

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee held at Council Chamber on Tuesday, 12th September, 2023.

PRESENT: Mr M C Dance (Chairman), Mr P V Barrington-King, Mr A Brady, Mr D L Brazier (Substitute for Mr S C Manion), Mrs B Bruneau, Mr S R Campkin, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mrs L Game, Ms S Hamilton, Mrs M McArthur, Mr A Sandhu, MBE, Mr P Stepto, Dr L Sullivan and Mr M Reidy.

OTHER MEMBERS: Sue Chandler and Rory Love, OBE

OFFICERS: Nick Abrahams (Area Education Officer – West Kent), Christy Holden (Head of Children's Commissioning), Ian Watts (Area Education Officer – North Kent), Marisa White (Area Education Officer - East Kent), Carolann James (Interim Director of Children's Operational Services), Katherine Atkinson (Assistant Director, Management Information and Intelligence, Integrated Children's Services), Dan Bride (Assistant Director, Adolescents and Open Access), Danielle Day (Programme Manager), Wendy Jeffreys (Consultant in Public Health), Kevin Kasaven (Assistant Director, Safeguarding, Professional Standards and Quality Assurance, Integrated Children's Services), Steve Lusk (Senior Commissioner), Robin Cahill (Senior Commissioner) and James Clapson (Democratic Services Officer).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item 2)

Apologies were received from Ms Carter, Mr Dendor, Dr Roper, and Mr Manion for whom Mr Brazier was present as substitute.

Mr Beaney and Mr Ross were present virtually.

2. Declarations of Interest
(Item 3)

Dr Sullivan declared an interest in item 14, Kent Partnership County Youth Justice Plan 2023/24.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023
(Item 4)

1) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

4. Verbal Update by Cabinet Members
(Item 5)

1. Mr Love provided his Cabinet Member Verbal Update as follows:

1.1 Exam Results Days

Congratulations were offered to pupils who received their GCSE, A Level and T Level results this Summer. A Level and T Level results were issued on 17.8.23, and GCSE results day was on 24.8.23.

Ms McInnes, Mrs Hamilton and Mr Love, visited Maidstone Grammar School for Girls on A Level results day. It was a privilege to be part of such an important moment for students at the School. A full breakdown of this year's exam results for Kent was expected to be available in November.

1.2 Kent Test

The Kent Test took place on 7 September for pupils in Kent primary schools, and on 9 September for other pupils. The results would be available to parents and carers on 18.10.23 from 4pm.

1.3 Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Update

Two Kent primary schools had to be closed at the start of the Autumn term pending confirmation from the Department for Education (DfE), that the mitigation measures implemented over the Summer were sufficient. Both schools were fully reopened on 6.9.23, following receipt of confirmation from the DfE. All of Kent's schools were now open. Thanks were offered to the Kent County Council (KCC) officers and school staff involved, their hard work minimised the level of disruption felt by pupils and parents. All costs associated with RAAC would be fully funded by the DfE, including the cost of repairs and costs incurred to mitigate the disruption to education.

1.4 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Home to School Transport

For the first time, 100% of SEN Home to School Transport applications received on time were processed in time for the start of the new school year. Thanks were offered to the Home to School Transport team for their efforts in ensuring a smooth start to the school year for pupils and parents.

1.5 New special schools

KCC's application to establish two new special free schools in the County was approved last month by the Secretary of State for Education. This would be discussed later in the agenda.

2. Mrs Chandler provided her Cabinet Member Verbal Update as follows:

2.1 Family Hubs

The consultation would close on 13.9.23. An item on the outcome of the consultation and the proposed key decision would come to the Committee on 21.11.23. Members would have the opportunity to make comments and recommendations before it went to Cabinet on 30.11.23.

2.2 Understanding the Needs of Young Carers

There were over 10,000 young carers aged 5 to 18 in Kent, however, there could be more as many young people do not recognise themselves as young carers or young adult carers.

During September and October there would be a series of joint events from Adult and Children's Social Care to focus on the experiences of young carers and young adult carers. Officers and Members who would like to learn more could sign up for one of these sessions via the Delta Learning Portal.

2.3 Kent Academy Social Care Awards

On 26.09.23 the first Kent Academy Social Care Awards would take place at the Kent Event Centre in Detling. It provided an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the work undertaken by KCC staff from Integrated Children's Services. Nominations came from clients and partner colleagues of children's social care.

Due to a prior commitment Mrs Chandler was unable to attend the awards however, Mr Ross the Deputy Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services would be in attendance to help present the awards.

2.4 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Update

There were no major developments since the recent all Member update on the matter. The legal case was ongoing and a further full update would be given at the County Council meeting on 21.9.23.

3. In response to comments and questions from Members, the following points were noted:

- There could be some former school buildings and other community buildings that had RACC in their construction. Mr Love offered to investigate the matter and asked Mrs Dean to send him details of the building she had specifically referred to.
- Careful consideration had been given to a request to extend the deadline for responses to the Family Hub Consultation, however, an extension would cause a significant delay to the timeline and would delay progression of other related key decisions.

5. Performance Monitoring

(Item 6)

Katherine Atkinson, Assistant Director, Management Information & Intelligence CYPE and Christine McInnes, Director of Education and SEN were in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Atkinson introduced the report and noted that the Provisional Primary School attainment results had been included for the first time.

2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- The number of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) completed within 20 weeks was expected to remain below the target while the newly employed case officers underwent training, and the service focused its attention on completing the backlog of older cases.
- There were currently 2000 open EHCP cases. In April 2023, 107 care plans were completed, the most recent monthly completion figure showed 196 completed cases. In future, the report would include the number of cases

completed and average wait time for completion; this would help provide a clearer view of the work taking place within the service.

- Kent had issued 20% more EHCP's than the national average; there was a need to ensure that EHCP's were issued strictly in accordance with statutory guidance. Every case was judged on its merit, and processes had been refined to target those most in need.

3. RESOLVED to note the report.

6. Ofsted Update *(Item 7)*

Katherine Atkinson, Assistant Director, Management Information & Intelligence CYPE and Christine McInnes, Director of Education and SEN were in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Atkinson introduced the report and noted that the proportion of schools rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted had risen to 2% higher than the national average. The Ofsted ratings for 58 schools had improved, remained unchanged for 60 schools, and had gone down for 37 schools during the period.

2. RESOLVED to note the report.

7. Family Hubs, Parenting Support Expenditure and Home Learning Environment Expenditure *(Item 8)*

Wendy Jeffreys, Public Health Consultant and Carolann James, Interim Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services were in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Chandler introduced the item noting that the overarching Family Hubs report spanned Public Health, Education, and Integrated Children's Services.

2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- More operational detail would be available and presented to Members at the next meeting; once the consultation process had completed and responses had been assessed.
- The expenditure detailed in the report related to existing and ongoing activities; there were some Start for Life activities already taking place that were expected to be incorporated into the Family Hubs model, and there were some active 'test and learn' sites.
- Costings had been included in the Delivery Plan. The Plan was awaiting official agreement from the DfE, however, initial feedback had suggested that it would be agreed. Once agreement had been received from the DfE, Ms James offered share a break down the costs and narrative with Dr Sullivan.
- The consultation document was 40 pages long which could be intimidating to readers and might put off potential responders. There was a shorter summary of the document also available.
- Community centres would be contacted following the completion of the consultation process.

3. RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decisions 23/00081 and 23/00082 as set out in the report.

8. Regional Care Co-operatives - Pathfinder
(Item 9)

Christy Holden, Head of Children's Commissioning and Carolann James Interim Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services were in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Holden introduced the report.

2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- The commissioning arrangements would be separate for each area, this would help to avoid competition between Local Authorities (LA). In the past this competition had allowed providers to charge LA's more for their services.
- Members would be kept apprised of the project and receive further updates at each phase.

3. RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision as set out in the report, namely to:

a) Agree for KCC to become a Regional Care Co-operative Pathfinder authority (if selected) and in doing so agree for KCC to enter into relevant agreements with DfE/other local authorities as appropriate.

b) Agree for KCC to bid and receive funding in order to deliver the requirements of the Programmes.

c) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to, finalising the terms of reference, and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

9. Fostering Recruitment and Retention Programme
(Item 10)

Christy Holden, Head of Children's Commissioning and Kevin Kasaven, Director of Children's Countywide Services were in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Holden introduced the report.

2. RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision as set out in the report, namely to:

a) Agree to become a member of the Fostering Recruitment and Retention programme.

b) Agree to enter into relevant agreements with the DfE to join a Pathfinder Region for the delivery of the creation of end-to-end improvements in the Fostering Recruitment and Retention Programme (agreements to include the acceptances of relevant Memorandums of Understandings and associated

funding, and partnership agreements with other local authorities in the assigned regional cluster).

c) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to, finalising the terms of reference and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

10. Targeted Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People
(Item 11)

Christy Holden, Head of Children's Commissioning, Steve Lusk, Senior Commissioner and Kevin Kasaven, Director of Children's Countywide Services were in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Holden introduced the report.

2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- Work on the strategy had identified areas of Kent where less provision was available. The South Kent Coast was an area that would be targeted to try and increase the provision available in the area.
- Work was underway to look at what services could be offered by special schools, particularly during school holiday periods.
- KCC provided some in-house short breaks services; this was funded separately and was reviewed each year.
- Negotiations were underway for additional funding from the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, this fund usually amounted to around £20,000 per annum.

3. RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision as set out in the report, namely to:

a) Approve the provision of grants to external providers to deliver Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People Service by commencing an Open Grants Process for the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2026.

b) Delegate authority to award grants to providers to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services.

c) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of and entering into required legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

11. Supported Accommodation Service 16 - 19 and Transitional arrangements
(Item 17)

Christy Holden, Head of Children's Commissioning, Robin Cahill, Senior Commissioner and Kevin Kasaven, Director of Children's Countywide Services were in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Holden introduced the report.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
 - Legislation specified a requirement to offer accommodation and support for 16 and 17 year olds, however this decision would also provide new 16 and 17 year old service users with accommodation until they turned 19 years of age. Young people aged 19 and over in education would also continue to receive support from the care leavers service.
3. RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision as set out in the report, namely to:
 - a) Approve the new Supported Accommodation Service for young adults up to the age of 19, for those new entrants to the service at the age of 16/17.
 - b) Agree to directly award a new contract, under the same terms and conditions to Clearsprings Ready Homes from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 for 18+ Shared Accommodation Services to support transition.
 - c) Delegate to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, to negotiate, finalise and enter into the relevant contracts with the successful providers to deliver the Supported Accommodation contract, as detailed in the Key Decision 22/00079.
 - d) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to, finalising the terms of, and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

12. School Maintenance - Landlord: Tenant Financial Thresholds
(Item 12)

Ian Watts, Area Education Officer (North Kent) and Christine McInnes, Director of Education and SEN were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Watts introduced the report.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
 - The proposal could apply additional stress on school budgets. School budgets were under pressure, however budget shortfalls should be addressed through the national funding formula.
 - A condition report of primary schools within the LA's portfolio could be made available to Members of the Committee.
 - 85% of schools elected not to respond to the survey, it should not be assumed that the non-responders were in support of the proposals.
 - Some schools might have higher than expected costs due to the age of the building or other specific circumstances; there needed to be flexibility to accommodate exceptional situations.
3. RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision to propose to the Schools' Funding Forum that the financial limits for the costs of repairs and maintenance of schools are increased as set out in paragraphs 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 of the report.

13. Establishment of two new Special Free Schools, in Swanley and Whitstable.
(Item 13)

Marisa White, Area Education Officer - East Kent, Ian Watts, Area Education Officer (North Kent) and Christine McInnes, Director of Education and SEN were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Love introduced the item noting that in due course planning applications would be submitted by the DfE for consideration by the relevant District LA. Once complete, more children would be able to access a school that suited their needs and was closer to their homes.
2. Ms White added that there had been considerable interest from trusts wanting to run the sites. The recruitment of a trust would be led by the DfE in consultation with KCC. Plans would be submitted for planning approval towards the end of 2024, once a trust was appointed. It was intended for the schools to open in September 2026.
3. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
 - There were some concerns about the placement of the school on the Whitstable site.
 - There would be a transportation cost saving if children attended a school closer to their home, and an increase in their well-being from reduced travel time.
4. RESOLVED to endorse the recommendation as set out in the report, namely to:
 - a) Note the progress of the bids for the new special schools that were made as part of the Safety Valve submission and agreements entered into as set out in Annex A of the report, and
 - b) Endorse the proposed decision to approve arrangements to establish two new special free schools in Whitstable and Swanley in accordance with free school presumption process and relevant Safety Valve agreements.

14. Kent Partnership County Youth Justice Plan 2023/24
(Item 14)

Dan Bride, Assistant Director and Head of Youth Justice and Carolann James, Interim Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services were in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Bride introduced the report.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
 - At the time of agenda publication, the details of the grant were unavailable; details have now been received and could be shared with Members after the meeting.
 - The Partnership's strategies, such as the Prevention Strategy could be shared with Members after the meeting.

- The focused deterrent work was financed by the Violence Reduction Unit. They provided Partnership Members with funding to undertake deterrent activities.
- The Response Team worked alongside Youth Workers and they visited target areas together.
- Refrain activities had become a key performance indicator and would be included in future reports.
- The allocation of the Secure Remand Grant had reduced in 2023/24. The amount received was determined by the number of young people held in secure remand in the preceding year. The reduction in grant was an indication of Kent Youth Justice's success in reducing the number of secure remands in 2022/23.

3. RESOLVED to note and endorse the Plan.

School Expansions/Alterations

15. Kings Hill Primary School Roof Maintenance (Item 15a)

Nicholas Abrahams, Assistant Director for Education (West Kent) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Abrahams introduced the report.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
 - The defects replacement period for the wooden shingle tiles expired around 10 years ago, this was 15 years after instillation. The use of wooden shingles on a shady part of the roof, had led moisture retention and the degradation of the shingles.
 - The use of wooden shingle tiles had been a planning condition at the time of instillation however, a variation to the condition has been sought from the planning authority to allow the shingles to be replaced with a metal roof.
3. RESOLVED to endorse the recommendation as set out in the report, namely to:
 - a) Authorise the allocation of £1,100,000 from the Children's, Young People and Education Annual Planned Enhancement Budget to permit the required repair works;
 - b) Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure to, in consultation with the Director of Education, enter into any necessary contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement this decision; and
 - c) Agree for the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements, with authority to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

16. Meadowfield (Foundation) Special School Satellite Provision at Sunny Bank Primary School (Item 15b)

Marisa White, Area Education Officer - East Kent, Ian Watts, Area Education Officer (North Kent) and Christine McInnes, Director of Education and SEN were in attendance for this item.

1. Ms White introduced the report.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:
 - Satellite sites were often required when schools were unable to expand further on their existing sites.
 - Sometimes, with the parents' consent, the head teacher and staff of a special school may identify children who could move into mainstream education. However, some parents of children with SEN may not wish to send their child to a satellite special school if they felt that it was a stepping stone into mainstream education.
3. RESOLVED to endorse the recommendation as set out in the report.

Post Meeting Note:

There was a typographical error in recommendation a) of the report, namely;

a) Authorise the allocation of **£1,500,000** from the High Needs Capital Funding Budget to fund the satellite provision of Meadowfield Special School at Fulston Manor Secondary School.

The recommendation should have referenced authorisation of the allocation of **£1,600,000** from the High Needs Capital Funding Budget.

Members of the Committee have been advised of the correction and the Record of Decision agreed and signed by the Cabinet Member of Education and Skills on 12.10.2023, detailed the correct figure of £1,600,000.

17. Work Programme *(Item 16)*

1. RESOLVED to agree the work programme and consider the addition of an item about LA Maintained Schools Condition Surveys, and an item about Family Hubs, at the November CYPE CC agenda setting meeting.