

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee held at Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 15th March, 2023.

PRESENT: Mr A M Ridgers (Chairman), Mr S Webb (Vice-Chairman), Mr S R Campkin, Mrs P T Cole, Mr N J Collor, Ms S Hamilton, Ms J Meade, Mr J Meade, Mr D Ross, Mr T L Shonk, Mr R J Thomas and Ms L Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs C Bell

IN ATTENDANCE: Richard Smith (Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health), Michael Thomas-Sam (Strategic Business Adviser, Social Care) and Simon Mitchell (Senior Commissioner), Jim Beale (Director of Adult Social Care for East Kent), Hayley Savage (Democratic Services Officer) and Dominic Westhoff (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

114. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item. 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Richard Streatfield and Kelly Grehan for whom Ms Dawkins was in attendance as substitute.

115. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the agenda
(Item. 3)

Mr Shonk noted that a family member worked for the NHS, Ms Wright noted that she was an appointee for a relative with a mental health issue and Ms Meade noted that she was a carer.

116. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2023
(Item. 4)

Ms Meade asked that a request for the Members of the committee to receive the draft White Paper regarding the replacement for Deprivation of Liberty Standards be noted in the minutes.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2023 are correctly recorded and a paper copy be signed by the Chairman.

117. Verbal Updates by Cabinet Member and Corporate Director
(Item. 5)

1. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Mrs Clair Bell, gave a verbal update on the following.

(a) Mrs Bell said that an 8-week consultation was ongoing regarding the proposed changes to the charges people pay for The Council's chargeable

services for Adult Social Care both at home and in the community. The consultation would close 21 March 2023. The proposal would extend the savings credit disregard from those in care homes to those receiving their care at home and to those new to the service. This would bring the Council's charges in line with those set out in national legislation.

(b) The Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of Health and Social Care in England, would launch a new CQC Assurance process for Adult Social Care functions. The CQC would visit from April 2023 to assess the services provided in Kent. The head of the inspection said that Adult Social Care must co-produce a self-assessment with people who have used the service. It was noted that Adult Social Care would expect to be assessed on how they placed people's experiences at the centre of their decision-making and on the four themes: working with people, providing support, ensuring safety and leadership. Adult Social Care would identify both the areas where it was working well and areas where improvement was required. People who had received Adult Social Care Services in Kent were asked to answer a survey to ensure that their views were reflected in the assessment. This could be accessed on the Kent County Council websites 'Let's Talk' page. The assessment would close on 31 March 2023.

(c) Ms Bell said Kent County Council teams had won three awards at the Public Sector Transformation Awards, 8 March 2023. These awards celebrated innovative approaches to transforming public services. Adult Social Care won bronze for the best use of digital and technology award for the Technology Enabled Care Services. Silver for the transformation of health and social care award for community micro-enterprises and gold for the communications award for the Kent Adult Social Care strategy. Mrs Bell thanked all the staff involved in these projects that won the awards.

2. The Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health, Mr Richard Smith, then gave a verbal update on the following.

(a) Mr Smith said that he had attended a conference on Friday 10 March 2023 where matters on Adult Social Care and the impact of the financial climate on providers were discussed. It was noted that the financial challenges were of major concern, a point that was raised by many of the presenters. Recruitment and workforce issues were also discussed and noted as a matter of concern.

(b) Mr Smith said that he was holding open-door sessions, where he made time available to meet with frontline staff from across Kent Adult Social Care. The sessions were noted as being useful for understanding the challenges and concerns being experienced in the provision of direct services.

(c) A staff event had been hosted following the publication of staff survey results. The survey had identified many areas of continued satisfaction, such as hybrid working, work-life balance and connectivity with their teams and the communities they support. It was also noted that there were ongoing challenges identified, such as, the disconnect between the vision and strategy for Adult Social Care which would need to be better communicated by senior leadership teams to frontline staff. Several Action Plans had been developed to help overcome the issues identified.

(d) It was said that an event would take place where 40 Adult Social Care managers were to discuss CQC. The sessions would be led by Jenny Anderson whom Mr Smith thanked for her work on the assurance preparation.

(e) At a recent away day, it was discussed how Adult Social Care was becoming a regulated service from 1 April 2023. Mr Smith noted that there were nine quality statements, each of which would be assigned to an assistant director. Work had been done to find out how Adult Social Care in Kent measured up to these statements, there was a good understanding of how the services were operating and of the areas where improvements were required. The next stage would be to develop action plans for the targeted areas.

3. Richard Smith then responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following.

(a) In response to a question on further details on how Adult Social Care being a regulated service would look like. Mr Smith responded that The CQC was an independent regulator that would pass judgement on the Council's performance and would operate much like The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED). This would create a culture of continuous improvement. Mr Smith would bring further updates to the Cabinet Committee as this progressed.

(b) In response to a question regarding the setting for the Open Door Sessions. Mr Smith responded that the sessions were held on Microsoft Teams and 15-minute slots were offered. Due to the size of Kent, it was hard to meet in person. It was noted that efforts were still made to meet in person with front-line staff when possible.

(c) In response to a question about how much pressure Mr Smith and other corporate directors were able to put on Government and Cabinet Ministers so that they were aware of the scale of the challenges that were facing Adult Social Care in Kent. Mr Smith said that Helen Grant MP for Maidstone had been of help due to her contacts in government. Lobbying was ongoing and more resources had been made available as a result. Short-term funding arrangements over winter were welcomed but would not resolve the long-term problems. The cost of care was noted as the greatest challenge.

118. 23/00022 - Procurement of the Property Security element of the countywide SAFER Scheme
(Item. 6)

Rachel Westlake, Senior Commissioner, and Ashleigh Cain were in attendance for this item.

1. Rachel Westlake introduced the report. An overview of the scheme was given, and it was noted that the Council had statutory responsibilities as outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. It was proposed that the property security element would have a two-year contract term, with two opportunities to extend by one year, at a value of £400,000 per year giving it a total contract value of £1.6 million. The anticipated contract start date was 1 August 2023.

2. Rachel Westlake and Ashleigh Cain responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following.

(a) It was confirmed that there would be an evaluation panel to ensure that those providers who most closely meet the specification were awarded the contract.

(b) Regarding economies of scale, there had been work with boroughs and districts to ensure a wide reach for the scheme and that it fitted alongside services already provided by these authorities.

(c) It was outlined in the eligibility criteria that the perpetrator would not live, or have legal access to, the property.

(d) There had been work with Kent Police to ensure that they were aware of houses which were a part of the scheme and would flag them up on their system if called to the address. It would be explored if the name of the victim would link to the address.

(e) It was noted that CCTV would be offered in exceptional circumstances and Ring doorbells were available as part of the offer, but there were some safety concerns.

(f) Individuals who were a part of the scheme would receive support from the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service. This would offer safety planning, for themselves and their children, when both inside and outside of the home.

(g) In response to a question of how Kent residents could access the scheme. It was confirmed that there would be a single point of access for the SAFER Scheme which would be advertised after the service had been procured.

RESOLVED that the decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to:

(a) Approve the procurement of the Property Security element of the countywide Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme; and

(b) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health to take relevant actions to facilitate the required procurement activity.

119. 23/00023 - Community Services Contract awards for Mental Health Assessment & Independent Advocacy Services
(Item. 7)

Mr Simon Mitchell, Senior Commissioner, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Mitchel introduced the report. It was noted that the proposal was for a 3-year period with two single-year extensions. About £1.6 million per year, totalling £7.8 million. It was said that the contract would be amended depending on the outcome of the Liberty Protection Safeguards.

2. Mr Mitchell responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following.

(a) There was no timescale for the Liberty Protection Safeguards publication.

(b) It was confirmed that the specification would ensure that providers ensured their advocates were trained to deliver the services required under the contract. The Council would have the ability to audit and scrutinise this process.

RESOLVED that the decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to:

(a) Extend the current Kent Advocacy Hub and Mental Health Assessment contracts for a period of up to four months;

(b) Award contracts to successful providers for the provision of Community Services Contracts (Mental Health Assessment and Independent Advocacy Services);

(c) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision; and

(d) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health and the Corporate Director Finance, to agree the relevant contract extensions as required.

120. 23/00011 - Framework for Interpreting and Communication Services for People who are D/deaf and Deafblind - Contract Award
(Item. 8)

Katherine Clark, Commissioner, was in attendance for this item.

1. Katherine Clark gave an overview of the report. The new framework would commence in June 2023 for a period of 4 years. The application for additional vendors would remain open throughout the contract to support varying demand and supply issues.

2. Katherine Clark responded to comments and questions from the Committee, including the following.

(a) It was noted that despite most of the users of the service coming from Kent County Council there were other significant users including Kent Fire and Rescue, Kent Police and Kent and Medway NHS Trust.

(b) The list of contacts for the deaf communication service would be circulated after the meeting.

(c) It was confirmed that the framework would be fully accessible and was a key part of the contract.

RESOLVED that the decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to:

- (a) Approve the award of contracts for Interpreting and Communication Services for People who are D/deaf and Deafblind; and
- (b) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

121. Risk Management: Adult Social Care and Health
(Item. 9)

Jade Caccavone, Directorate Business Manager Adult Social Care, and Alison Petters, Risk Manager Strategic and Corporate Services, were in attendance for this item.

1. Jade Caccavone introduced the report. Ms Caccavone gave an overview of the annual update of the strategic risks across the Adult Social Care and Health directorate and the Council's Corporate Risk register. Further details were provided on the risk categories regarding the workforce and the financial position of the directorate.

2. Jade Caccavone, Alison Petters, Richard Smith and Jim Beale then responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following.

(a) In response to a question about what mitigations were in place to ensure the retention of Adult Social Care Staff. It was confirmed that this was an issue occurring nationally. It was noted there would be a focus on support networks, retention packages and providing on-the-job support and supervision to help mitigate the risk they may face and establish a collaborative working culture. The new locality model, beginning April 2023, would allow for more community-level working. It was said that this presented a highly challenging issue.

(b) In response to a question about the risk of cyber-attacks. It was noted that risk was held on the corporate risk regarding cyber and information security and mitigations were in place to reduce the risk to desired levels. Further mitigations were put in place following the pandemic when workers transitioned to working from home on laptops.

(c) In response to a question asking for more details on where within Kent the pressure to recruit social workers most or least felt. It was noted that several areas for different reasons had greater difficulties to recruit social workers. For instance, south Kent had difficulties due to the nature of the area and West Kent faced pressure from competition with London Boroughs. Further details of this could be added to the live risk register.

(d) It was asked if further details could be provided on risk *AH0005 continued pressures on public sector funding impacting on revenue and saving efficiencies*. It was suggested this was too broad a category. It was confirmed that this would be looked at.

(e) In response to a question asking if there were any innovative or different approaches being done to support the recruitment and retention of Social Care staff. It was confirmed that there would be a much greater focus on employee retention and remuneration packages. Also, providing learning, development and training opportunities. It was noted that they were looking at where best to target their recruitment drives.

(f) Asked about the transition from training to full workload as it was argued that it was too extreme and potentially dissuaded some from continuing to work with Kent Adult Social Care. It was confirmed that there was a focus on students in Kent and encouraging them to take social work qualifications. It was noted that work was ongoing to provide staff with support networks to mitigate the risk of those leaving after their first year.

(g) A point was raised that more should be done to look after experienced social workers. It was noted that the essential car user allowance had not appeared to be fair and should be looked at.

RESOLVED that the Risk Management: Adult Social Care and Health report be noted.

122. Adult Social Care and Health Performance Q3 2022/23
(Item. 10)

Ms Helen Groombridge, Adult Social Care and Health Performance Manager was in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Groombridge introduced the report and highlighted the key areas of activity and performance during quarter 3 for 2022/23.
2. Ms Groombridge, Jim Beale, and Katherine Clark then responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following.

(a) Asked about why the number of people staying at home after rehab had fallen. It was said this was because there had been an increase in the number of people staying in short-term beds, but the trend was reversing and expected the number to go back up.

(b) Asked for more details on why the number of assessments of carer's needs had gone down, it was said that this was based on the level of need incoming so would fluctuate throughout the year.

(c) Asked about the quarter-on-quarter rise of people accessing Adult Social Care services who have a mental health need and what measures were in place and if there would be a target set for this. It was said that the increase was a concern and reflected nationally. Work was ongoing with the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust and other partners to ensure the right pathways and support are provided for those with mental health problems.

(d) Asked why there had been an above-inflation rise in cost for new support packages. It was noted that there were various reasons for this, supply and demand, the level of support required in certain areas, harder to find support in parts of Kent and if people are remaining at home as this required greater levels of support.

(e) Asked about the Kent Enablement at Home Service growth plans. It was said There had been a very positive recruitment campaign. Has been a large number of people coming through the service and they were looking at using central funding and joint posts to enhance recruitment further. It was anticipated that the number would increase further going forward.

(f) It was confirmed that social prescribing would be embedded and linked to GP surgeries and hospitals depending on the context of needs.

(g) Concerns were expressed that the detail and data supplied in the targets were too limited. Needed to be much more targeted and specific. It was noted that this concern would be acknowledged and taken back to the team to be reviewed.

RESOLVED that the performance of services in Q3 2022/23 be noted.

123. Revision of Rates Payable and Charges Levied for Adult Social Care Services in 2023-24
(Item. 11)

James Beamish, Principal Accountant, was in attendance for this item.

1. James Beamish introduced and gave an overview of the report.
2. A member of the committee noted that this had not been agreed to by the Labour Group at the Budget County Council meeting 9 February 2023.

RESOLVED the committee noted the revised rates payable and charges levied for adult social care services in 2023-24, which were agreed as part of the administration's budget presented to County Council on 9 February 2023.

124. Decisions Taken Outside of the Cabinet Committee Meeting Cycle
(Item. 12)

Asked why decision 23/00029 *Fee Uplifts for Adult Social Care Providers for 2023/2024* had to be taken outside the usual process. Mrs Bell said that they always intend to go through the usual governance process. One of the main reasons was that we didn't have a Cabinet Committee scheduled at the right time. Discussing the decision at this Cabinet Committee meeting would have not allowed sufficient time for the changes to the invoicing system to be implemented for April 1 2023 and for providers to access the system with the correct invoice fees. The decision also required further work as additional guidance was issued from the Government and this had to be considered by ASCH, Commissioning and Legal. Every effort would be made to avoid such an event occurring again but sometimes it was unavoidable.

RESOLVED noted.

125. Work Programme
(Item. 13)

RESOLVED that the Work Programme 2023/24 be noted.