept the family.
- Estimate the net unit costs of likely 'wrap around' services, and the process by which costs will be logged and reimbursed.
- Put in place training for those staff (across all relevant agencies) who will be working with the refugees to ensure they are aware of, for example, the cultural needs of Syrians and the likely impact of trauma/torture.

6.3 To date all districts within Kent are supportive of the scheme in principle but most are still considering the extent of any support they can offer in their own areas.

6.4 With regard to the numbers they are likely to support, Ashford has confirmed that they will be one of the early participants in the expanded Scheme (referred to as "Trailblazers") and they have committed to taking 50 people (about 10 families) per year for the next 5 years. It is possible they will begin receiving refugees before Christmas. Shepway has indicated it will take about 2 families per year. An update on the other districts will be provided at the County Council meeting if further offers have been confirmed by this date.

7. KCC's proposed position

7.1 Following discussions with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services it is planned that KCC should support those districts that wish to take part but with the following caveats:

- There should be a full analysis in each individual case of services provided by both the districts, the county council and other key partners (e.g. housing availability, school places, social care, health etc) in local areas to ensure placements are sustainable, refugee needs are met and the needs of the existing community are taken into account.
- Due to the extreme pressures on Kent children's services severely exacerbated by the unprecedented numbers of UASC, Kent cannot accommodate unaccompanied minors through the Syrian refugee scheme as we would be unable to meet their needs given current circumstances.
- With regard to other children with particularly high/complex needs, each case presented to us will be individually assessed before a decision is made as our ability to meet such needs will vary depending on their nature, whether they are health, education or social care needs, what statutory and community resources are available and the availability of additional funding.

8. Response from the public and community/voluntary organisations in Kent

8.1 It is important to acknowledge in this report the overwhelming response to the Syrian crisis (and refugee crisis in general) from individuals, community and voluntary groups, institutions and businesses in Kent.

8.2 As at 13 October, KCC has received 179 specific offers of help. Two of these offers included details of 90 and 70 volunteers from groups, making over 300 people who have volunteered support. A number of these offers are from retired or part time teachers who we will be utilising to provide additional help with English and other skills to support these young people.

8.3 The support offered also included spare rooms in people's homes, foster care, translation, counselling, equipment, bedding, help with removals and mentoring. Local churches and charities have, amongst other things, helped with the collection of goods, such as providing a table tennis table for one of the Reception Centres. We are extremely grateful for all of these offers.

8.4 Everything possible is being done to harness these offers and coordinate with similar offers being made to the district and borough councils. Where people have offered accommodation for children they have been given the details of application process for the council's fostering service.

9. Recommendations

The County Council is asked to COMMENT on the report and ENDORSE:

- The proposal to support those districts that wish to take part in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme with the caveats outlined in section 7 of the report AND
- The continuing efforts to persuade Government to develop a sustainable national dispersal scheme for UASC.

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