

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 Thursday, 23rd November, 2023.

PRESENT: Mr S R Campkin, Mrs P T Cole, Mr N J Collor, Ms S Hamilton, Ms J Meade, Mr J Meade, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Mrs L Game, Jenni Hawkins, Mr D L Brazier and Mr B H Lewis

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D Watkins and Mr P Oakford

IN ATTENDANCE: Richard Smith (Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health), Michael Thomas-Sam (Strategic Business Adviser, Social Care), Simon Mitchell (Senior Commissioner), Zena Cooke (Corporate Director of Finance) and Dave Shipton (Head of Finance Policy, Planning and Strategy) and Dominic Westhoff (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

160. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item. 2)

Apologies were received from Mr Ridgers, Mr Kennedy, Mr Ross and Mr Brady. Mr Lewis and Mr Brazier were in attendance as substitutes for Mr Brady and Mr Ross respectively.

161. Election of Chair
(Item.)

1. Mr Collor proposed, and Mr Meade seconded that Mrs Cole be elected to Chair the meeting. No other nominations were received.
2. RESOLVED Mrs Cole was duly elected by the committee to Chair the meeting.

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

Ms Meade noted that she was a carer.

163. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2023
(Item. 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2023 were a correct record.

164. Initial Draft Budget 2024-25 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-27
(Item. 5)

Zena Cooke, Corporate Director Finance, and Dave Shipton, Head of Finance (Policy, Planning & Strategy) were in attendance for this item.

1. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Traded Services, Mr Oakford, provided the committee with a high-level overview of the current financial position of the Council and the process of the budget between now and March 2024. Mr Oakford noted the current deficit for this year was around £30 million with a budget gap of £20 million. The current projected overspend for Adult Social Care and Health was at £30.4 million, but the Corporate Director and other directors had identified management action to bring this number down. It was said that spending controls had been put in place with a note sent around to all employees of the Council. For next year the budget gap was at £100 million, with around £50 million of savings identified. Mr Oakford thanked Mr Smith and his staff for finding savings of £50 million which could be made over the next few years. A gap of £50 million remained which would have to be identified through savings or increased revenue by January 2024.
2. Mr Watkins made some further comments on the impact on the directorate to identify savings. He thanked the corporate director and his team for their work to find savings while maintaining and improving care for residents through the redesign of services. It was noted that solid plans were in place to deliver savings going forward.
3. Mr Richard Smith noted that it was a very difficult year and that the next few years would also be very difficult. It was said that there was a need to reduce the overall ongoing demand for Social Care services. Going forward prevention would be key and they were working closely with Public Health colleagues on this with a digital prevention offer commissioned as part of the move away from the traditional offer. The creation of community teams would support people in their communities and help prevent people from entering residential care. Mr Smith noted that they would still support those with eligible needs, and it was up to the Council how best to do this. Mr Smith thanked his team, and finance, for their work.
4. A Member asked the Cabinet Member what the section 'Adult Social Care service redesign phase 2 of the ASCH restructure' on page 59 under 'Transformation & Efficiency' savings meant for Kent residents. Mr Watkins said it relates to the shifting of care support from a county-wide offer to a community-level offer. There were now 24 community teams that enabled local expertise and it was noted that the wider service redesign includes technology and enablement. Mr Watkins said that Technology Enhanced Lives would launch this week where residents could be supported at home through technology and equipment rather than in residential care homes. Mark Albiston said this was part of the approach to reshape the front door of care with an early intervention and preventative offer as the new model for social care going forward. Mr Smith noted that it was hard to cover all the details in a summary document. Mr Smith reiterated the ongoing work to change from a traditional care model to a robust community-facing preventative offer. To do this the team were looking to implement Joint Community Teams with NHS partners to support people in the community before they reach the eligibility standard for Social Care. It was said that these teams were not in place yet but the foundations had been put in place

over the past 12 months. Mr Smith noted that new models of care featured highly in Securing Kent's Future.

5. In response to the previous answers, a Member raised a concern that not enough information or detail had been provided to the committee to allow them to make an informed decision. It was said that the next time the report comes to the committee, further information on the impact of savings on the services provided and Kent residents would be required.
6. A Member asked the following questions about the impact of the proposed budget on the provision of Adult Social Care services.
 - a. It was asked how the budget aim to negotiate a 5% reduction in expenditure for the Older People's Residential & Nursing contract and the Care & Support in the Home contract was feasible without negatively affecting the delivery of these statutory services given the context of the cost-of-living crisis and the need for staff to get a pay rise.
 - b. A concern was raised about cuts to the expenditure for voluntary services, which provided vital support for numerous residents and held up statutory services, it was asked how the Council planning was on supporting those who may struggle to access services that they were entitled to.
 - c. It was said that numerous suppliers were unaware if their contracts with the Council would be extended beyond the current end date of March 2024. This undermined the ability of these services to forward plans and were losing staff as a result. The situation would negatively impact their future ability to provide services for the local communities they support.

Mr Watkins said that they were working closely with suppliers and partners, which was key to achieving their transformation and efficiency aims. It was noted that the negotiation on the two contracts mentioned would be achieved through a new approach delivered under the recently appointed Director of Strategic Commissioning, Richard Ellis, to support a strategic approach to residential care, service commissioning and stakeholder engagement. The aim would be to achieve a win-win for both the Council and its partners. Mr Watkins also said that there had been reductions in the grant for voluntary sector services but there was also an effort to reconfigure the services to meet obligations efficiently and effectively for service users. Mr Mitchell said that they were engaging with voluntary sector organisations about the approach from April 2024, this was currently going through internal governance and the outcome would be shared with those organisations soon.

7. A Member said that adequate information had not been provided to Members before today's discussion. It was also noted that making these budget decisions before engaging with partners and service providers, such as care homes, was of concern as any reduction in contract values could have negative knock-on impacts on staff, service users and the overall quality of support. The Chair noted that at this time no final decisions would be made more information could be provided between now and the Budget County Council in February 2024. Mr Smith said that there would be now system-wide reduction in contract values, going forward some might constrict and others expand to strategically meet the needs of residents. Mr

Smith noted that this was about moving from a contract and procurement relationship with the sector to one focused on partnerships.

8. A Member said that the move to an increasingly digital offer would potentially leave some people behind who lacked digital skills or an internet connection. It was said that this could lead to an increased risk of social isolation for vulnerable people. It was also asked if there was a plan b if the assumed reduction in costs was not achieved when negotiating contracts.

In response to this question, it was said:

(a) Mr Watkins said that the document would be too long if all the details were included but there would be more information provided in January and at the February full Council meeting, an additional meeting could be arranged to discuss this further if Members requested to. Mr Watkins noted that the Member was referring to the 'Making a Difference Every Day Strategy' which was coproduced with residents who wanted to limit the amount of time spent in a care home. The use of technology would help residents live independent lives for longer, support care workers and would not reduce the level of care residents received. The technology covered a range of devices, such as sensors, several of these would not require the residents themselves to have digital skills but social workers would be trained to be more digitally adept to understand the data provided by these devices. Mr Watkins said that any reductions in contract values would reshape how services were delivered but would not reduce the standard of care. The Council would meet its statutory obligation to meet the care needs of eligible adults. Mr Watkins also noted that the financial plans had been rigorously assessed before being brought to the committee.

(b) Mark Albiston said that no one answer would fit all the 16,000 people who currently receive a funded care package in Kent but that all decisions on support would follow a lawful assessment and no decisions would be made to bring the Social Care team or the Council into disrepute. The redesign focused on reducing reliance on residential care homes and providing support to residents within their own homes, which people in Kent and nationally have said they want. Technology would support the achievement of this aim and reduce barriers to the provision of at-home care.

(c) Mr Smith said that the proposals made in the budget and ongoing plans for the future of Adult Social Care in Kent followed tried and tested methods. Mr Smith noted that due to demographic changes and more complex health challenges adult social care provision would be very difficult without a long-term funded solution for adult social care and children's services.

9. A Member asked if the Council were of the assumption that care homes were inefficient by running with spare capacity and if these proposals were proved effective why were they not implemented in the years previously. Mr Watkins said all organisations were more innovative when under the most amount of pressure. Mr Watkins noted that not all care homes had spare capacity and that some care homes outside the current framework could join to increase overall capacity.

10. It was said by a Member that if residents were to stay in their home longer they required support from the local community services. It was noted that

Community Hubs were uncertain about the future funding to be received from Kent County Council (KCC) and that without such services home care would be more difficult. Mr Watkins invited Members to share concerns if a Community Hub in their division was in trouble and his team would reach out to them to help resolve any difficulties.

11. A Member said that the highest risk identified in the risk register was an unsustainable market and that entering into a negotiation to achieve a 5% cut was unwise. The Member requested further information on this at the next meeting. Mr Watkins said that this was noted and would put together a briefing note on this area for the January committee meeting.

12. A Member asked how quickly they could be expected to see any of the results or financial benefits of the changes proposed for Adult Social Care services going forward Mr Smith noted that due to the current financial climate, this year and the next would be very difficult. Mr Smith said that the Adult Social Care Awards had recently recognised some of the great work by frontline staff. It was said the new strategic commissioning strategy would be about working in partnership with businesses and in-house services to discuss how best to deliver the new model of care.

13. RESOLVED the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee agreed to:

- i. Note the initial draft capital and revenue budgets including responses to consultation.
- ii. Suggest any changes which should be made to the section of the budget related to the Cabinet Committee's portfolio area before the draft is considered by the Cabinet on 25th January 2024 and presented to the Full County Council on 19th February 2024.

165. Verbal Updates by Cabinet Member and Corporate Director (Item. 6)

1. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Mr Dan Watkins, gave a verbal update on the following

Carers Rights Day – Mr Watkins noted that 23 November 2023 marked Carers Rights Day and the Council would be celebrating the work of unpaid carers and highlighting support available to them. It was said that the work of unpaid carers can have a major impact on paid employment and leisure activities and that Kent had over 150,000 adults over the age of 16 providing unpaid care each week. Mr Watkins said the Council had a 5-year plan to work with partners to improve the experience of unpaid carers. The Cabinet Member said that he had recently visited Crossroads Care Kent which provided local carers respite and a helpline. Mr Watkins expressed his and the committee's appreciation for the work of unpaid carers in Kent.

Vaccinations – The Council was supporting a nationwide campaign encouraging all those eligible to come forward for their seasonal flu and COVID-19 vaccinations. This winter over 11.7 million flu jabs and 9 million Covid-19 jabs had been delivered by the NHS since September 2023.

Charging Policy – Mr Watkins noted that there would be a review of the charging policy for those in receipt of non-residential services. The findings were expected to be presented at the January 18 2024 meeting of the committee.

Adult Social Care Pressures – Mr Watkins had recorded a BBC South East podcast on the adult social care pressures and challenges in Kent and how the Council plans to address them. BBC South East also visited the Hospital Base Technology Facilitators Service, which helped to get people back home safely after discharge from hospital. Mr Watkins said that he hoped that the publicity generated would lead to additional support from the central Government.

All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Digital Skills – Mr Watkins spoke at the APPG on empowering the UK health workforce through digital innovations concerning the work going on in Kent on the digital rollout.

World Mental Health Day – Mr Watkins said that to mark the occasion on the 10 October 2023 the Council had given grants to community groups of between £500 and £15,000.

Kent and Medway Health and Care Symposium – Mr Watkins said he had attended the event on 20 October 2023 which was an opportunity for health and care partners from across the county to come together and discuss progress on the Integrated Care System and generate new ideas.

Blackburn Lodge – The Cabinet Member informed the committee that an emergency closure had to be enforced at the site in Sheerness following high concentrations of iron found in the water supply. To ensure the health and safety of the 13 residents they were transferred to alternative residential care homes. Mr Watkins said he noted the disruption this had caused the residents and their families and he thanked the staff who helped to safely and effectively manage the transition. Officers were considering the future of Blackburn Lodge and a decision would be made in due course.

Care Sector Digital Event – Mr Watkins and officers attended the event hosted by KCC, Medway Council and the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) on 8 October 2023. The event aimed to help care providers adopt digital technology and services to improve care for service users. It was noted that 180 providers attended the event which covered both national and local schemes and innovations. KCC's Technology Enabled Lives programme was demonstrated at the event and launched in November 2023.

2. In response to comments and questions, it was said:

(a) Mr Whiting asked if the Cabinet Member would reassure residents in his division that Blackburn Lodge would reopen once the health and safety issues were resolved. It was noted that the emergency closure had been a traumatic experience for residents and those who received daycare services as there was a lack of local alternatives in the area. It was asked when the reports into Blackburn Lodge would be ready to reassure both the site's users and the staff. Mr Watkins thanked Mr Whiting for his question and that he understood how distressing it must be for the community. It was said that the reports would be ready as soon as possible to limit uncertainty, it was hoped it would be weeks rather than months. It was said that his team were looking at increasing capacity in Sheppey for daycare services and was

working with the AGE UK facility and other smaller providers to increase care provision. Jim Beale said that officers were actively working with community teams to urgently look at the provision of daycare in Sheppey. It was also noted that Human Resources teams were working with the staff affected to support them.

(b) A Member suggested that a briefing for all Council Members on the digital technologies available to support care would be welcomed. Mr Watkins agreed and would attempt to hold a presentation at a meeting of the full Council.

(c) It was said by a Member that the support for unpaid carers did not go far enough and it was noted that currently unpaid carers had to work 35 hours to be entitled to receive £76.75 the equivalent of £2.19 per hour. With opportunities for paid employment limited this put great pressure on unpaid carers in the cost-of-living crisis and increased the risk of poor health outcomes and social isolation. The Member asked if the Leader of the Council would lobby the central government to increase the payment given to unpaid carers due to the value of their work and the recent increase to the minimum wage. Mr Watkins welcomed the suggestion and said that he would speak to the Leader about this issue.

3. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care, Mr Richard Smith, gave a verbal update on the following:

South East Senior Leaders meeting – Mr Smith had attended a meeting hosted by Amanda Pritchard, CEO of NHS England, that focussed on pressing issues across the South East.

System Flow Discharge Summit – At the summit, Mr Smith met with ICB colleagues to ensure that the right funding streams are used for the people of Kent following hospital discharge or discharge from mental health services. Another aim of the summit was to ensure that communication at a strategic level was effective.

KICA Kent Care Awards - It was noted that the annual event celebrated the work of frontline care staff.

Joint Session with Public Health – Mr Smith said that the first session had recently taken place where key issues that could be worked on collectively were discussed.

Westbrook and Westview Services - Mr Smith said that he and the CEO of the Community Health Care Trust had visited Westbrook and Westview Intermediate Care Services. They met with staff on how to improve collective working arrangements. It was noted that 50 staff had been trained on Home First Services, jointly funded by Public Health and Adult Social Care.

Hospital Discharge – After a visit from the national team adult social care received an additional grant to support discharge work by creating greater capacity across Kent and particularly in East Kent.

Budget Live Event – Mr Smith noted that he had met with frontline staff to engage with them after the budget situation and sought their ideas for how to work going forward.

4. In response to comments and questions, it was said.

(a) A Member asked for more detail about budget forecasting as there was a concern that in the last few years, it had not sufficiently identified the challenges and budget gaps witnessed today. Mr Smith said that the team had been aware of the challenges in the months before budget discussions but said he would be happy to discuss forecasting models outside the meeting. It was noted that forecasting was a very complex exercise and was a continuously ongoing process.

(b) A Member asked if the action points developed on hospital discharge could be shared with the committee. Mr Smith said that the work with the community mental health trusts and the community partners was seeing improvements in joint working to maximise the bed capacity at intermediate services and ensure that the right people go to the right beds. It was noted that much of the focus was on Home First and prevention to help reduce the number of individuals going into the hospital in the first place.

166. 23/00098 - Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2023/2024 including Urgent and Emergency Care Grant Funding
(Item. 7)

Sydney Hill, Assistant Director of North Kent, was in attendance for this item.

1. Sydney Hill introduced and gave an overview of the report. It was noted that a review of this year's plan would occur in spring 2024 and the findings would be brought to the committee at an appropriate time. A summary of the six key areas of the Pressures Plan was provided. It was said that the Council was successful in its application to the Department for Health and Social Care for Urgent and Emergency Care Grant funding of £2.9 million. The funding would help strengthen the resilience of urgent and emergency care services and support hospital discharge pathways during the winter period.
2. In response to comments and questions, it was said.

(a) That the figures on the update on the flu vaccines and the Covid-19 boosters would be shared after the meeting.

(b) That the paper be shared with all Council Members, to further the understanding of the pressures that Kent's health and social care services were under.

3. RESOLVED The Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee noted the content of the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2023 2024 and endorsed the proposed decision attached as Appendix 1 to:
 - a) Accept the Urgent and Emergency Care Funding under the terms set out by the Department of Health and Social Care; and
 - b) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health to develop plans and deploy the grant funding and take relevant actions, including but not limited to entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

167. 23/00091 - Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy
(Item. 8)

Mike Gogarty, Strategic Lead Public Health Consultant, and Jenny Dixon-Sherreard, Policy Officer, were in attendance for this item.

1. Mike Gogarty introduced the report. An overview was provided of why a new approach to public health was required and how the Integrated Care Strategy would support the strategic approach to prevention, the wider determinants of health, lifestyle factors and access to quality health care services. The paper set out how the system as a whole would coordinate actions to support the health and well-being of the population. It was noted that the strategy would be delivered through detailed action plans.
2. Jenny Dixon-Sherreard noted that the strategy was owned by the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP). In December the ICP would recommend the document for approval by the three statutory bodies, KCC, NHS Kent and Medway and Medway Council. Cabinet would consider the comments made at the four Cabinet Committees that the strategy had been to and whether any changes should be made to the draft strategy, before being asked to approve the final version at Cabinet in January

3. In response to comments and questions, it was said.

(a) A Member asked how the strategy would support the more deprived areas of the county, as they would require extra help. Mike Gogarty agreed that such areas would need to be targeted. It was said that the approach would adopt proportionate universalism which would ensure that areas of greater need would get greater support and that if required bespoke services would be delivered. There would be close working with district colleagues and health services to support those who required additional help.

(b) Mike Gogarty said that work on the action plans was ongoing and being developed in partnership with NHS and district colleagues, it was expected most plans would be in action or well developed by the beginning of the new financial year 2024/2025.

(c) Mike Gogarty confirmed that music would be included in the strategy going forward following a Member's suggestion.

(d) A question was asked if there was going to be any working with partners at the district level to make available affordable housing options for key healthcare professionals. Jenny Dixon-Sherreard said that the issue had been discussed at the ICP and work was ongoing to ensure that the workforce leaders across Kent and Medway worked together when developing workforce plans. It was noted that more information on housing for health and care workers would be shared after the meeting.

(e) It was noted that difficulties with reduced funding for voluntary services and lack of affordable houses meant staff were attracted to higher wages offered in London.

4. RESOLVED the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee considered and endorsed the proposed decision to approve the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy on behalf of Kent County Council.

168. Adult Social Care and Health Performance Q2 2023/2024
(Item. 9)

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

1. Mark Albiston introduced and gave an overview of the Q2 performance report. It was said that the trend of increasing demand for Adult Social Care services had continued. It was noted that there was a significant workforce challenge that affected Kent which was also the case nationally, certain areas of Kent, particularly the East Kent coastal areas, experienced a very significant challenge.
2. In response to comments and questions, it was said.

(a) It was confirmed that the statistics on Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) were only of those completed under the framework, others completed under the Mental Health Act would not be included in these figures. Ms Groombridge said that figures on all DOLS were available but not released publicly. The Member asked if these could be shared with the committee to discuss.

(b) A Member said that absolute reporting was preferred to relative performing. A comparison may not fully explain how well a service is performing for Kent residents. Mark Albiston said that comparisons were presented to provide context for the performance figures.

(c) It was asked what plans were in place to meet the target for care needs assessments. How was demand going to be forecasted to ensure that going forward adequate resources were in place to meet the level of demand and meet the targets. Mark Albiston said that planning was constantly ongoing and the Recovery Plan would have more detail on this and would be brought to the committee with the Q3 performance report. Mr Smith said that there was a challenge to recruit staff qualified to complete these assessments and the vacancy levels across the county varied significantly. Mr Smith noted that there were several plans in place to help reduce demand going forward. Mr Watkins said that prevention would be key to creating savings in the budget going forward while maintaining frontline staff numbers, it was noted that the number of social workers was anticipated to increase but more work was needed as they were still behind where they wanted to be. Mark Albiston and Jim Beale gave examples of recent successful recruitment campaigns and the plans going forward to engage on social media and sell Kent as a place to live and work.

(d) Asked by a Member if a net £46 million increase to the budget was at a scale to meet the demand and if the authority was adequately prepared for the level of demand going forward and would not be caught out. Mr Watkins said the increase to the budget should meet the net increase in the number of people entering care services. It was noted that the challenge was from the increase of instances of people with multiple and complex care needs who took greater resources to treat.

The recommissioning of large contracts would help ensure that people's needs are met in the right way and in a way that is financially sustainable for the Council.

3. RESOLVED the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee noted the performance of adult social care services in Quarter 2 2023/2024.

169. Adult Social Care and Health Annual Complaint's Report 2022/2023
(Item. 10)

Debra Davidson, Customer Care and Complaints Manager for Adult Social Care, and Pascale Blackburn-Clarke, Delivery Manager Engagement and Consultation, were in attendance for this item.

1. Debra Davidson introduced and gave an overview of the report. It was noted that there had been an increase in all areas of activity during 2022/23.
2. In response to comments and questions, it was said:

(a) The Chair expressed thanks on behalf of the committee to the staff for their work.

(b) It was said that people approach Members of Parliament and Council members in relation to complaints and enquiries for a variety of reasons, not solely or especially because their complaints are not resolved within the time specified.

3. RESOLVED the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee considered and commented on the content of the report.

170. Work Programme
(Item. 11)

RESOLVED the Work Programme 2023/24 was noted.