

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 23 September 2019.

PRESENT: Mr P B Carter, CBE, Mrs C Bell, Miss S J Carey, Mr M C Dance, Mr R W Gough, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr E E C Hotson, Mr P J Oakford, Miss C Rankin and Mr M Whiting

ALSO PRESENT: Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr P V Barrington-King, Mr I S Chittenden and Mr D Farrell

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director of People and Communications), Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director Strategic & Corporate Services), Ms Z Cooke (Corporate Director of Finance), Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr M Dunkley CBE (Corporate Director for Children Young People and Education), Mr A Scott-Clark (Director of Public Health) and Ms P Southern (Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

110. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 July 2019

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2019 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

111. Quarterly Performance Report, Quarter 1, 2019/20

(Item 4)

Rachel Kennard was in attendance for this item.

1. Miss Carey introduced the report which presented performance for the first quarter to the end of June 2019. Of the 35 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) contained within the report 24 were rated as Green, 7 were Amber and 4 were Red.
2. Three KPIs had moved to Green in this quarter, these were:
 - i. Customer Services – Percentage of complaints responded to within timescale.
 - ii. Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) – Percentage of children in care with 3 or more placements in the last 12 months.
 - iii. Adult Social Care – Number of admissions to permanent residential and nursing care for older people – rolling 12 months.
3. The number of KPIs rated red had increased from 3 to 4, these were:
 - a. CYPE
 - i. Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks – rolling 12 months
 - ii. Percentage of 16-18 year olds who start an apprenticeship

iii. Percentage of cases closed by Early Help Units with outcomes achieved.

b. Environment and Transport

i. Percentage of routine pothole repairs completed within 28 days. (However June performance was back above target).

4. Overall performance was positive the majority of indicators were green but there was a small number below acceptable and this would continue to be monitored closely.

5. Mr Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education commented on the strong areas of performance such as the 91% of schools in Kent which were, in June, Good or Outstanding compared to the national figure of 86%. Whilst there had been a decline in apprenticeships this had been less than the national decline, the report set out the range of activity undertaken in this area. Referring to Early Help, cases closed with outcomes achieved this was due to a higher than usual number of families declining support at first contact and disengagement from support at a later stage in the pathway. The EHCP measure was the most concerning and the Council was extremely focussed on this. The report set out two elements in relation to EHCPs, one was caseworker capacity and the other was the delay in Educational Psychology assessment.

6. The Leader referred to the high number of other local authority children in care placed into Kent and the failure of the system to have any impact on the agreement with London Boroughs that children would be placed closer to home.

7. Overall there had been a significant and positive improvement on some vitally important areas of business for the Council.

8. Matt Dunkley considered that it would be useful to ensure that the 'Percentage of cases closed by Early Help Units with outcomes achieved' indicator should be reviewed to ensure it reflected the work of Early Help supporting complex young people. This was supported by the Leader but he confirmed that the performance management information was independent of the Senior Management Team and Members.

9. Mr Dance referred to Broadband, Kent had achieved 95.7% coverage on superfast broadband. Fibre to the Premises was now being delivered to households and 5000 new connections were starting in January 2020 in rural areas with slow or no broadband. To ensure 100% coverage would cost £100million. In addition a voucher scheme using share gain money earned with broadband takeup allowed remote houses to club together to approach broadband providers.

10. Mr Whiting explained that the pothole red rating referred to April and May 2019 due to a spike in demand and a gap in available resource. By June/July 2019 the KPI was back to over 93% and current performance at 94% with the average routine pothole being filled within 14days. Mr Whiting congratulated the team for this achievement.

11. Miss Carey commented that the good performance level was being achieved with less resource and this should be commended.

12. The Leader commented that the Local Growth Fund and Capital Projects should be monitored closely. He considered that an item should be included on the growing places fund.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the Quarter 1 Performance Report.

112. Select Committee - Knife Crime
(Item 5)

1. Mr Barrington-King, Chairman of the Select Committee introduced the report of his Select Committee, which began its work in April 2019 following concerns raised at County Council about knife crime in Kent. The Committee was charged with being agile, responsive and to deal with the problem in an urgent fashion.

2. Mr Barrington-King drew out the key points of the report, tackling knife crime required a joined up approach with input as early as possible with the education of young people. Mr Barrington-King briefly explained the background to each of the 7 recommendations and Members discussed these recommendations.

3. Mr Chittenden commented on the report which aimed to stop the escalation into knife crime, communication between agencies was key and he considered recommendation 1 to be essential. There needed to be a joint effort between agencies and schools and exclusions needed to be monitored closely. Mr Chittenden recommended the report to Cabinet.

4. The Leader emphasised that although the incidents of knife crime had increased in Kent the county was below national average. The rise was of massive concern which had led to the urgent Select Committee report.

5. Mr Farrell commented on the reduction of police officers and the closure of youth centres. He considered that young people were left with a sense of no future, the Select Committee heard overwhelming evidence that young people no longer felt safe and there was a need to deal with the symptoms of knife crime such as poverty. Mr Farrell explained that he disagreed with some of the recommendations such as that referring to Trading Standards. He supported the report but was disappointed not to have received comparable budget data for youth services. He commented on exclusion rates in schools and the correlation between exclusions and knife crime. He considered that there was a clear role for the British Transport Police with reference to county lines, and Mr Chittenden concurred with this comment.

6. Mr Farrell and Mr Chittenden thanked the Chairman and Officers who supported the Select Committee, particularly Gaetano Romagnuolo the Research Officer.

7. The Leader commented that further work could be done with regards to the recommendations but it was accepted that the report was that of the Select Committee. Mr Watts, General Counsel thanked Members of the Select Committee for the commitment they showed and the unprecedented speed at which the review progressed. He formally thanked the officers involved. The Leader endorsed the

thanks, on behalf of himself and his Cabinet, to Officers, Select Committee members and the Chairman.

8. Mr Long commented on the flourishing sector of youth services across the country, such as the Scouts, Guides and MoD youth services, operating and serving many thousands of young people across Kent. He considered that the picture of withdrawal of youth services was misleading.

9. Mr Oakford thanked Members and Officers for their work on the difficult topic which was growing in size and concern. KCC had a huge role to play in prevention before it got to the stage of young people becoming involved in knife crime. KCC should be working with schools on education, exclusion and on truancy rates. He considered that there needed to be a focus on youth work and working with District Councils around areas of prevention.

10. Mr Hill welcomed the timely report on an increasingly important issue. He welcomed the recognition that this was not the responsibility of the Criminal Justice System alone but required the activities of a range of partners to tackle the issues. He welcomed the recognition of the Community Warden Service, these officers had two roles, firstly the information they gained from their contact with young people and also their roles as mentors working with young people. Regarding Trading Standards, Mr Hill considered that they did have a role to play and anything that could be done to reduce the number of weapons on the streets was positive.

11. In response to a query about the importance of multi-agency working Mr Barrington-King confirmed that the importance became clear when the Select Committee heard from colleagues in the police. Members recognised the work going on, the Select Committee Chairman was a big advocate of the Community Safety Partnerships which operated locally and the shared intelligence, however he considered that KCC had a strategic role to play in organising and co-ordinating the best response possible.

12. Mr Farrell explained that the Select Committee had heard from their evidence gathering that there was a direct correlation between the reduction in youth services across the country and an increase in knife crime. It was considered that by the time the Police were involved with young people it was often too late, this was a multi-agency problem.

13. Mr Chittenden referred to KCC's outreach team and offered thanks to them. The Police and PCSOs had been effective at dealing with young people and adults, however as numbers were reduced the Police had been drawn into everyday policing. Referring to Community Wardens they were considered to be critical in dealing with young people.

14. The Leader asked the Officers to publish the evidence that was cross referenced throughout the report to help shape both national and local statistics before it was submitted to County Council in October.

15. Mr Gough welcomed the report and thanked the Select Committee, he referred to the Gang Strategy and the multi-agency work that was currently taking place. Mr Gough considered the Youth Zone recommendation to be important and he was keen to ensure that further work was linked in to the Youth Strategy.

16. Mr Whiting agreed that KCC was a key agency and clearly had a role to play, he asked what caused some of the historical reductions in knife crime and whether lessons had been learned from these.

17. Miss Rankin commended the work of the Task Force and the roles of partner agencies working together.

18. Matt Dunkley commented on ways in which KCC could build on successes, amongst Kent's young people the number of recorded knife crimes had reduced. Recorded knife crime amongst adults and non-Kent residents presents different challenges and it was important to use data to target resources and prevention in the right way to ensure that where there were successes these were fostered.

19. Members discussed young people drawn through county lines into crime, these people were often given criminal records but were sometimes victims themselves, thought needed to be given to how the judiciary treats young victims of county line operators.

20. Mr Barrington-King hoped that the report provided a good start to ensure aspirations and outcomes were delivered. It had been a privilege to work with the Select Committee Members and he thanked Gaetano Romagnuolo for his excellent work done which was beyond anything he had experienced in local government in the last 18 years, along with Georgina Little and Denise Fitch for their work with the Committee.

21. Mr Chittenden commented on the importance of multi-agency work and whether further thought needed to be given to the results of cuts to youth services. A report back from Margate Task Force would be welcomed.

22. The Leader referred to his earlier request for a cross reference of data and statistics within the report to ensure a more meaningful debate.

23. Mr Farrell referred to the earlier point about young people as victims, it was important to make a distinction between young people in county lines gangs and leaders of county lines groups.

24. Ben Watts confirmed that the report had already been finalised by the Select Committee, the individual Cabinet Members could respond to the recommendations and set out how they could be taken further with regards to their implementation. Further discussions would be had with Mr Barrington-King about ensuring the cross-referenced evidence was available for County Council. Mr Watts confirmed that it was possible for County Council to support the report and take recommendations further.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- Thank the Select Committee for its work and for producing a relevant and balanced document;
- Thank the witnesses and others who provided evidence and made valuable contributions to the Select Committee;
- Receive the report with the comments noted above.

113. Motion to Exclude the Press and Public
(Item)

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

114. 19/00058 Maidstone East Development
(Item 6)

(Open Minute of Exempt Item)

1. Mr Hotson and Ms Spore updated Members on the Maidstone East Development.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the update provided.