

## **KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

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### **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, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 15th July, 2025.

PRESENT: Mr O Bradshaw, Mr B Fryer, Ms I Kemp, Mr A Kibble, Mr R Mayall, Ms C Nolan, Ms A Randall, Ms C Russell, Mr P Stepto, Dr G Sturley, Mr P Thomas and Mrs P Williams

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs B Fordham (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) and Mrs C Palmer (Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services)

IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Hammond (Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education), Kevin Kasaven (Director of Children's Countywide Services), Ingrid Crisan (Director of Operations, Integrated Children's Services), Christine McInnes (Director of Education & SEND), Craig Chapman (Head of Fair Access), Ian Watts (Assistant Director Education, North), Jordan Regan (Families First Programme Manager) and Georgia Humphreys (Democratic Services Officer)

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

##### **1. Election of Chair** *(Item 2)*

1. Mr Fryer was nominated by the Leader to be the Chairman of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee.
2. The Committee agreed the nomination and Mr Fryer was declared as Chairman of the Committee.
3. RESOLVED that Mr Fryer was elected as the Chairman of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee.

##### **2. Election of Vice-Chair** *(Item 3)*

1. Ms Kemp proposed, and Mr Bradshaw seconded that Ms Randall be elected as Vice-Chair of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee.
2. As there were no further nominations, the Chairman declared Ms Randall as Vice-Chair of the Committee.
3. RESOLVED that Ms Randall be elected Vice-Chair of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee.

##### **3. Apologies and Substitutes** *(Item 4)*

Apologies had been received from Mr Reidy and Mrs Dean for whom Mr Streatfield was present as substitute.

**4. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda**  
(Item 5)

1. Ms Nolan declared that she was a foundation Governor at St Anselm's School and a member of the Veritas Academy Trust.

**5. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2025**  
(Item 6)

RESOLVED that the open and exempt minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2025 were correct records.

**6. 25/00040 Broomhill Bank School - Removal of Residential Provision from September 2025**  
(Item 7)

1. Mrs Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, introduced the item, providing the Committee with background information about the school. Additionally, sharing that she was impressed with her recent visit to the school.
2. Ms McInnes, Director of Education, assured the Committee that the outcomes of the consultation were not a reflection of the quality of the provision.
3. Mr Watts, Assistant Director Education – North, provided the Committee with an overview of the content of the paper and advised the Committee that the decision had been carefully considered and would not impact the education of those attending the school. Negative feedback was received from those directly associated with the school which was to be expected as the provision was rated outstanding. This decision would lead to a financial saving as the day rate for pupils was cheaper than the residential cost, there was the possibility for that saving to be redirected to other priorities.
4. In response to comments and questions it was said:
  - a. Mr Watts explained that the school was undergoing a consultation to expand its designated number of students from 318 to 490, most additional places were planned for the North Hextable site. The expansion involved investing in new buildings to create modern educational facilities. By repurposing existing buildings the school aimed to support a wider range of student needs including more complex educational requirements. The consultation was set to conclude by the end of the term and formal proposals for the expansion were to be reviewed in the autumn.
  - b. The school maintained the same staff and opportunities for both day and residential pupils, focusing on local provision to ensure appropriate care. Final financial details were still being confirmed but the cost estimates for creating 105 additional places through the new

build and conversion was favourable compared to standard benchmark costs.

- c. Kent had shown commitment to keep provision in place before this decision. There was a significant cost each year for this provision, KCC had carefully tested the need for this provision overtime, it was believed that it was appropriate to end the residential provision. Ms McInnes added that historically children with hearing or visual impairments were sent to boarding schools, presently these needs were successfully met through mainstream education with support services. The boarding school did not meet social care thresholds and was part of a national trend of reducing residential school placements. With the limited Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) budget, KCC preferred to invest in local special school provisions that enable children to live at home and attend school daily.
- d. In terms of the cost effectiveness of moving away from boarding school placements, it was said that there was a lack of SEND places in north Kent, the Local Authority was seeking local day placement options to reduce long distance travel for students. Whilst no comprehensive cost benefit analysis had been completed, the low student numbers made a direct comparison difficult.
- e. Any unused buildings that were to come from the residential provision would be difficult to convert for the extra cohort due to them not being classroom space. This would afford the school the opportunity to use this space for intervention, as break-out space and admin space. The appropriate teaching areas were to be provided with the new builds.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered and endorsed the proposed decision.

**7. 25/00044 Determination of the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 Transport 2025-26**  
(Item 8)

1. Mrs Fordham explained that all councils had to publish a transport policy, adding that there were no changes from the previous year.
2. Mr Chapman, Head of Fair Access, added that Kent had a statutory duty to consult on a post-16 transport policy each year. It was expected that the work was completed by May each year, but due to the 2025 local elections in Kent, this had been delayed. The discussion of this statement was important for the general operation of Kent's transport offer.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered and endorsed the proposed decision.

**8. 25/00045 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 for 2026/27**  
(Item 9)

1. Mrs Fordham introduced the paper and gave an overview of the reasoning behind the decision.
2. Mr Chapman gave an overview of the decision, adding that since the publication of the paper the annual increase in cost of the saver pass had occurred, so the correct costing of that was £630. The current system was no longer sustainable, the service was looking to offer families a personal

travel budget rather than a vehicle. This was due to a 75% increase in qualifying students in the past six years and a 40% increase in transport costs per pupil which had pushed annual spending over £10 million. The aim was to maintain support for students with specific needs whilst making the transport system more financially sustainable, with 34% of consultation respondents agreeing with proposed changes.

3. In response to comments and questions it was said:
  - a. The impact of this decision had been analysed, when looking at the 2024/25 cohort of 1500 young people, with 200 selecting a Personal Transport Pass (PTP), it was understood that this had the possibility to cause 1300 new vehicles on the road or around 300 if ride sharing occurred. The average cost of a taxi was £8600 which made a full transition to taxi use unlikely, there was a focus on facilitating alternative transport arrangements. Mr Chapman emphasised the importance of the analysis providing transparency for parents and students about future transfer options before school selection.
  - b. Mr Chapman shared that out of 621 young people previously receiving transport support, only 24 cases were initially declined. Of the declined cases, most found alternative solutions: 37% received alternative social care support, 8% moved to different educational provisions, 12% found their own transportation methods and just one person left education entirely. The proposed changes aimed to provide financial support between £1,317 and £4,370 in mileage payments, balancing individual needs with broader system requirements. Whilst the changes had the potential to impact some individuals they had been carefully considered by the service.
  - c. Mrs Hammond added that last year the Local Authority processed over 800 Education, Health and Care Plan's (EHCP's) for individuals aged 19 to 25. Of the over 800, 90 people continued to receive adult social care, 550 had no additional needs and did not require continued support from the Local Authority and some individuals transitioned into work or apprenticeships. Mrs Hammond emphasised that there was no substantial evidence suggesting that young people with EHCP's were significantly impacting adult social care services when their educational support ceased somewhere between the ages of 19 to 25.
  - d. Mr Chapman added that the aim was to transform how Kent supports young people's independence. The service was to start compelling young learners and families to engage with the Independent Travel Training Scheme from age 16. The default expectation was to promote self-sufficiency however flexibility would be maintained through the Member-led Regulation Committee. This ensured that individuals with the highest level of need could still receive specialised transportation support.
  - e. There was an aim to create flexible transport arrangements from rural schools, by implementing the School Led Transport scheme for students. The policy aimed to allow schools develop their own transport solutions using existing vehicles, whilst providing travel training that assessed individual student capabilities. There would be an assessment stage before travel training to identify those who would not be able to cope in those scenarios. Mr Chapman added that positive conversations had taken place with leaders in rural

schools, these schools had asked for flexibility to work with KCC for their own arrangements.

- f. A Member raised that there needed to be a focus on the lack of bus services and to ensure that young people were given the opportunity for independence and entry into the workforce in adulthood.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered and endorsed the proposed decision.

**9. 25/00047 Children's Social Care Prevention Grant 2025/2026 (Families First)**  
*(Item 10)*

1. Mrs Palmer, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, explained that the focus of the decision was to ensure an integrated, family centred approach to support for children aged 0-18 or 0-25 for those with SEND.
2. Ms Crisan, Director of Operations, Integrated Children's Services, added that this was a national grant offered to all local authorities to implement reforms from the Children's Wellbeing Bill.
3. In response to comments and questions it was said:
  - a. There was a move nationally to recognise and expand the roles of alternatively qualified professionals, such as social work assistants, to allow them to perform functions traditionally reserved for fully qualified social workers in children's services such as assessments, care planning and interventions.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered and endorsed the proposed decision.

**10. Work Programme**  
*(Item 11)*

RESOLVED that the work programme was noted.