

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, 18th January, 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 K Grehan, Ms S Hamilton, Ms J Meade, Mr J Meade, Mr D Ross, Mr T L Shonk, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Mr R J Thomas and Ms L Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs C Bell 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), Paula Parker (Transformation Lead), Jim Beale (Director of Adult Social Care for East Kent), Hayley Savage (Democratic Services Officer) and Dominic Westhoff (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

107. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item. 2)

There were no apologies or substitutes.

108. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the agenda

(Item. 3)

Mr Shonk declared an interest as a family member worked for the NHS.

109. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022

(Item. 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022 are correctly recorded and a paper copy be signed by the Chairman.

110. 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 Kent had experienced severe cold weather, with a level 3 warning issued for the southeast. Public Health had advised residents to help vulnerable families, friends, and neighbours, which included advice on how to keep warm inside, keep safe outside, and financial support.

(b) Mrs Bell provided details of services that supported health and wellbeing, which included the Release the Pressure helpline and text services. Further details about these services are available at:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/mental-health>

(c) There had been efforts to raise awareness amongst parents of the symptoms of scarlet fever which could lead to Strep A. Director of Public Health, Dr Anjan Ghosh, had written to headteachers, nurseries, and children's centres to offer further information and advice.

(d) Between 25 November and 10 December 2022, the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS) had run its '16 Days of Action Against Domestic Abuse' campaign. Over 2.4 million people per year were affected by domestic abuse in England and Wales, equating to between 75,000-80,000 adults in Kent and Medway. The cost-of-living crisis and the recent football World Cup had escalated the risk to those who experienced domestic abuse. Mrs Bell had taken part in a BBC Radio Kent interview to raise awareness and reminded residents to be vigilant, and recognise the signs of domestic abuse, and to direct victims to safety and to the help and support available.

2. The Corporate Director of Adult Social Care, Mr Richard Smith, gave a verbal update.

(a) Mr Smith provided an update on the recruitment process for the new Director for West Kent. Members had been involved in the process and a preferred candidate had been identified.

(b) Mr Smith noted that they were at the mid-point of the implementation of the Locality model, the appointment of community managers would happen soon.

(c) Mr Smith noted that there had been significant pressure on the NHS system, which had been compounded by the impact of industrial action. Mr Smith thanked Adult Social Care colleagues and the NHS workforce for their work over the challenging winter and Christmas period.

(d) The government had announced a commitment of £200million to support hospital discharge and the guidance was being reviewed. These funds would be used to purchase additional bed capacity in the community to move patients from hospitals for more appropriate care. It was noted that this was short-term funding, available until the end of March 2023.

RESOLVED the updates were noted.

111. Draft Ten Year Capital Programme, Revenue Budget 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-26
(Item. 6)

Mr Peter Oakford, Ms Zena Cooke (Corporate Director Finance) and Ms Michelle Goldsmith (Finance Business Partner - Social Care, Health & Wellbeing) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Oakford introduced the report and noted that the Local Government Finance Settlement for Kent had been far better than anticipated, and included additional funding for Adult Social Care, but would still fall short of what the Council

needed. This was due to the large pressures which faced not just the Council but most Local Authorities and included inflation and demands in Adults and Children's Social Care. The growth spending demand for the next financial year was around £216million and an additional £40million of savings would be required. Increased charges to the services that were provided by the Council were expected to generate a further £16million.

Mr Oakford said the Council would need to draw from reserves to remain financially resilient. He said it was assumed that all planned savings would be delivered in 2023-24 and that the Council would approve the 4.99% Council Tax and Social Care precept increase. Mr Oakford said the Consultation on the Council's Community Asset base had been launched and explained that if the proposals outlined in the consultation were to go ahead it would lead to £6million of operational savings and £7million worth of maintenance savings. Mr Oakford also referred to the ongoing Safety Valve negotiations between the Council and the Department of Education.

2. Mrs Bell provided an update on the Adult Social Care budget and outlined the main growth pressures, which included £22.8million to fund the current year's budget pressures, £30million provision for prices for providers, who themselves faced challenges from workforce shortages and cost pressures, and £25.6million provision for demography.

Mrs Bell said the growth pressures would be dealt with through increased income from the uplift in Client Care Contributions of £8.5 million, £2.3 million increase in the Better Care Fund and just under £1 million in New Burdens Funding for domestic abuse. Mrs Bell gave an overview of savings including £3.5 million from a strategic review of in-house services, £0.2 million review of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts, £2.3 million from the full year effect of the cessation of the homelessness contract and £4.3 million from a review of contracts and grants for discretionary services. It was noted that there were some savings that had not been achieved this financial year, due to delays in the procurement of new models of care, implementing the digital front door, technology-enabled care, and commissioning. The total savings target was in the region of £35 million.

Mrs Bell said the reforms of Adult Social Care would be important in the long term, but the postponement for two years would allow a refocus on the full-service redesign 'Making a Difference Everyday' programme, preparation for implementation of Care Quality Commission (CQC) assurance, and progress on the work on demand management, prevention, and innovation. To further develop the Council's working relationship with NHS partners within the Integrated Care System would be key in meeting the challenge of future demand and support and meet the needs of those who required social care. Mrs Bell said that the £4.3 million saving to discretionary services was a very difficult proposal and a review was ongoing into which services would be affected. The focus would be on the provision of statutory duties outlined under the Care Act and the Mental Health Act.

3. Mr Oakford, Mrs Bell, and Mr Smith responded to the following comments and questions from Members:

(a) Asked what efforts had been made with central government to obtain funding for the Council's statutory responsibilities, Mr Oakford said that lobbying of central government was a regular occurrence that would be ongoing.

(b) Asked about the increase in Council Tax for Kent residents, Mr Oakford said that central government expected local authorities to fund their services through Council Tax and this made up 75% of the budget. It was noted that savings of around £750 million had been made over the past 10 years whilst protecting front-line services.

(c) Asked about the reductions to funding for discretionary services and how this would affect vulnerable residents, Mr Oakford responded that difficult adjustments to discretionary services had to be made to maintain the provision of the Council's statutory responsibilities. Mr Smith said that details of savings made over previous years would be circulated after the meeting. He noted that the budget had recognised the growing pressures and complexity of care required in Kent and that the adoption of new models of care was urgently needed.

(d) Asked which preventative services would be affected by the savings in discretionary services, it was confirmed that work was ongoing within the directorate, in collaboration with providers and NHS partners, regarding this. When the information was available it would be reported back to the Cabinet Committee.

(e) Mr Oakford confirmed that the Fair Funding Review had been delayed and reforms to how the Council was funded were required to ensure a sustainable budget going forward.

(f) Asked about the status of the relationship between the Council and NHS partners, Mrs Bell said that the relationship was strong, with co-produced strategies and the Joint Delivery Plan, and there was a shared interest to put services on a sustainable footing.

(g) Asked if front-line staff had been consulted on proposed savings in the budget, Mrs Bell responded that Council staff were given the opportunity through a consultation to input into budget decisions. Mr Oakford confirmed that unions were fully briefed on the budget and that their views were considered.

RESOLVED that Members' comments on the draft capital and revenue budgets relevant to this committee, including responses to consultation, be noted, and reported to the Cabinet on 26th January 2023, before the draft was presented for approval at County Council on 9th February 2023.

Ms Meade and Mr Campkin asked for their abstentions to be noted in the minutes.

112. Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report April 2021 - March 2022
(Item. 7)

Mr Andrew Rabey was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Rabey introduced the report and outlined his role as the independent chair, and the responsibilities of the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board (KMSAB). Mr Rabey gave an overview of the structure and content of the report. Prevention, awareness, and quality were identified as the three main themes.

2. Mr Rabey, Mr Smith, and Mr Beale then responded to comments and questions from Members:

(a) Asked how communication issues, which were a recurring theme in Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs), were resolved, Mr Rabey responded that improved engagement was key and very cost-effective. The role of charities and local community actions in the voluntary sector was highly valued.

(b) Asked about growth numbers and the difference between Medway and the rest of Kent, Mr Rabey said that mostly the numbers had returned to pre-pandemic levels. Any comparative data, and all other requested data, not in the report, would be shared with Members after the meeting.

(c) Asked about the withdrawal of funding from voluntary sector organisations and how this would impact strategy, Mr Rabey and the KMSAB would react and adapt to any challenges they faced and noted that funding was found not only from the Council but also from private sector organisations.

(d) It was confirmed that all districts had Safeguarding teams, and all took part in the SARs.

RESOLVED that the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2021-2022 was noted.

113. Work Programme 2023
(*Item. 8*)

RESOLVED the Work Programme 2022-2023 was noted.