

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 25 April 2016.

PRESENT: Mr P B Carter, CBE (Chairman), Mr M A C Balfour, Mr G Cooke, Mr M C Dance, Mr G K Gibbens, Mr R W Gough, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr P J Oakford and Mr J D Simmonds, MBE

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

163. Apologies

(Item 2)

No apologies were received.

164. Declarations of Interest

(Item 3)

No declarations of interest were received.

165. Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 March 2016

(Item 4)

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 21 March 2016, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman accordingly.

166. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring for 2015-16 - January

(Item 5)

Cabinet received a report providing the budget monitoring position for January 2015-16 for both revenue and capital budgets, including an update on key activity data.

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

- i. That pressures on the revenue budget remained which would continue in to the new financial year, including:
 - The cost of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in Kent, although improved by the new Home Office offer, continued to apply pressure to the budget and concern continued as to the financial implications of a significant number of those minors turning 18 when costs would increase further.
 - The Adults Social Care and Health portfolio continued to report ongoing pressures, reported here at approximately £5.5million from a variety of sources, including, residential and home care services, services for people with physical disabilities and supported living services. It was likely that these pressures would continue to be reflected in the 2016-17 budget.

- That SEN home to school transport had reported a £2.2million pressure, partially offset by reduced demand for mainstream home to school transport. Work continued to reduce demand in this area by supporting young people who have accessed the service previously to travel independently, where appropriate.
- In the Growth Environment and Transport Directorate, high waste volumes, and associated costs, continued to present a budgetary pressure, only partially offset by income from recyclables.

In relation to the capital budget Mr Simmonds reported that the working budget for 2015-16 was just over £266million. The forecast outturn against that figure was just over £254million, resulting in a reported variance of approximately £11million of which only £2million was real, the other £9million being a result of re-phasing.

In conclusion, Mr Simmonds thanked Members and Officers for the good work undertaken to deliver the successful 2015-16 budget and asked for support in doing the same in 2016-17.

Andy Wood, Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement, reported that the underspend on finalisation of the budget would be between £2 and £3million and that this would be completed shortly. He thanked managers for their work all year and in particular for their adherence to the moratorium on spending introduced towards the end of the financial year. Mr Wood estimated that this moratorium had saved the council approximately £2million without affecting front line services, which had been exempted from the spending restraints.

He also reported that the Finance Directorate were planning to introduce new reporting methods, as of September 2016, which would mean that Cabinet had sight of quarterly budget information more quickly following the end of each quarter.

In response to a request for information made by the Leader; Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing spoke to the item. He reported that there were currently just below 900 unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) in Kent and just below 500 former UASC's who were now over 18 and had care leaver rights. This number had grown significantly in recent years, and, as an estimated 70% of last summer's arrivals were 16 or 17 years old, this trend was likely to continue. As a result capacity within the system was significantly diminished. However, he remained confident that a national dispersal programme would be created. The details of the scheme had not yet been confirmed, such as the voluntary nature, or otherwise, of it and it was unlikely that the figures regarding funding for receiving authorities would be released before the local elections. In addition no clear timescale had been put forward by government for implementation of any scheme and he expressed concern that it may well be after the summer months when arrival numbers were likely to be highest.

The Leader thanked the Corporate Director for his comprehensive comments and welcomed news that a national dispersal programme continued to be a priority for the government. He considered such a programme to be essential in managing the situation in the future as resources at KCC were already under considerable pressure.

He welcomed the news that the budget had delivered an underspend and echoed both the cabinet member and corporate director by reminding cabinet that the delivery of a balanced budget in 2016-17 would be an even more difficult task.

It was agreed that the information in the report be NOTED

167. Energy Security Select Committee Report

(Item 6)

Cabinet received a report of the Energy Security Select Committee which contained, at appendix 2, an executive summary of the committee's full report.

In the absence of members of the select committee to present its findings Cabinet agreed to note the report and its recommendations and welcomed the opportunity for a full debate when the matter was considered by the full Council in May.