

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the County Council held online on Thursday, 11 February 2021.

PRESENT: Mr G K Gibbens (Chairman), Mr M J Northey (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, MBE, Mr M J Angell, Mr M A C Balfour, Mr P V Barrington-King, Mr P Bartlett, Mrs C Bell, Mrs P M Beresford, Mrs R Binks, Mr R H Bird, Mr T Bond, Mr A Booth, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr D L Brazier, Mr J Burden, Mr D Butler, Miss S J Carey, Sir Paul Carter, CBE, Mrs S Chandler, Mr N J D Chard, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr J Clinch, Mrs P T Cole, Mr N J Collor, Ms K Constantine, Mr A Cook, Mr G Cooke, Mr P C Cooper, Mrs M E Crabtree, Mr M C Dance, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr D Farrell, Mrs L Game, Mr R W Gough, Ms S Hamilton, Mr P M Harman, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr A R Hills, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr S Holden, Mr P J Homewood, Mr A J Hook, Mr M J Horwood, Mr E E C Hotson, Mrs L Hurst, Mr J A Kite, MBE, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr P W A Lake, Mr B H Lewis, Ida Linfield, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr R C Love, OBE, Mr G Lymer, Mr S C Manion, Mr R A Marsh, Mr J P McInroy, Mr P J Messenger, Mr D D Monk, Miss D Morton, Mr D Murphy, Mr P J Oakford, Mr J M Ozog, Mr R A Pascoe, Mr M D Payne, Mrs S Prendergast, Mr K Pugh, Miss C Rankin, Mr H Rayner, Mr C Simkins, Dr L Sullivan, Mr B J Sweetland, Mr R J Thomas, Mr M Whiting, Mr M E Whybrow and Mr J Wright

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director Strategic & Corporate Services), Ms Z Cooke (Corporate Director of Finance) and Mr B Watts (General Counsel)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

269. Apologies for Absence
(Item 1)

The General Counsel reported apologies from Mr Daley, Mrs Dawson, Mr Ridgers and Mrs Stockell. Mr Messenger gave his apologies for the afternoon session. Mr A Cook, Mr Lewis and Mr Lymer gave their apologies for part of the afternoon session.

270. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests in items on the agenda
(Item 2)

Dr Sullivan declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as her husband is employed by the County Council in the Early Help and Prevention Team. She did not vote on the amendment set out at paragraph 23 below.

271. Chairman's Announcements

(Item 3)

(a) Mr Leonard Price

- (1) The Chairman said, it was with regret, that he had to inform members of the death of Mr Leonard Price, former Conservative Member for Tunbridge Wells Central from 1981-1993.
- (2) Mr Payne, Mr Bird and Mr Holden paid tribute to Mr Price.
- (3) Following the tributes, members observed a one-minute silence in memory of Mr Price.
- (4) After the one-minute silence, the Chairman moved, the Vice-Chairman seconded, and it was resolved unanimously that:

“This Council records the sense of loss it feels on the sad passing of Mr Price and extends to his family and friends our heartfelt sympathy to them in their sad bereavement”.

(b) Honours Process for New Year 2022

The Chairman said he would like to formally record the Council’s congratulations to those who had received an honour in the New Year honours list 2021, with particular congratulations to the Kent residents who received an honour. He also informed members that there was still time to nominate people working in local government (including members) for an honour in the 2022 New Year honours list. The Chairman said the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was especially interested in people who were working or volunteering in their communities, including those working with the homeless or in housing more widely, those supporting community integration and interfaith work and those working in local government over an extended period to achieve the council’s local ambitions. He advised members that two letters of support had to be included with the nomination form and that further information was available from the Civic Office.

(c) Smart Winter Project

The Chairman said that the Highways Transportation and Waste team, with Amey, had won an Association for Public Service Excellence 2020 Innovation Award in December for its highways, street lighting and winter maintenance services. The award was made for the Smart Winter Project, which introduced 120 road surface temperature sensors across the county to measure road temperature and transmit data in real-time. When combined with weather station information this information enabled the development of a predictive road surface temperature model with 90% accuracy, allowing for real-time decisions on gritting routes, which made savings by avoiding unnecessary gritting, and enhanced public safety through targeted gritting where it was most required.

272. Section 25 Assurance Statement

(Item 4)

- (1) Mr Oakford moved, and Mr Gough seconded the motion that:

“Pursuant to section 25 of the Local Government Act, the County Council is asked to note this report and agree to have due regard to the contents when making decisions about the budget.”

- (2) The Corporate Director for Finance said that, as the Section 151 Officer, she was legally required to give her opinion on the robustness of the budget estimates and the level of the Council’s reserves. She said that, having taken into account a number of factors including the highly uncertain operating environment, the significantly increased financial risks being faced by the Council in both the short and medium term, a detailed assessment of the budget estimates, the Council’s financial resilience, the risks it was facing and the proposed approach to strengthening reserves contained in the appendices to the draft budget report at item 5 of the agenda and presented at a member briefing on 4 February, in her opinion, the budget estimates set out at item 5 of the agenda were robust as were the level of reserves.
- (3) The Chairman put the motion set out in paragraph 1 above to the vote and the vote was as follows:

For (65)

Mrs Allen, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mr Bird, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Mr Cook, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Dean, , Mrs Game, Mr Gibbens Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Harman, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Homewood, Mr Hook, Mr Horwood, Mr Hotson, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Lake, Ida Linfield, Mr Long, Mr Love, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Messenger, Mr Monk, Miss Morton, Mr Murphy, Mr Northey, Mr Oakford, Mr Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, Mr Whybrow, Mr Wright.

Against (3) Miss Constantine, Mr Lewis, Dr Sullivan

Abstain(1) Mr Farrell

Motion carried.

- (4) Resolved that, pursuant to section 25 of the Local Government Act, the County Council notes this report and agrees to have due regard to the contents when making decisions about the budget.

273. Capital Programme 2021-24, Revenue Budget 2021-22 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-24
(Item 5)

- (1) The Chairman said that any member of a local authority who was liable to pay Council Tax, and who had any unpaid Council Tax amount overdue for at least two months, even if there was an arrangement to pay off the arrears, must declare that they were in arrears and must not vote on any matter related to KCC's Budget or Council Tax.
- (2) The Chairman drew members' attention to the Section 151 Officer's assurance statement agreed in the previous item on the agenda.
- (3) Mr Oakford moved, and Mr Gough seconded the following motion:

“County Council, having given due regard to the s25 Report (published for consideration and noting as agenda item 4 of this meeting), is asked to agree:

- (a) The net revenue budget requirement of £1,132.426m for 2021-22.
- (b) The 10-year capital programme and investment proposals of £1,057.925m over three years from 2021-22 to 2023-24 together with the necessary funding and subject to approval to spend arrangements.
- (c) The directorate capital programmes as set out in appendices A & B of the final draft budget report published on 3rd February 2021.
- (d) The directorate revenue budget proposals as set out in appendices C to F of the final draft budget report published on 3rd February 2021.
- (e) The Capital Strategy as set out in appendix J of the final draft report published on 3rd February 2021 including the Prudential Indicators.
- (f) The Treasury Management Strategy as set out in appendix K of the final draft report published on 3rd February 2021
- (g) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement as set out in appendix M of the final draft report published on 3rd February 2021.
- (h) The Reserves Policy as set out in Appendix N, including the review of the rollover procedures for 2020-21 outturn to improve financial resilience and treatment of general underspends
- (i) To delegate responsibility to Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors to manage the budget within the parameters set out in the Constitution and Financial Regulations.
- (j) To increase Council Tax band rates up to the maximum permitted without a referendum as set out in section 6 table 5 (page 20 of the report) in the final draft report published on 3rd February 2021.
- (k) To levy the additional 3% social care precept (raising an additional £22,228,900 and taking the total social care precept to £87,335,000 out of the precept set out in recommendation (l) below).
- (l) The total Council Tax requirement of £778,704,100 to be raised through precepts on districts as set out in section 6, table 4 (page 19 of the report) in the final draft report published on 3rd February.
- (m) The Personnel Committee recommendation of an increase of 2% for 2021-22 for all Kent Scheme staff with the corresponding adjustment to pay scales (and noting the voluntary freeze for 2021-22 to Kent Range 17 and above offered by Corporate Directors and Directors)
- (n) The Personnel Committee recommendation to increase to the entry value of the lowest grade (KR2/3) to £9.55 per hour to maintain the position above the national minimum and marginally above the Living Wage Foundation for April 2021.

In addition:

(o) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Finance (after consultation with the Leader, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate & Traded Services and the political Group Leaders) to resolve any minor technical issues for the final budget publication which do not materially alter the approved budget or change the net budget requirement and for any changes made to be reflected in the final version of the Budget Book (blue combed) due to be published in March 2021.

(p) To note the uncertain financial outlook for later years in the absence of a multi-year settlement from government and the potential scenarios for recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic as set out in appendix I of the final draft report published on 3rd February 2021.

(4) Mr Farrell proposed, and Mr Lewis seconded a motion that the meeting be suspended to allow fuller details of the budget to be presented.

(5) Chairman put the motion to the vote as set out in paragraph 4 above and the voting was as follows:

For (15)

Mr Bird, Mr Burden, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Mr Collor Miss Constantine, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mr Harman, Mr Hook, Mr Koowaree, Mr Lewis, Ida Linfield, Dr Sullivan, Mr Whybrow

Against (58)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, , Mr Cook, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Game, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Homewood, Mr Horwood, Mr Hotson, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Lake, Mr Long, Mr Love, Mr Lymer, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Messenger, Mr Monk, Miss Morton, Mr Murphy, Mr Northey, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mr Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Rayner, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright

Abstain (0)

Motion lost.

(6) In response to a question and comments from members, and a request that the answer be recorded in the minutes, Mr Watts said the County Council was the sovereign body of the authority and had a number of reserved functions, including the agreement of the Budget, which could not be delegated to the Executive. He said the Budget had been prepared in accordance with constitutional requirements including the publication of a draft Budget at the correct time and in a format of the Leader's choosing on the advice of the Section 151 Officer. He said it was for each member to decide whether they had sufficient information to enable them to agree the Budget. Mrs Cooke referred to Section A7 of the Financial Regulations which had been referred to by a member. Mrs Cooke said that particular section of the regulations required her to propose to the Leader the general format of the Budget and that the draft Budget should include allocations to different services and projects, as well as proposed sources of funding, taxation levels and contingency funds. In her opinion, the proposed Budget before the County Council satisfied those requirements. She also said the Leader was

responsible for developing and proposing to the County Council the general content of the revenue Budget in consultation with her and in accordance with the requirement of paragraph A10 of the Financial Regulations and that budgets would be presented in both a Service Analysis and Directorate format aligned with the structure of the Council. Once the draft Budget was approved, officers were required to produce those budgets in the format prescribed and to do so by the end of the current financial year, so it was in place before the start of the next financial year.

(7) In response to a question about the legality of the meeting and the presentation of the Budget, Mr Watts confirmed that, although the presentation of the Budget deviated from custom and practice, both the meeting and presentation of the Budget met legal and constitutional requirements.

(8) The Chairman concluded the initial general debate and progressed to consideration of amendments to the proposed budget. In the course of the debate on the amendments, Mr Watts advised the Council that all amendments put forward had been approved by the s151 Officer from a financial perspective and by him as the Monitoring Officer from a constitutional perspective as being suitable for debate and agreement if so voted by Members.

Amendment 1 – Council Tax

(9) Mr Hook proposed, and Ida Linfield seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose

“The Council recognises that council tax is a regressive tax, the burden of which unfairly falls on Kent households with limited incomes. Consequently, increases in council tax, together with the social care precept, will fall disproportionately on those least able to pay. The Council notes that any change to the current council tax bands and charging structure needs to be sanctioned by Parliament. The Council therefore agrees that the Leader of the Council should write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting that the current council tax bands and charging structures in England be reviewed, as a matter of urgency, so they better reflect people’s ability to pay the tax.”

(10) A change to the second sentence to make it read “Consequently increases in council tax together with the social care precept can place an undue burden on those least able to pay, albeit mitigated by the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and additional relief measures supported by this Council” was proposed by the Leader of the Council. The proposer and seconder of the amendment agreed to these words and the Chairman put the revised amendment to the vote. The voting was as follows:

For (70)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bird, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, Mr Burden, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Miss Constantine, Mr Cook, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mrs Game, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Harman, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Homewood, Mr Hook, Mr Horwood, Mr Hotson, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Koowaree, Mr Lake, Mr Lewis, Ida Linfield, Mr Long, Mr Lymer, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Monk, Miss Morton, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mr

Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Simkins, Dr Sullivan, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, Mr Whybrow, Mr Wright

Against (0)

Abstain (1) Mr Love

Amendment carried.

Amendment 2 – Budget Scrutiny

(11) Dr Sullivan proposed, and Mr Farrell seconded the following amendment:

“That the budget monitoring report provided to each Cabinet meeting be updated to include:

(a) Financial information on all projects costing between £100,000 and £1m;

(b) Information on all decisions taken by Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors under their delegation with a financial impact between £100,000 and £1m within the financial year and a report on these to the relevant Committee as well;

(c) Information on all financial spend at variance with the agreed budget for each key service line;

(d) The above items (a-c) should be placed as a standing item on the scrutiny committee agenda so that officers and cabinet members can question the decisions taken.”

(12) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 11 above and the voting was as follows:

For (15)

Mr Bird, Mr Burden, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Miss Constantine, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mr Harman, Mr Hook, Mr Hotson, Mr Koowaree, Mr Lewis, Ida Linfield, Dr Sullivan, Mr Whybrow

Against (55)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Mr Cook, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Game, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Homewood, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Lake, Mr Long, Mr Love, Mr Lymer, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Monk, Miss Morton, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mr Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright

Abstain (0)

Amendment lost.

Amendment 3 – KCC Member Community Grant

(13) Mr Whybrow proposed, and Mrs Dean seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose

“The KCC Member Community Grant is a vital financial lifeline for many local charities and community groups, with a likely particular demand in 2021/22 due to a reduction in income and increased demand in services for many of these due to the effects of the pandemic.”

Proposed Amount

“Increase KCC Community Member Grants by £581,000.”

Proposed Funding Source

“The proposed reduction from £20,000 to £10,000 per member would bring a saving of £810,000. To partially offset this, on a one-off basis, it is proposed that the unallocated underspend on Member Community Grants from the previous four years of £581,000 is not returned to reserves but is rolled over to 2021-22. This would give a total Member Community Grant fund of £1.391 million, equating to a grant of £17,173 per member to support their local communities. If agreed this would only be implemented after the final 2020-21 outturn has been confirmed.”

(14) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 13 above and the voting was as follows:

For (30)

Mrs Binks, Mr Bird, Mr Bond, Mr Bowles, Mr Burden, Sir Paul Carter Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Miss Constantine, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mr Harman, Mr Homewood, Mr Hook, Mr Hotson, Mr Lake, Mr Lewis, Ida Linfield, Mr Lymer, Mr Marsh, Mr Monk, Mr Murphy, Mr Pascoe, Miss Rankin, Mr Rayner, Dr Sullivan, Mr Thomas, Mr Whybrow

Against (41)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Game, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Horwood, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Long, Mr Love, Mr Manion, Mr McInroy, Miss Morton, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright

Abstain (0)

Amendment lost.

Amendment 4 – Community Wardens

(15) Mr Chittenden proposed, and Mr Hook seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose

“This valuable service to local residents has been in place since 2002 and has gradually been expanded to cover more than 100 local communities, mostly in rural areas. Wardens build up very close relationships with their communities which includes working with local PCSOs, befriending the elderly, many of whom are particularly vulnerable and lonely, and working with local youths. Recognising the valuable impact that Community Wardens have, in June 2020, a key decision was taken by the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services to enhance and expand the service.”

Proposed Amount

“We propose that the £220,000 saving is put back into the revenue budget for 2021/22 and that fixed-term appointments are made to take the Community Warden service to its full complement of posts. This can then be reviewed in the 2022/23 Medium Term Plan to determine whether the fixed term posts can be extended, made permanent or ended.”

Proposed Funding Source

“This would be funded by ringfencing £220,000 from the unallocated 2020-21 Covid-19 Emergency Grant, to be spent in 2021/22. If agreed this would only be implemented after the final 2020-21 outturn has been confirmed.”

(16) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 15 above and the voting was as follows:

For (13)

Mr Bird, Mr Burden, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Miss Constantine, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mr Harman, Mr Hook, Mr Lewis, Ida Linfield, Dr Sullivan, Mr Whybrow

Against (57)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Game, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Homewood, Mr Horwood, Mr Hotson, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Lake, Mr Long, Mr Love, Mr Lymer, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Monk, Miss Morton, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mr Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright

Abstain (0)

Amendment lost.

Amendment 5 – Public Rights of Way

(17) Mr Chittenden proposed, and Ida Linfield seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose

“The current pandemic has placed huge restrictions on the residents of Kent for almost a year. During that time, the one consistent activity allowed and recommended for mental and physical health was walking.”

Proposed Amount

The Public Rights of Way service regularly reports that the shortfall on recommended Asset Management spend is £2m per annum and increasing due to extent of current usage and we propose a one-off investment of £600,000 to deal with the most urgent safety issues including major remediation to pathways and urgent increasing safeguarding repairs to styles, kissing gates and other footpath related items.”

Proposed Funding Source

“This would be funded by ringfencing £600,000 from the unallocated 2020-21 Covid-19 Emergency Grant. If agreed this would only be implemented after the final 2020-21 outturn has been confirmed.”

(18) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 17 above and the voting was as follows:

For (13)

Mr Bird, Mr Burden, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Miss Constantine, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mr Harman, Mr Hook, Mr Lewis, Ida Linfield, Dr Sullivan, Mr Whybrow

Against (56)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Game, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Homewood, Mr Horwood, Mr Hotson, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Lake, Mr Long, Mr Love, Mr Lymer, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Monk, Miss Morton, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Rayner, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, , Mr Whiting, Mr Wright

Abstain: (1) Mr Thomas

Amendment lost.

Amendment 6 – Country Parks

(19) Mrs Dean proposed, and Mr Chittenden seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose

During the first lockdown of 2020, the nine country parks which KCC manages saw an average 60% increase in visitor numbers. Inevitably this has created additional wear and tear on footpaths and other infrastructure such as gates, which will add to the existing maintenance backlog. With the current lockdown measures set to continue well into the Spring, it is expected that this increased usage will continue.”

Proposed Amount

We propose a one-off investment of £400,000 to allow for repairs/replacements of assets within Kent Country Parks, over and above those already planned, where deemed most necessary.”

Proposed Funding Source

This would be funded by ringfencing £400,000 from the unallocated 2020-21 Covid-19 Emergency Grant, to be spent in 2021/22. If agreed this would only be implemented after the final 2020-21 outturn has been confirmed.”

(20) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 19 above and the voting was as follows:

For (12)

Mr Bird, Mr Burden, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Miss Constantine, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mr Harman, Mr Hook, Ida Linfield, Dr Sullivan, Mr Whybrow

Against (55)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Game, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Homewood, Mr Hotson, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Long, Mr Love, Mr Lymer, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Monk, Miss Morton, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Rayner, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright

Amendment lost.

Amendment 7 – Befriending Service

(21) Ida Linfield proposed, and Mr Hook seconded the following amendment

Proposed Purpose

“The findings of the Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee concluded that when social isolation is addressed it does indeed prevent mental health problems, the onset of dementia, and eases pressure on the NHS. The Covid pandemic and subsequent lockdowns have without doubt confirmed the appalling and tragic consequences of isolation both in Kent and nationwide. Significant Covid-19 grant funds have been provided by the government to help alleviate the impact of the pandemic, much of which are yet to be spent. The Lib Dem group believes that commissioning a befriending service would be an excellent use for a proportion of these grant funds and would provide major benefits to lonely and vulnerable residents of all ages.”

Proposed Amount

“We propose establishing a countywide befriending service for a duration of 3 years costing £325,000.”

Proposed Funding Source

“This would be funded by ringfencing £325,000 from the unallocated 2020-21 Covid-19 Emergency Grant, with £125,000 to be spent in 2021/22 and £100,000 to be spent in 2022/23. 2021/22 includes £25,000 to cover additional costs for initial establishment of the service. If agreed this would only be implemented after the final 2020-21 outturn has been confirmed.”

(22) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 21 above and the voting was as follows:

For (12)

Mr Bird, Mr Burden, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Miss Constantine, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mr Harman, Mr Hook, Ida Linfield, Dr Sullivan, Mr Whybrow

Against (56)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Mr Cook, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Game, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Homewood, Mr Horwood, Mr Hotson, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Lake, Mr Long, Mr Love, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Monk, Miss Morton, Mr

Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright

Abstain (0)

Amendment lost.

Amendment 8 – Recovering a Generation: Children’s Centres

(23) Dr Sullivan proposed, and Mr Burden seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Amount

“Allocate £750,000 of unspent 2020-21 Covid emergency grant to children’s centres, to increase support services and provision over extended hours, on a one-off basis for 2021/22. This will further support in mitigating the negative impacts of sustained lockdown on children and their families.”

Proposed Funding Source

“Unspent 2020-21 Covid emergency grant, subject to the final outturn position.”

(24) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 23 above and the voting was as follows:

For (12)

Mr Bird, Mr Burden, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Miss Constantine, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mr Harman, Mr Hook, Ida Linfield, Dr Sullivan, Mr Whybrow

Against (57)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Mr Cook, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Game, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Homewood, Mr Horwood, Mr Hotson, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Lake, Mr Long, Mr Love, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Monk, Miss Morton Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Rayner, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright

Abstain (0)

Amendment lost.

Amendment 9 - Recovering a Generation – Youth Services

(25) Mr Farrell proposed, and Miss Constantine seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Amount

“Allocate £750,000 of unspent 2020-21 Covid emergency grant to one-off enhanced youth provision. To included fun activities to facilitate discussions around mental health and wellbeing, preventing medical interventions where possible. This will seek to address the negative impacts of sustained lockdown and home-schooling on young people and their families.”

Proposed Funding Source

“Unspent 2020-21 Covid emergency grant, subject to the final outturn position.”

(26) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 24 above and the voting was as follows:

For (12)

Mr Bird, Mr Burden, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Miss Constantine, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mr Harman, Mr Hook, Mr Hotson, Ida Linfield, Mr Whybrow

Against (54)

Mrs Allen, Mr Balfour, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Mr Cook, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Game, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Homewood, Mr Horwood, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Lake, Mr Long, Mr Love, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Monk, Miss Morton Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Rayner, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright

Abstain (2) Mr Angell, Mr Barrington-King

Amendment lost.

(In accordance with her declaration of interest, Dr Sullivan took no part in the debate or voting on the *Recovering a Generation – Youth Services amendment* as set out in paragraphs 25 and 26 above)

(27) The Chairman proposed, and the Vice-Chairman seconded a motion in accordance with paragraph 14.48 of Part 3 of the Council's constitution that the meeting be extended beyond 5pm.

(28) The Chairman put the motion to the vote and the voting was as follows

For (69)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bird, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Miss Constantine, Mr Cook, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mrs Game, Mr Gibbens, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Harman, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Homewood, Mr Hook, Mr Horwood, Mr Hotson, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Lake, Ida Linfield, Mr Long, Mr Love, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Monk, Miss Morton, Mr Murphy, Mr Northey, Mr Oakford, Mr Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Rayner, Mr Simkins, Dr Sullivan, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, Mr Whybrow, Mr Wright

Against (0)

Abstain (0)

Motion carried.

(29) Dr Sullivan asked the Head of the Paid Service for assurance that all financial regulations as previously agreed by the County Council had been appropriately and correctly followed in presenting the proposed Budget to County Council.

(30) Mr Cockburn said that, whilst recognising that more information could have helped members understand the budget, with the assurance from the Monitoring Officer and the Corporate Director of Finance, he was satisfied as to the legality of the paper presented.

(31) Mr Gough and Mr Oakford summarised the debate. As all the amendments had either been determined or withdrawn, the Chairman put to the vote the substantive motion as set out in paragraph 3 above, with the addition of the relevant text from the carried amendment in paragraphs 9 and 10 above and the voting was as follows:

For (55)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Mr Cook, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Game, Mr Gibbens, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Homewood, Mr Horwood, Mrs Hurst, Mr Kite, Mr Lake, Mr Long, Mr Love, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Miss Morton, Mr McInroy, Mr Monk, Mr Murphy, Mr Northey, Mr Oakford, Mr Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright

Against (12)

Mr Bird, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Miss Constantine, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mr Harman, Mr Hook, Mr Hotson, Ida Linfield, Dr Sullivan, Mr Whybrow

Abstain (2)

Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper,

Substantive Motion Carried.

(32) The following Members, who voted against the substantive motion, wished that their views in relation to recommendations M and N in paragraph 3 above be recorded:

Recommendation M

Supported Mr Bird, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Miss Constantine, Mrs Dean, Mr Hook, Mr Horwood, Ida Linfield, Mr Whybrow

Not Supported Mr Hotson

Recommendation N

Supported Mr Bird, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Miss Constantine, Mrs Dean, Mr Farrell, Mr Hook, Mr Hotson, Ida Linfield, Mr Whybrow

(33) Resolved that the County Council approves the following:

- (a) The net revenue budget requirement of £1,132.426m for 2021-22.
- (b) The 10-year capital programme and investment proposals of £1,057.925m over three years from 2021-22 to 2023-24 together with the necessary funding and subject to approval to spend arrangements.

- (c) The directorate capital programmes as set out in appendices A & B of the final draft budget report published on 3rd February 2021.
- (d) The directorate revenue budget proposals as set out in appendices C to F of the final draft budget report published on 3rd February 2021.
- (e) The Capital Strategy as set out in appendix J of the final draft report published on 3rd February 2021 including the Prudential Indicators.
- (f) The Treasury Management Strategy as set out in appendix K of the final draft report published on 3rd February 2021
- (g) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement as set out in appendix M of the final draft report published on 3rd February 2021.
- (h) The Reserves Policy as set out in Appendix N, including the review of the rollover procedures for 2020-21 outturn to improve financial resilience and treatment of general underspends
- (i) To delegate responsibility to Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors to manage the budget within the parameters set out in the Constitution and Financial Regulations.
- (j) To increase Council Tax band rates up to the maximum permitted without a referendum as set out in section 6 table 5 (page 20 of the report) in the final draft report published on 3rd February 2021.
- (k) To levy the additional 3% social care precept (raising an additional £22,228,900 and taking the total social care precept to £87,335,000 out of the precept set out in recommendation (l) below).
- (l) The total Council Tax requirement of £778,704,100 to be raised through precepts on districts as set out in section 6, table 4 (page 19 of the report) in the final draft report published on 3rd February.
- (m) The Personnel Committee recommendation of an increase of 2% for 2021-22 for all Kent Scheme staff with the corresponding adjustment to pay scales (and noting the voluntary freeze for 2021-22 to Kent Range 17 and above offered by Corporate Directors and Directors)
- (n) The Personnel Committee recommendation to increase to the entry value of the lowest grade (KR2/3) to £9.55 per hour to maintain the position above the national minimum and marginally above the Living Wage Foundation for April 2021.

In addition:

- (o) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Finance (after consultation with the Leader, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate & Traded Services and the political Group Leaders) to resolve any minor technical issues for the final budget publication which do not materially alter the approved budget or change the net budget requirement and for any changes made to be reflected in the final version of the Budget Book (blue combed) due to be published in March 2021.
- (p) To note the uncertain financial outlook for later years in the absence of a multi-year settlement from government and the potential scenarios for recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic as set out in appendix I of the final draft report published on 3rd February 2021.
- (q) The Leader of the Council should write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting that the current council tax bands and charging structures in England be reviewed, as a matter of urgency, so they better reflect people's ability to pay the tax.