

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 1 December 2022.

PRESENT: Mr R W Gough (Chairman), Mrs C Bell, Mr D L Brazier, Miss S J Carey, Mrs S Chandler, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr D Murphy, Mr P J Oakford and Mrs S Prendergast

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Apologies

(Item 1)

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2022

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 29 September 2022 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

3. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report (quarter 2)

(Item 4)

1. Mr Oakford (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services) introduced the report.
2. Mr Oakford said there was a projected revenue overspend of £60.9 million, an increase of £10.3 million since the last report. Mr Oakford then gave an overview which noted the seriousness of the situation, the causes attributed to the overspend, the use of the risk reserve and the significant management action required in response. Mr Oakford said that the projection had been one of the most challenging that the Council had faced, and difficult decisions would need to be made.
3. Mrs Bell (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health) said that a significant element of the overspend related to the Adult Social Care and Health directorate. Mrs Bell said that savings were to be made in part through the procurement of new models of care. Workforce and recruitment issues had delayed the delivery of the benefits arising from self-directed care. Delays to the procurement and lead-in time from the pilots had led to a slippage of £4.8 million of savings.

There had also been slippage in the delivery of the new operating model of Social Care, delayed from 2022 to 2023-24 due to the size and scale of the required restructure. Workforce and market pressures had further affected the delivery of savings with more people placed into short-term residential care with non-framework providers. Mrs Bell informed the committee of what

monitoring measures and management actions had been put in place to address the overspend. A range of areas were reviewed to minimise non-essential spending. The full extent of the savings to be achieved had yet to be quantified, but limited savings for 2022 were forecast, with greater savings intended to be found in 2023.

4. Miss Carey (Cabinet Member for Environment) noted the impact of waste on the budget. The income generated through recycling had been affected by market changes. Miss Carey noted that the Council had introduced measures encouraging the reduction of waste volumes and promoting reuse and recycling countywide.
5. Mrs Chandler (Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services) gave an overview on the recruitment, maintenance and use of agency staff for social workers in the county. A review was ongoing to see what new ways of working were possible, with attempts to reduce the reliance on fully qualified social workers whilst ensuring young people and families receive the same quality of support. Mrs Chandler noted there had been a small increase in younger children and unaccompanied minors not seeking asylum placed into care, which had increased the use of agency foster carers to the Council. A review of all placements was being undertaken.
6. Mr Brazier (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) said there had been an overspend of £1.7 million for highways asset management in quarter 2, which was attributed to the rising energy costs for street lighting and lighting tunnels. It was anticipated the overspend would be offset through income for street works and permits. The £2.2 million of savings from supported bus services had been delayed following a challenge but this was to be achieved in the next financial year. Another overspend had been seen with the delay in producing the Kent Travel Saver passes. £1.1 million was to be taken from reserves to offset this, with it due to be replenished through income generated in 2023-24.
7. Mr Love (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) said that of the £15 million overspend in education, £14 million was from home-to-school transport. Mr Love said that spending per pupil was in line with national average or better with the costs arising from high demand. Repairs to school buildings and the use of mobile classrooms were other sources of overspending. The planning process was to be streamlined, to help reduce timescales and costs. The budget for community learning and skills was to be reviewed to ensure that it was sustainable.
8. Mr Hill (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services) noted that a small net underspend had been recorded.
9. Mr Murphy (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) reported that Economic Development was £16,000 under budget. A further £40,000 and £80,000 of savings had been identified.
10. Mrs Prendergast (Cabinet Member for Communications and People) noted that work was ongoing to identify non-essential spending.

11. The Leader said that although some flexibility had been built into the Budget, the rate of inflation had exceeded all expectations. Further work was to be undertaken to find further savings.

4. SEND - Ofsted / CQC Revisit and Transformation Programme

(Item 5)

Sarah Hammond (Corporate Director, Children's Young People and Education) was in attendance for this item

1. Mr Love (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) introduced the report.
2. Mrs Hammond outlined the presentation (slides attached) on the Joint area SEND revisit Kent.
3. The Leader stated that the Council accepted the findings in the report and there would be an open and transparent review process. It was recognised that greater progress needed to be made on all nine identified areas of weakness.
4. Mr Oakford (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services) noted that the current number, and growth trajectory, of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), which were 20% higher in Kent than the national average, was unsustainable. It was parental perception that the only way to get support was by applying for EHCPs and it was recognised that this perception needed to change.
5. Mrs Hammond said work was to be undertaken with other authorities who had achieved success in their SEND services to learn from their experiences. Mrs Hammond said that parents had found it very difficult to get support without applying for an EHCP and this was to be addressed with wrap-around support being provided earlier where required. Transition periods for children were an area of anxiety for parents and targeted support was needed to address this.
6. RESOLVED to note the content of the report and the actions already underway in addressing the areas of weakness identified in the SEND revisit and to prepare to meet the requirements of the Safety Valve programme.

5. Developer Contributions Guide

(Item 6)

Colin Finch, Strategic Programme Manager (Infrastructure), and Victoria Thistlewood, Project Manager – Infrastructure, were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Murphy (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) introduced the report. Mr Murphy noted that 178,000 new dwellings were expected to be completed in Kent by 2031, the necessary infrastructure was to be put in place alongside the developments. The Council must make use of developers' contributions, through Section 106 Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 278 Highways Obligations, as part of a wider corporate approach to funding

and delivery of this infrastructure. The updated Developer Contributions Guide reflected a number of new changes in legislation, policy, priorities and costs. Members were asked to approve a targeted public consultation to take place between December 2022 and 30 January 2023.

2. Mr Finch outlined amendments made to the published report.
3. RESOLVED to consider and endorse the recommendations as outlined in the report.

6. Kent and Medway Interim Integrated Care Strategy *(Item 7)*

Karen Cook, Head of Integrated Care System Engagement, David Whittle, Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance, and Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director for Public Health, were in attendance for this item.

1. The Leader introduced the report. The Council was required to introduce this strategy by the end of the calendar year. The process was launched at a well-attended event on the 28 October and was the result of work from several strategic partners.
2. Ms Cook noted that this was the first attempt and that amendments should be expected but the priorities of the strategy will not change. The strategy brought together partners to tackle the root causes of health inequalities. The next phase of work was engagement with the public, stakeholders and Members to inform the next iteration of the strategy. It was a legal requirement of the Integrated Care Partnership to produce the strategy. The Department for Health and Social Care had tasked the Partnership with finalising the report by the end of December 2022. Ms Cook said that the Strategy was evidence of the effectiveness of the Integrated Care Partnership.
3. Mr Oakford (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services) noted that the Strategy was needed due to pressures in NHS and Adult Social Care. Mr Oakford raised concerns about the need for a more productive working relationship between the Council and NHS partners.
4. The Leader remarked on the need to focus on the social determinants of health. Mr Gough said joined-up working was required to address the scale of the crisis.
5. Mrs Bell (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health) endorsed the use of an overarching strategy. Mrs Bell said that there was a need for wider engagement with people from across the county to fully understand what people wanted, and how to improve health and social care services in Kent.
6. Mrs Chandler (Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services) welcomed the clear narrative focus on integration, emphasis on health inequalities and the whole family.

7. Dr Ghosh stated that the intention was to engage widely and retrofit the information into the document during the next stage.
8. Mr Whittle noted that the process behind the strategy had enabled the rapid development of many key relationships which were to be important going forward.
9. RESOLVED to approve the Kent and Medway Interim Integrated Care Strategy

7. Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People - Evaluation of Programme
(Item 8)

David Adams, Reconnect Programme Director, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Chandler (Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services) introduced the item. An overview of the Reconnect Programme was given. Several programmes and initiatives were mentioned that demonstrated how the aim of offering universal opportunities for children of all ages had been achieved. Multiple partners and agencies from across Kent were involved in the programme which reflected the major reach of the project. It was stated that the broad aims of the programme had been met, thanks to the support from Members. Mr Adams was thanked for his commitment to Reconnect and his role in its success.
2. Members noted the success of the Reconnect Programme and thanked all those involved.
3. RESOLVED to note the report.

8. High Needs Funding Update
(Item 9)

John Betts, Finance Consultant and Benjamin Watts, General Counsel were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Betts outlined the report.
2. RESOLVED to note the recommendations as outlined in the report.