

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 2 December 2013.

PRESENT: Mr P B Carter, (Chairman), Mr D L Brazier, Mr G Cooke, Mr M C Dance, Mr G K Gibbens, Mr R W Gough, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr J D Simmonds, MBE, Mr B J Sweetland and Mrs J Whittle

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Austerberry (Corporate Director, Enterprise and Environment), Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director of Business Strategy and Support), Ms A Honey (Corporate Director, Customer and Communities), Mr A Ireland (Corporate Director, Families and Social Care), Mr P Leeson (Corporate Director Education, Learning and Skills Directorate), Ms M Peachey (Kent Director Of Public Health), Mr A Wood (Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement), Mr G Wild (Director of Governance and Law) and Mrs L Whitaker (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### **32. Apologies**

*(Item 1)*

Apologies were received from Amanda Beer, Corporate Director for Human Resources.

#### **33. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 October 2013**

*(Item 3)*

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

#### **34. Other items which the Chairman decides are relevant or urgent**

*(Item 4)*

The Leader of the Council, Mr Carter, reported that no urgent reports would be received, however, in response to a small protest being conducted outside of County Hall regarding the recent review of Children's Centres in Kent he provided a brief update of the current position.

A report to the Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee had been published on the 27<sup>th</sup> November for consideration at the meeting scheduled for the 5<sup>th</sup> December. The report detailed the outcomes of the recent consultation and the proposals for the future of Children's Centres. He welcomed the thorough and genuine consultation and thanked the Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services for her hard work in engaging with those who may be impacted. He invited the Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services to comment on the paper. Mrs Whittle made the following statements:

- An extensive consultation lasting 3 months had taken place and was now concluded.

- The original proposal consulted upon had been to close 23 Centres but had been amended following the consultation to 12.
- Thanks were extended to KCC Members and Kent's MP's for their involvement in the process, as well as to Children Centre staff, professionals and parents who had responded.
- That should a centre be closed in a particular locality, services would be continued in nearby local alternative community venues.
- The current proposals to be discussed by the Cabinet Committee and eventually to be considered for adoption by herself, would help to protect services in the future and would be able to survive and respond to continued difficult economic times.

### **35. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring for 2013-14 - Quarter 2**

*(Item 5 – Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement and Andy Wood, Corporate Director for Finance and Procurement)*

Cabinet received a report providing the second full financial monitoring report of the 2013 -14 financial year. Mr Simmonds introduced the report to cabinet and in particular referred to the following details contained within it, pertaining to the revenue budget:

- That the report was positive and the Council remained on target to deliver an underspend.
- An underspend of £5.179million was currently reported before any management action had been taken, which would be reduced to £2.647million by the rephasing of projects/programmes including Social Fund monies and Kent Youth Employment. Following scheduled management action it was expected that the underspend would increase to £4.049million
- Since the last report, the increase in the underspend before management action and roll forward requirements could be largely attributed to three factors, the rephasing of the Kent Youth Employment Programme, an underspend related to waste management and savings in the customer and communities portfolio. This had been offset by increased pressure on the property budget and a shortfall in the Educational service grant relating to schools converting to academies.
- That £4.506 million grant funding received from central government at the beginning of the year had been helpful in achieving the satisfactory 6 month position.
- The Children's Services budget continued to experience considerable pressure, and currently showed an overspend of £3.916million which it was hoped would be reduced by management action taken in relation to recruitment, amongst other things. Asylum seeking children who had exhausted all rights of appeal continued to create financial pressure for the portfolio and although invoices totalling £3.8million continued to be sent to UKBA in an attempt to recover costs, the future receipt of all monies owed was not certain.
- A £1.567m underspend was reported within the mainstream home to school transport budget and £3m within the waste budget as a result of lower than budgeted waste tonnage. This was offset by other pressures within the waste service , leaving a £1.3million overall surplus on the waste budgets.
- Overall the position was satisfactory and it was crucial that the good work continued.

In relation to the Capital Budget he reported that:

- The working budget was currently reported as £320.3million but the actual spend was likely to be approximately £277.5million, a variation of £42.8million. The majority of this variation, £35.8million was accounted for by rephrasing of capital projects.
- The overall position was satisfactory.

Andy Wood, Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement welcomed the report and also expressed satisfaction that pressures identified were a small percentage of the budget of almost one billion.

The Cabinet Member concluded by reminding members that the recommendations before them contained a £1.5million of virement that would enable funding of the initial costs of Facing the Challenge, the Council's transformation programme.

The Leader referred to the rise in outstanding debt to KCC and suggested that this might be considered in more depth in the future.

It was **RESOLVED**:

<b>Cabinet Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring for 2013-14 – Quarter 2 14 October 2013</b>	
<b>1.</b>	That the latest monitoring position on both the revenue and capital budgets be noted
<b>2.</b>	That a virement of £1.5m from the Modernisation of the Council budget within the Finance & Business Support portfolio to a new budget line "Business Strategy - Facing the Challenge" to be held in the Democracy & Partnerships portfolio (in the pre-election portfolio structure), to fund the initial costs of Facing the Challenge be agreed.
<b>3.</b>	That the changes to the capital programme as detailed in the actions column in table 2 of the annex reports be agreed.
<b>4.</b>	That the latest Financial Health Indicators and Prudential Indicators as reported in appendix 1 and appendix 2 respectively be noted
<b>5</b>	That the directorate staffing levels as at the end of September 2013 as provided in section 7 be noted.
<b>REASON</b>	
<b>1, 4 &amp; 5</b>	In order that the Cabinet conducts its monitoring activities effectively.
<b>2.</b>	In order that the 'facing the challenge' programme is not delayed by accounting requirements.
<b>3.</b>	In order that the capital budget reflects the actuality of the council's capital programme.

<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED</b>	None
<b>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST</b>	None
<b>DISPENSATIONS GRANTED</b>	None

### **36. Quarterly Performance Report - Quarter 2 2013/14**

*(Item 6 – Report of the Leader and Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Audit and Performance, Mr Paul Carter and Corporate Director for Business Strategy and Support, David Cockburn)*

Cabinet received a report detailing performance in key areas during the first quarter of the financial year.

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Audit & Transformation, Mr Paul Carter, introduced the report for members, he commented on the need to manage demand led services and the importance of preventative services in managing a reduction in those areas. He requested that Richard Fitzgerald, Performance Manager BSS, spoke to draw attention to any areas of particular relevance or variation. Mr Fitzgerald drew attention to the following information:

- That there had been a small reduction in the number of Looked After Children
- That for a number of performance targets showing as amber performance was close to or better than the national average with the amber rating reflecting challenging local targets which had been set.
- That the three ‘reds’ reported where as at the last Quarter. Namely, Social worker posts filled, NHS health checks and Schools in category.
- NHS Health Checks showed a positive direction of travel.
- 14 Indicators had improved while 14 reported lower than at the last quarter which was a balanced position.

The Leader commented that the current levels of schools in category and temporary social workers employed were big issues, and assured members that the administration continued to work towards positive solutions to these issues.

In response to the report the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform made the following remarks:

- That the direction of travel for education remained positive and that improvements had been made in terms of attainment for children in Kent.
- Ofsted inspection results also continued to improve.
- The Education Directorate would continue to focus on minimising the attainment gap between children from different socio-economic backgrounds.
- There is on-going monitoring of schools at risk of going into category and expectations were that numbers moving into category would reduce in the year ahead. Finally he highlighted for members, figures included within the report which illustrated the rising number of reception pupils for whom KCC had a statutory responsibility to ensure a school place. It was not, he

reported, unexpected but explained the current programme of school expansion being undertaken.

The Leader added that the success of the Capital receipt programme had been and would continue to be crucial in funding capital projects such as the expansion programme to which Mr Gough had referred.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Mr Dance, commented on the reported improvement in the number of jobs created. For the TIGER fund performance was ahead of target for the first seven months and the direction of travel remained positive. TIGER was a public/private partnership and he credited a large part of the success to date to that innovative partnership working. In the future the Escalate project would invest £5.5million in West Kent and in addition private sector partners were being sought to help deliver the smaller Marsh Million fund.

The Cabinet Member for Specialist Children’s Services, Mrs Whittle reported in relation to recruitment of permanent social workers. She informed Members that there had been a significant increase in the number of permanent social workers with 48 additional newly qualified social workers recruited in September, but that they would not become case holders until the relevant professional training had been completed. .

The Leader expressed concern regarding the performance target which measured the number of placements that Children in Care experienced. He suggested that in the future the Social Care and Public health Cabinet Committee may wish to investigate this data further.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, reported against the ‘red’ indicator on NHS Health Checks. He explained that concerns had been addressed with the provider and the majority of GP’s in Kent were now fully signed up to the scheme. The service was improving and would continue to improve, but that the 5 year trajectory of the work meant that reporting of success would not be immediate.

It was RESOLVED:

<b>Cabinet Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 2 2013/14 2 December 2013</b>	
<b>1.</b>	That the Quarter 2, 2013/14 Quarterly Performance Report be noted.
<b>REASON</b>	
<b>1.</b>	In order that the Cabinet conducts its monitoring activities effectively.
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED</b>	None
<b>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST</b>	None
<b>DISPENSATIONS</b>	None

<b>GRANTED</b>	
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**37. Corporate Risk Register - Refresh**

*(Item 7 – Report of the Leader and Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Audit and Performance, Mr Paul Carter and Corporate Director for Business Strategy and Support, David Cockburn)*

Cabinet received a report presenting the latest version of the Kent County Council Corporate Risk Register.

Mark Scrivener, Corporate Risk Manager was in attendance to talk to the item. He introduced the report to Cabinet explaining that the Corporate Risk register was a living document and as such risks were deleted, escalated or adapted according to various factors. The report detailed such changes for consideration, and any actions being taken to mitigate risks reported.

No further comments were received.

It was RESOLVED:

<b>Cabinet Corporate Risk register - Refresh 2 December 2013</b>	
<b>1.</b>	That the refreshed Corporate Risk Register, be noted.
<b>REASON</b>	
<b>1.</b>	In order that the Cabinet conducts its risk monitoring activities effectively.
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED</b>	None
<b>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST</b>	None
<b>DISPENSATIONS GRANTED</b>	None