

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the County Council held online on Thursday, 11 March 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 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, Miss D Morton, Mr R A Marsh, Mr J P McInroy, Mr P J Messenger, Mr D D Monk, 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 A M Ridgers, 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 B Watts (General Counsel)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

274. Apologies for Absence
(Item 1)

The General Counsel reported apologies from Mr Daley, Miss Dawson, Mr Koowaree and Mrs Stockell. Mr Butler, Mr Farrell and Mr Simkins gave their apologies for the afternoon session.

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

- (1) The Chairman declared an interest in item 8 on the agenda as he received a pension from the Australia and New Zealand Bank group who were mentioned in the report. Mr Bartlett also declared an interest in item 8 as he is an employee of the Bank of New York and one of the funds listed in the report was managed by an affiliate of the Bank of New York. He stayed in the meeting but did not participate in the discussion of the item.

- (2) Miss Morton declared an interest as she had recently taken up employment as a nurse vaccinator with the Kent Community Health Foundation Trust which worked in partnership with Kent County Council.
- (3) During item 10 Mr Burden declared an interest as he was chairman of Age UK Northwest Kent. He did not take part in the discussion relating to question 6 from Ida Linfield to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health about funding for Age UK branches in Canterbury.

276. Minutes of the meetings held on 10 December 2020 and 11 February 2021
(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 10 December 2020 and 11 February 2021 be approved as a correct record subject to a correction to minute 268 from December 2020 to show that Mrs Hohler had not voted on the item.

277. Chairman's Announcements
(Item 4)

(a) **Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport**

The Chairman said Barbara Cooper, the Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport, would be retiring on 31 March, after almost twelve years with Kent County Council. He said Mrs Cooper had joined the Council in 2009 from Swale Borough Council and had worked in local government for over 20 years. She had been a stalwart supporter of growth in Kent and had worked tirelessly for the good of the county, including on projects such as the Thanet Parkway, the Creative Estuary and the Production Corridor. He said Mrs Cooper had risen to the particular challenges of Brexit and the coronavirus pandemic over the last twelve months with characteristic enthusiasm, knowledge, and good humour. He said she was described by her colleagues as a truly inspirational leader with amazing levels of energy and commitment to getting the job done. He concluded by saying she would be greatly missed and asked members and officers to join him in wishing her all the very best for her future endeavours.

(b) **Director of Public Health**

The Chairman said that Andrew Scott-Clark, Director of Public Health, would be retiring in June. He thanked him for his hard work and his support over many years and in particular for his support during his term as cabinet member with responsibility for public health. He said Mr Scott-Clark had worked in public health for around 20 years, but the last 12 months had been an unparalleled challenge. He asked members to join him in thanking Mr Scott-Clark for everything he had done for the county and in wishing him well for his future endeavours.

(c) **Mr Balfour**

The Chairman said that Mr Balfour was in hospital following an injury to his ankle and sent him best wishes for a speedy recovery.

278. Questions
(Item 5)

In accordance with Sections 14.15 to 14.22 of the Constitution, six questions were asked and replies given. A record of all questions put and answers given at the meeting is available [online](#) with the papers for this meeting.

279. Report by Leader of the Council (Oral)
(Item 6)

- (1) The Leader updated the council on events since the previous meeting.
- (2) Mr Gough said he would like to associate himself with the Chairman's words about Barbara Cooper and Andrew Scott-Clark who had both given outstanding service to the county and to the council and in particular during the last most testing year. He also recognised that this meeting would be the last for many members and thanked the Chairman for his friendship and support over many years as well as his grace and good humour in charring meetings of the county council. He paid tribute to the group leaders, Mr Bird and Mr Whybrow, who were not seeking re-election. He said it had been a pleasure to work with them and congratulated Mr Whybrow on being the first Green party member elected to Kent County Council. He thanked colleagues from his own party, including Mr Northey and Mr Pugh, who had made significant contributions to both the county council and the communities they served over many years.
- (3) Mr Gough then considered how circumstances had changed since the county council meeting in December. At that time, he had reported that the authority was looking to set up its first symptom-free coronavirus testing sites in Thanet and Swale and he was pleased to report that since then almost 400,000 tests had been conducted in a network of sites across the county. He said that a few weeks after the meeting in December, the seven-day rate of Covid-19 infections in Kent had peaked at just under 900 cases per 100,000 of the population and that the rate currently stood at 37.2 per 100,000. He said the reduction in the rate of infection and the roll out of the vaccine meant that the journey to normality could begin. He said the road map to recovery including school return and local outbreak control plans would be considered at an all-member briefing on the 12 March and he hoped that as many members as possible would be able to attend.
- (4) Mr Gough said that a few weeks after the meeting of the county council in December a decision of the French government to block channel crossings for 48 hours had a huge impact on the east of the county and, in particular, on the town of Dover. He said officers and members had responded well at the time and it was intended to reflect on lessons learned and look to future at the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 15 March. He also said the Cabinet would consider the Reconnect programme designed to support young people in Kent as part of the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. He said it was an exciting programme but that he did not want to pre-empt the discussion at Cabinet by saying too much now.
- (5) Mr Gough then turned his attention to the items which he thought would be in the in-tray for the new administration following the elections in May. Firstly, he referred to finance. He said projections from the Office of Budget Responsibility indicated that funding for 'non-protected [government] departments' which included local government would remain under real term pressure and that this had been reinforced by a National Audit Office report published on 10 March which set out the financial and other pressures facing local government. He said that, while he did not expect to see a repetition of the austerity experienced 8-10 years ago, the overall funding framework was likely to remain tight and he

anticipated that this would be easier to manage the sooner the authority had medium term rather than one-year financial settlements to work with. He also said the authority would continue to push for its fair share of funding particularly under the Fair Funding Review. Mr Gough referred to the announcement of the Levelling Up Fund and the Towns Fund, from which Margate had received funding, and the Community Renewal Fund. He said the authority would play a key role, in conjunction with the district councils and local members of parliament, in the delivery of the Levelling Up Fund in Kent. He said the process for bidding for money from the fund was complicated and not all Kent districts would benefit. He welcomed the fact that the funding was being routed through local government and anticipated that the Shared Prosperity Fund would also be channelled through local government.

- (6) Secondly, Mr Gough said that public health would feature prominently in the in-tray of the new administration. He said the government had published its White Paper on the Health and Social Care Bill on 11 February, the same day Kent County Council had agreed its budget. He said the White Paper spoke about local government as an equal partner with the NHS and the need for co-operation between them; emphasised the importance of place; and indicated that the preferred geography of integrated care systems was to align them with upper tier local authorities. He said it was right and essential that many of the changes since 2015, which were gradually replacing many of the provision of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, should be consolidated and enshrined in legislation. Mr Gough said the proposed architecture of an integrated care system NHS body and an ICS Health and Care Partnership with health and wellbeing boards playing a significant role had yet to be published. He also said the long promised White Paper on social care was still awaited. He commended the work of the County Councils' Network and Danny Kruger MP working through Demos and said a paper would be presented to a meeting of the county council early in the new term.
- (7) Thirdly, Mr Gough said that further activity in relation to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children would be in the in-tray of the new administration. He said the number of new arrivals was currently low, but the position could change quickly. He said there were 288 under-18s in the care of Kent County Council and there were 1,066 care leavers. He said the authority would continue to lobby for a National Transfer Scheme over the coming weeks.
- (8) Mr Gough drew members' attention to the announcements by Mr Payne (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) relating to highways including the recent launch of a £10 million pothole blitz which followed a very active programme of improvements and developments over a number of years. He also referred to the Vision Zero strategy, which had ambitious targets for road safety improvements and for ways of working with communities, as well as to the public sector Decarbonisation Fund of £21 million for energy projects and £2.25 million for school sites which was being managed by SALIX Finance on behalf of the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- (9) He concluded his report by saying that after today's meeting, many members would turn their attention to the election campaign, and that residents would pass their judgement on members' performance over the previous four years. He said he would turn to the campaign with hope and with pride in the record of the administration in serving the people of Kent.
- (10) Mr Bird, the Leader of the Opposition, thanked the Leader for his kind words and said that he too had appreciated their constructive dialogue. He thanked officers who had assisted him throughout his time as a councillor and although there were

too many to mention by name he paid tribute to Barbara Cooper and Andrew Scott-Clark who were, like him, stepping back from KCC. He said he would advise any new member to get to know officers as it was much easier to be an effective member with their help and support. He also paid tribute to his colleague, George Koowaree who was stepping down in May.

- (11) Mr Bird said he had suggested three priorities for Mr Gough's attention when he became Leader of the Council but at the time neither of them had anticipated the impact of Covid-19. Nevertheless, he hoped the priorities of tackling climate change, dealing with inequalities, particularly in health and education, and in supporting community volunteers and carers would be taken forward by the new administration. He said there would be many challenges in the coming years and that KCC would have a major role in supporting the health and wellbeing of residents. He welcomed the increasing partnership working between the authority and local NHS organisations. He went on to say that the authority's most important partner was central government and that he was trying to understand how the government could have spent £37 million on a test and trace system which failed. He said the Chancellor's recent budget had been reasonably well received by the press but had done nothing to help local government. He noted that the authority was awaiting the allocation of public health grants which he thought was not good enough as the public health team needed to be planning for recovery and not wondering whether it would be possible to maintain existing services. He acknowledged the case for reform of local government finance made by the Leader to the Secretary of State and said the ever increasing reliance on an unfair council tax system to fund local services was untenable as it placed too great a burden on households that were just about managing.
- (12) Mr Bird said, although he and the Leader had not always agreed with each other's approach to issues, he was clear that there was a common bond of wanting the best for the residents of Kent among all members and parties. He hoped that the role of the council and, in particular, the work of officers over the last year was properly appreciated.
- (13) Mr Farrell, Leader of the Labour Group said that the government's recent budget was remarkable for what it failed to mention including how Covid-19 related expenditure would be repaid and the impact of the fact that in the future people would take home less of the money they earned. He wondered if austerity would return before it ever went away. He also commented on the £37 billion spent on the failed Covid-19 test and trace system and suggested that this money could have been spent giving each nurse a payment of just under £125,000. He went on to comment on the government's debate about whether to award NHS staff an extra £3.50 or an extra £7.50 a week, its expenditure of £340,000 plus legal fees to enable the Home Secretary to avoid the consequences of bullying, its unwillingness to fund meals for school children, and its re-heated policy on home ownership for young people. He said plans to turn 'generation rent' into 'generation buy' were laudable but there was a worrying lack of action on 'generation universal credit'. He further said that the number of people in receipt of Universal Credit had risen by 5.1% in the three months to December 2020, almost three-fifths of whom were under 25 years of age, and that the number of people on company payrolls was 726,000 down on pre-pandemic levels. He thought there was little point in offering young people a mortgage at an interest rate of 5% if they could not get a job to enable them to make the repayments. He said the Chancellor had been keen to advertise his budget on Instagram but there was nothing in it for schools, teachers, the Police, NHS staff and nothing in it to tackle inequalities or to fix social care. He said local councils were also ignored and wondered why the promised review of the Fair Funding and the Business Rate Retention schemes had not been completed and why the White Paper on

Devolution and the Green Paper on Social Care Reform had not come forward. He said the national budget fell short in relation to councils who needed to help their communities recover from the pandemic and that the Levelling Up Fund smacked of trying to retain or buy votes in constituencies represented by Conservative MPs. He contrasted Robert Jenrick's intervention to assure approval of a Conservative party donor's £1 billion development within 24 hours with the fact that years after the Grenfell fire there were still 56,000 people living in homes with unsafe cladding.

- (14) Mr Farrell said the next administration at Kent County Council faced many challenges including an outdated local taxation system and many outdated key strategies. He suggested that the authority needed to move away from vanity projects and return to the day job of supporting communities and investing in services.
- (15) He concluded by acknowledging that this meeting was the last for some members. He said it had been an honour and a privilege to be a member of Kent County Council and to work with 80 other members. He also wished to be associated with the words spoken by the Leader and the Chairman about Mrs Cooper and Mr Scott-Clark.
- (16) Mr Whybrow, Leader of the Independents Group, thanked the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman for their efforts and wished them very happy years ahead. He commended the Chairman for choosing Porchlight as his charity for the year. He thanked Mrs Cooper and Mr Scott-Clark for their hard work and wished them well. He thanked the Leader for his kind words and said that he too had appreciated good working relationships across the political spectrum. He said that one of the most positive aspects of his eight years as a county councillor had been the calibre, helpfulness and professionalism of officers and he thanked them. He concluded his thanks by thanking all the members of the opposition including his colleagues in the Independents Group.
- (17) Mr Whybrow then responded to the Leader's report. He said the numbing effects of a decade of austerity might be forgotten because of the slightly better than anticipated financial settlement and drew attention to the report of the National Audit Office which referred to the 'scarring of councils' balance sheets and to the fact that at least 25 councils were close to bankruptcy. He also suggested that the proposed pay increase of 1% for NHS and social care staff demonstrated the tone-deaf nature of the government. Mr Whybrow said the national budget had not been good from a green recovery perspective and that the only way to ensure recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic was through an economic transformation that prioritised the wellbeing of people and the planet over a fixation with growth and GDP. He expressed surprise that the government, which had signed up to the Paris Climate Agreement and was planning to host the COP26 Climate Summit later in the year, was also proposing to cut air passenger duty on domestic flights, had allowed a freeze on fuel duty and had agreed to eye-watering rail fare increases. He suggested that, even for KCC, there was a danger of a disconnect between the rhetoric relating to zero carbon and actions leading to results. He assumed that in future all KCC's own planning applications would be zero carbon in terms of carbon usage and that issues relating to its estate would be addressed soon. He further suggested that KCC's capital programme and bids considered by the Southeast Local Enterprise Partnership should support walking, cycling and public transport projects and reiterated his call for KCC to divest from fossil fuels.
- (18) Mr Whybrow concluded by saying he was not standing for re-election and looked forward to spending more time on activities in the community. He hoped there

would be greater diversity among the next set of members and that central government would recognise the financial and other resources needed by the local government sector.

- (19) Mr Gough responded to the comments of the Group Leaders. He said the current administration had a record to be proud of on climate change and biodiversity. The administration had brought forward an Energy and Low Emissions Strategy and had set targets to achieve Net Zero for its estate and operations by 2030. He also said much thought had been given to responding to the social impact of Covid-19 and many of the announcements made in recent weeks, including the Helping Hands funding, were aimed at addressing such issues. He also said these issues would be discussed further along with support for volunteers and carers later in the meeting.
- (20) Mr Gough said the authority's relationship with the local NHS was very good and acknowledged that the levels of centralisation within the NHS remained a key issue. He anticipated that a paper would be brought to the County Council about health and social care early in the new term. He also said the picture was mixed in relation to local government finance and that the funding Robert Jenrick had provided over the last year indicated that he had acted as a champion of the sector. He acknowledged that local government historically was not as high on the government's list of priorities as the NHS and armed forces.
- (21) Mr Gough said he did not propose to address Mr Farrell's comments about the central government and said his claim that the authority had few up to date strategies could not be substantiated and he referred in particular to the strategic reset and the interim strategic plan brought in when the authority had to step back from the widely-admired five-year plan because of Covid-19. He concluded by referring to the work underway to reach carbon zero in relation to the authority's own estate and operations.
- (22) RESOLVED that the Leader's report be noted.

280. Pay Policy Statement 2021-22 *(Item 7)*

- (1) Mrs Prendergast proposed and Mr Oakford seconded the motion that:
- “The County Council endorses the Pay Policy Statement.”
- (2) Following the debate the Chairman put the motion set out in paragraph 1 to the vote and the voting was as follows:

For (65)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Balfour, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bird, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr Butler, Miss Carey, Sir Paul Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chittenden, Mrs Cole, Mr Collor, Mr Cook, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mrs Crabtree, Mr Dance, Mrs Dean, Mrs Game, Mr Gough, Mrs Hamilton, 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 Lymer, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Messenger, Miss Morton, Mr Murphy, Mr Northey, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mr Pascoe, Mr Payne, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Pugh, Miss Rankin, Mr Rayner, Mr Ridgers, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, Mr Whybrow, Mr Wright

Against (6)

Mr Burden, Mr Clinch, Mr Farrell, Mr Harman, Mr Lewis, Dr Sullivan

Abstain (0)

Motion Carried.

(3) RESOLVED that the County Council endorses the Pay Policy Statement.

281. Treasury Management 6 Month Review 2020/21
(Item 8)

(1) Mr Oakford proposed and Mrs Crabtree seconded the following motion:

“Members are asked to consider and comment on this report.”

(2) The motion as set out in paragraph 1 was agreed without a formal vote.

(3) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

282. Covid-19 - Delivering through the Pandemic
(Item 9)

(1) Mr Gough proposed and Mrs Bell seconded the following motion:

“County Council is asked to note and comment on activity undertaken by KCC and partners to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for recovery.”

(2) The motion as set out in paragraph 1 was agreed without a formal vote.

(3) RESOLVED to note the activity undertaken by KCC and partners to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and prepare for recovery.

283. Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund
(Item 10)

(1) Mr Oakford proposed and Mr Gough seconded the following motion:

“The County Council is asked to note the report and support the proposal to create the Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund for 2021-22 under part (a) of the Helping Hands Support Scheme via Executive Decision 21/00024.”

(2) The motion as set out in paragraph 1 was agreed without a formal vote.

(3) RESOLVED that the County Council notes the report and supports the proposal to create the Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund for 2021-22 under part (a) of the Helping Hands Support Scheme via Executive Decision 21/00024.

284. Motion for Time Limited Debate
(Item 11)

Promoting respite services in Kent

- (1) Ida Linfield proposed and Mrs Dean seconded the following motion:

“This Council notes the many benefits to health and wellbeing that respite services and short breaks provide to carers. However, it is clear that even before the current pandemic many carers in the county were not accessing any support. These numbers are likely to have increased markedly, and stress levels amongst carers are known to be very high.

The Council commits to actively promoting respite breaks for all carers across Kent by launching a new publicity campaign to raise awareness to those carers who have yet to take advantage of the short break and respite services to which they are entitled”.

- (2) Mrs Bell proposed and Miss Morton seconded the following amendment:

“This Council notes the many benefits to health and wellbeing that respite services and short breaks provide to carers. However, it is clear that even before the current pandemic many carers in the county were not accessing any support. These numbers are likely to have increased markedly, and stress levels amongst carers are known to be very high.

~~The Council commits to actively promoting respite breaks for all carers across Kent by launching a new publicity campaign to raise awareness to those carers who have yet to take advantage of the short break and respite services to which they are entitled.~~

The Council congratulates the administration on the Making a Difference Every Day programme. The Council further supports the determination of the administration to continue and expand on the work to improve engagement with carers, to raise awareness of the services available to carers, and to actively promote these services via the KCC Comms Team, as well as our partners in Primary Care, the voluntary sector, district councils and others, to ensure that carers across Kent are able to benefit from the short break and respite opportunities and other support available to them.”

- (3) Following the debate the Chairman put the amendment set out in paragraph 2 to the vote and the voting was as follows:

For (54)

Mrs Allen, Mr Angell, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, 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 Long, Mr Love, Mr Lymer, Mr Manion, 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 Ridgers, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, , Mr Wright

Against (11)

Mr Bird, Mr Burden, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Mrs Dean, Mr Harman, Mr Hook, Mr Hotson, Ida Linfield, Dr Sullivan, Mr Whybrow

Abstain (0)

Amendment carried.

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

For (50)

Mrs Allen, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Beresford, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Bowles, Mr Brazier, 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 Long, Mr Love, Mr Lymer, Mr Manion, Mr McInroy, 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 Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright

Against (13)

Mr Angell, Mr Bird, Mr Burden, Mr Chittenden, Mr Clinch, Mrs Dean, Mr Harman, Mr Hook, Mr Hotson, Ida Linfield, Mr Messenger, Dr Sullivan, Mr Whybrow

Abstain (0)

Substantive motion carried.

- (5) RESOLVED that:

- (a) This Council notes the many benefits to health and wellbeing that respite services and short breaks provide to carers. However, it is clear that even before the current pandemic many carers in the county were not accessing any support. These numbers are likely to have increased markedly, and stress levels amongst carers are known to be very high.
- (b) The Council congratulates the administration on the Making a Difference Every Day programme. The Council further supports the determination of the administration to continue and expand on the work to improve engagement with carers, to raise awareness of the services available to carers, and to actively promote these services via the KCC Comms Team, as well as our partners in Primary Care, the voluntary sector, district councils and others, to ensure that carers across Kent are able to benefit from the short break and respite opportunities and other support available to them.

285. Chairman's Remarks *(Item)*

The Chairman thanked members for their support and help during the life of the administration. He paid tribute to the leaders of the opposition groups and thanked them for their help in making virtual meetings work. He also thanked the Vice-Chairman, Mr Northey for his counsel and advice during the year. He thanked officers for their support

and advice over the last four years and, in particular, over the last twelve months for their efforts in facilitating the move to virtual meetings of the council without any detriment to the democratic process. He concluded by thanking members who were not seeking re-election for their input and he wished those who were standing for re-election the best of luck.