

## 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, 13th November, 2024.

PRESENT: Ms L Parfitt (Chair), Ms L Wright (Vice-Chairman), Mr S R Campkin, Mrs P T Cole, Ms S Hamilton, Ms J Hawkins, Mr A Kennedy, Mr B H Lewis, Ms J Meade and Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE

ALSO PRESENT: Mr Dan Watkins, Mr Peter Oakford

IN ATTENDANCE: Richard Smith (Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health), Michael Thomas-Sam (Corporate Lead Adult's and Children's Policy and Strategy), Richard Ellis (Director of Integrated Commissioning), Sydney Hill (Director Adult Social Care), Helen Groombridge (ASCH Performance Manager), Dave Shipton (Head of Finance Policy, Planning and Strategy), Susan Ashmore (Service Manager, Safeguarding and Professional Standards), Pascale Blackburn-Clarke (Delivery Manager - Engagement & Consultation), Debra Davidson (Customer Care and Complaints Manager), Paula Parker (Transformation Lead) and John Betts (Interim Corporate Director Finance) and Ruth Emberley (Democratic Services Officer).

VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE: Mrs Linda Game

#### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

**214. Introduction/Webcasting Announcement**  
(Item. 1)

**215. Apologies and Substitutes**  
(Item. 2)

Apologies were received from Mr Nigel Coller, Mr Jordan Meade, Mr Alan Ridgers.

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

Ms J Meade declared that she was an unpaid carer.

**217. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2024**  
(Item. 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 19 September 2024 were correctly recorded and that paper copies be signed by the Chair.

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

1. The verbal update was provided by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Mr Dan Watkins and Corporate Director for Adult

Social Care, Mr Richard Smith. Mr Watkins highlighted the following in his report:

- a) A public consultation on changes to wellbeing services was scheduled to launch at the end of November 2024. The services are delivered by voluntary community organisations to help prevent, reduce or delay the need for people to receive care and support by keeping them well and independent. The proposal had been developed with the strategic provider and a full briefing will be circulated to Cabinet Committee Members prior to launch.
  - b) The Care Quality Commission Assurance visit took place at the end of September / beginning of October 2024 and the initial report is anticipated in early December 2024.
  - c) World Mental Health Day took place on the 10 October 2024 and the official theme was prioritising mental health in the workplace and Kent County Council supported this in a variety of ways.
  - d) Mr Watkins confirmed that he joined Mr Jordan Meade and Mr Andrew Kennedy, both of whom are KCC Mental Health Champions, on part of their tour of mental health charities around Kent (on 20 October 2024).
  - e) Mr Watkins confirmed that he would be attending the Kent and Medway Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Conference on the 26 November 2024 at the Detling Showground.
  - f) Mr Watkins confirmed as part of his tour of Adult Social Care and Health Services, he visited the Southfields Short Break Centre in Ashford on the 16 October 2024.
  - g) The Kent Dementia Show Case and Dementia Friendly Awards took part on the 21 October 2024. Mr Watkins confirmed that he presented the awards at Vally Park Secondary School in Maidstone.
2. Mr Kennedy confirmed that he was also attending the Kent and Medway Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Conference and requested that his thanks to Mr Streatfeild be recorded, in recognition for organising three successful visits to organisations within his division on World Mental Health Day.
  3. Mr Kennedy explained to Members that he recently launched an initiative in his division called The Community Bridge which has been put together with the Kent County Council Mental Health team and Tonbridge and Malling Council provided financial support. The website is: [communitybridge.co.uk](http://communitybridge.co.uk)
  4. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care, Mr Richard Smith highlighted the following in his verbal update:
    - a) Mr Smith gave his thanks to all staff involved in the CQC Assurance visit. He confirmed that the first report would be received during the last week of November / beginning of December and once he had taken the opportunity to review the contents for the purposes of

challenge, question and check accuracy levels, the rating would then be published. An improvement plan would then be developed.

- b) October was Black History month and there were various engagement opportunities throughout KCC. Mr Smith gave thanks to all staff involved with the planning and implementation.
  - c) A Festival of Practice will be held to allow Adult Social Care, in particular social workers, the opportunity to showcase their work. 57 people have indicated through DELTA that they would like to share examples of good practice.
  - d) Occupational Therapy week had just concluded. This also provided opportunities to show case good examples of preventative work carried out by OTTs (Occupational Therapists Teams).
  - e) Mr Smith confirmed that he attended a Kent and Medway Health and Care Symposium run by the ICS (Integrated Care Service). The focus was on prevention and a range of providers were also in attendance.
  - f) Adult Social Care won two silver awards and Social Work of the Year award. The awards were collected by Mr Peter Zein.
5. In answer to a question concerning the NHS's potential future involvement with the Prevent scheme, Mr Smith commented that, whilst he was not able to answer on behalf of the NHS he could comment in his capacity as Corporate Director that new monies had gone into the NHS and there were going to be some organisation changes and clarity of roles and responsibilities between the Integrated Care Board, the Trusts and NHS England. This meant that the Integrated Care Board were more focused on community services and prevention.
6. RESOLVED the Committee to note the verbal updates.

**219. Draft Revenue and Capital Budget and MTFP**  
*(Item. 6)*

- 1. The item was present by Cabinet Member for Finance, Mr Peter Oakford. He commented that an individual report had been completed for each Cabinet Committee this financial year, meaning the respective Cabinet Member would deal with the responsibilities for own directorate. Mr Oakford discussed the high level budget and how it impacted the Council. The particular points to note included the following:
  - a) The Local Government Finance settlement would be provided late December 2024.
  - b) It was a draft budget put together using the current knowledge available and on the assumption that levels such as Council Tax would remain the same. The inheritance of the spending plans from the previous Government and the unknown intentions of the current Government in relation to these had also been factored in.

- c) There were a number of challenges to the budget, which sat within the Adult Social Care budget. These were principally due to the pressures seen on adult social care, with £50 million of saving contained in the plan for adult social care this financial year. The current in year budget over spend was currently at £16 million.
  - d) It was confirmed that additional funds would be allocated to Adult Social Care, however the distribution was known. If the allocation was based on previously used methodology, it was possible the directorate would receive around £13 million. Taking into consideration the over spend of the current financial year and the required savings for the next year, it likely that this will be used to off set the budget pressures, rather than incremental spending.
2. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health explained the following:
- a) In relation to demand, the current growth was approximately £66 million in spending for Adult Social Care, compared to £100 million of the previous year. Mr Watkins confirm that this reflected more people coming into the service and an increased complexity of need. Inflation was also a component, with payments of 3% uplift being paid to providers.
  - b) The Employer's Bill of Rights was due for enactment in 2025 which would add an estimated £600 of cost per employee.
  - c) The target saving for the next financial year is proposed to be £38 Million, compared to £54 million of saving for this year. Despite this, Mr Watkins indicated that Adult Social Care, although off track for their budgetary targets, were on track to create the largest saving ever achieve by any directorate at Kent County Council.
  - d) The largest share of the £38 million in savings came from Transformation Programme (focused on how the services operated) at £28 million.
  - e) Some smaller savings involved a sum of £4 million which came from client contributions, which were essentially the uplift of benefits and other payments receive through inflation. The Preventative savings through the Community Wellbeing consultation being launched, was budgeted to save around £2.5 million in 2025.
  - f) Mr Watkins confirmed there was an unresolved item of £8.5 million of savings which were not achieved this financial year, not would they likely be achieved the following year.
3. Mr Smith commented that the ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) Autum Budget statement summary provide that 81% of Councils in the country are forecasting an overspend in Adult Social Care. A long term solution was required and therefore items like the Transformation Program were an important part of maintaining service whilst trying to make savings.

4. In answer to questions and comments made by Members it was said that:
- a) It was not a statutory duty to support the independent sector however, it was stated that the Council and the private sector are partners and so working together was important. The 10% increase cost of care in Care Homes was driven by central government; at present the Council can only provide 3% which left a clear difference.
  - b) It was stated that care providers are not able to absorb the costs as readily as other sectors and so going forwards, partnership working would be important and the relationship with providers needed to open, honest and transparent. There was a current risk matrix of providers and given the high levels of complex care packages, the provider industry was changing which mean that for some providers, they would find this difficult to operate which meant that they needed to support.
  - c) It was stated that this was not just an Adult Social Care issue, rather the sustainability of Kent County Council as a whole; given the current overspend on the budget, the margin for error was narrow. The draft budget for Adult Social Care represented an improvement picture for the next financial year. It was highlighted that by doing the basic things in Adult Social Care and by moving resources around, would have a positive impact and better outcome.
  - d) Recent paperwork suggested that Adult Social Care were over performing in Enablement Services (for example: Kent Enablement at Home Service) currently had £2 million of cost diversion by people who had access to enablement.
  - e) Assurance was provided to the Committee that by employing preventative measures and keeping people in their homes for longer through using a variety of methods, meant meeting needs earlier but at a lower cost.
  - f) It was explained to the Committee that due to the funding restrictions, the decision making capability was constrained with very little discretion and so meeting the statutory need took precedent.
  - g) Care workers were getting an above inflation minimum wage pay rise; this year it was approximately 7% for most minimum wage workers however people of 18, 19 or 20 years of age, it calculated to around a 16% increase. Care homes with a work force predominantly made up of this age range of employees, were predicted to find employment costs very high.
  - h) It was confirmed that Adult Social Care comprised of 35% of the Council's net budget and this money supported 8.5% of the residents of Kent.

- i) A Member expressed gratitude for the work conducted by those in Adult Social who developed strategies to save money and balance the budget.
5. In answer to a question from a Member, Mr Dave Shipton commented that behind the budget papers, an interactive Member dashboard was published which provided information and highlighted all the impacts, risks and sensitivities that Members could view. In previous years, officers tried to produce a 'chilli rating' on all savings but this proved to be a subjective judgement. Members indicated that a red, yellow or green indication would visually be helpful to which Mr Shipton confirmed that he would take this away as a suggestion.
6. Mr Watkins suggested that if Members had any suggestions or comments/proposals in relation to the budget for Adult Social Care to provide them to him or bring them to the January 2025 as Full Council meetings were not the best place to debate complex issues with the Adults Social Care budget.
7. RESOLVED to NOTE the administration's draft revenue budgets including responses to consultation.
8. RESOLVED to SUGGEST any changes which should be made to the administration's draft budget proposals related to the Cabinet Committee's portfolio area before the draft is considered by Cabinet on 30 January 2025 and presented to Full County Council on 13 February 2025.

## **220. Performance Dashboard**

*(Item. 7)*

1. The report was introduced by the Adult Social Care Performance Manager, Ms Helen Groombridge.
2. In answer to comments and questions made by Members Ms Groombridge commented:
  - a) In relation to the statistics presented in the report, it was confirmed that the rate of services provided per 100,000 people would be added to the existing presentation of the measures in time for the next Cabinet Committee. She also commented that she would also look at the baseline against national comparators for the next report
3. RESOLVED to note the performance of Adult Social Care Services in Quarter 2 2024/2025

## **221. Adult Social Care Pressures Plan**

*(Item. 8)*

1. The report was presented by Assistant Director Operations, Ms Susan Ashmore.
2. In answer to questions and comments made by Members it was said that:
  - a) People over 65 and vulnerable people were eligible for a free COVID vaccine
  - b) A Member requested that the covering note which accompanied the report to be more focused so that Members got the full benefit of all the hard work conducted and residents were able to ascertain a clear picture of the continuous improvements, as well as a better understanding of how the improvements are being made.
  - c) East Kent Hospital trusts had the most stressed system for hospital discharge delay during winter pressures, however since the implementation of several new initiatives last winter has produced good results and the discharge delay number halved.
  - d) The benefits of encouraging residents to embrace technology to facilitate staying at home longer, whilst saving funds was discussed.
  - e) There were a number of technological responses which carers found useful, such as the 24 hour technical assessment equipment to ascertain whether someone is up walking during the night, falls prevention work to keep people from hospital admission, falling a fall. The idea was to grow awareness of technology in the Adult Social Care Connect Space.
  - f) Mr Smith stated that he, ICB (Integrated Care Board) KMPT (Kent and Medway Partnership Trust) were aware of the pressures on the Mental Health services at present and Kent had few acute beds which meant they needed community wrap around support and community step up beds. Mr Smith stated that commissioning pathways out of hospital need to be thought about in a very different way. He stated that, unless the pathways ways are fully commissioned, there was a risk that local solutions would come into play which could attract unforeseen circumstances.
3. RESOLVED to note the content of the report and the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2024-2025

**222. Annual Complaints Report**  
(Item. 9)

1. The report was presented by the Customer Care and Complaints Manager Ms Debra Davidson.
2. In answer to questions and comments from Members it was said that:
  - a) The 51% of complaints that were either upheld or partially upheld, was a similar rate to that of other councils. A more detailed response could be provided if required.
  - b) In response to a Member indicating that it would be helpful to hear from someone in regarding the Coroner's Inquest Enquiries and requests, it was confirmed that a member of the strategic safeguarding team could attend a committee meeting and provide further information regarding Coroners Involvement. It was explained that, on occasion, safeguarding was raised as an issue at inquest. A prevention of future deaths report can be ordered by a Coroner as part of their discretionary powers, which support their overall statutory powers.
  - c) It was confirmed that the Customer Care and Complaints team managed the process when a Coroner made a request and they ensured that Adult Social Care responded and followed the authorisation process.
  - d) Members were directed to sections of the reports and supporting appendices which set out the theme of Complaints and as well as the section entitled 'You Said, We Did'.
  - e) The high level of compliments and the stories from members of the public were acknowledged and thanks was given to the directorate for their hard work.
3. RESOLVED to consider and commented on the content of the Annual Complaints Report.

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

1. RESOLVED to note the work programme.