

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 23 March 2015.

PRESENT: Mr P B Carter, CBE (Chairman), Mr M A C Balfour, Mr G Cooke, Mr M C Dance, Mr G K Gibbens, Mr R W Gough, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr P J Oakford and Mr J D Simmonds, MBE

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

104. Apologies

Apologies were received from the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services, Brian Sweetland.

105. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda

(Item 2)

None.

106. Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 January 2015

(Item 3)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 January 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman accordingly.

107. Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement 2015-2020

(Item 4)

Cabinet received a report of the Leader, Mr Paul Carter, providing for consideration, the findings of the public consultation on the Council's draft five year strategic statement; 'Improving Outcomes and Increasing Opportunities' and seeking endorsement of the document, as amended, for agreement by County Council.

Mr Carter introduced the report, and recommended it to members for endorsement to County Council. He welcomed the succinct and clear style in which the document was written and reminded all Directors that Directorate Business Plans must be derived from the strategic aims set out within the statement as the activity that followed any endorsement of the strategic aims by County Council would be critical to realising the vision set out therein. Directorate Business Plans would be considered by the relevant Cabinet Committees in order to ensure that this was the case.

He also commented on the consultation that had been undertaken. Although the response had not been overwhelming, Mr Carter welcomed the comments that had been received and regarded them as having helped to shape a better final draft document.

David Whittle, Director of Policy, Strategy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance, spoke to the item. He acknowledged that engaging the public in the consultation had been difficult as it had in other similar consultations on Bold Steps for Kent and Toward 2010 for example and this had prompted the council's decision to move to a series of in depth events around the county, engaging residents in a more meaningful way and providing the council with very useful qualitative data which added a great deal of value and lead to significant changes to the original draft document.

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Mr Mike Hill, confirmed that the document would be useful for directorates in producing business and commissioning plans and that it had already provided useful guidance within his portfolio during consideration of the future of the Libraries service in Kent in order to ensure that any proposals for the future delivery of the service was fit for purpose and helped to achieve the wider strategic aims of the County Council.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health, Mr Graham Gibbens, commented on table 3 within the draft document, which described the desired outcomes toward the wider goal of older and vulnerable residents being safe and supported and having choices that enabled them to live independently. He welcomed the recognition of the need for Health and Social Care to work closely together and the importance of early assessment and treatment for those with mental health issues.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Mr Mark Dance, welcomed the report and spoke of the benefits of economic development for all communities in Kent. He particularly highlighted the work that had been facilitated by regional growth fund monies to work with young people who were not in education, employment or training, which would be the subject of a television programme that evening.

The Leader concluded the discussion by drawing attention to the suggested measures for performance contained within the report. He expected that these would continue to evolve over time at the hands of Cabinet Committees, Directors and Cabinet Members in order that they remained relevant and useful to target delivery.

It was agreed that the findings of the public consultation and subsequent changes to the draft strategic statement as set out in the report be NOTED and the draft five year strategic statement; "*Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes*" at appendix 1, be RECOMMENDED to County Council for APPROVAL.

108. Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3 - 2014/15

(Item 5)

Cabinet received a report detailing the budget monitoring position for Quarter 3 of 2014-15 for both revenue and capital budgets and including an update on key activity data.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement introduced the report and in particular he referred to the following:

Revenue Budget:

- i. That early signs had caused concern when an overspend had been initially predicted for 2014/15. This was no longer the case as improved predictions

were now reported owing to the hard work and determination of Directors and Cabinet Members to manage budgets effectively.

- ii. The current net position variance against the budget was predicted as £5.48million, predicted to rise to £6million following further management action. Since the figures had been compiled, good news had been received from the Government regarding the cost of supporting unaccompanied minors seeking asylum. The changes would increase the council's budget by approximately £1.4million and increasing the projected underspend accordingly.
- iii. KCC was legally obligated to roll forward £341,000 for commitments made to the Kent Youth Employment Programme for 2015/16. In addition to this, should the underspend be realised, other roll forwards would take place, namely £2million for the Troubled Families Programme and £70,000 for the County Coroners Service. It had also been considered that a roll forward of £2.2million might be needed in order to continue the Kent Support and Assistance Service but this had been included in the Governments funding announcement and was therefore no longer necessary.
- iv. He looked at each Directorate in turn:
 - Social Care, Health and Wellbeing presented a balanced overall position. Pressures remained in the areas of domiciliary care and as a result of the timing of realisation of transformation savings but these were offset by savings elsewhere, such as nursing and residential care.
 - Growth Environment and Transport continued to experience waste tonnage increases but efforts in the area of waste disposal had created economies that had offset those pressures by more than 50%. Pressures remained on the Kent Freedom Pass and Young Persons Travel Card and on Home to School SEN Transport, the latter being partly offset by income from other authorities of £500,000 and reduced demand for other home to school transport.
- v. Generally the revenue budget report was positive and the outlook optimistic.

Capital budget:

- i. The current working budget was reported at £356million with an actual outturn of £259million a very large proportion of that variance was as a result of rephrasing of projects and these were detailed in full within the report.

Andy Wood, Corporate Director of Finance and procurement spoke to the item. He clarified that the underlying position after roll forward requests was a £3m underspend against a total budget of nearly one billion. The news on the costs of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum was welcomed and would increase that underspend to approximately £4.5million but difficult negotiations would continue to seek clarity on the position for future years. Finally Mr Wood confirmed that there were reasons for concern within the indicative January and February figures and that he was confident that the underspend would be achieved.

Mr Carter reiterated the points made about the asylum budget; he welcomed the news from government but confirmed that negotiations would continue in respect of future years. He also reminded members that as a result of a motion put forward by Mr Truelove at County Council work was underway to identify road maintenance projects that may be funded from some of the underspend.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Mr Matthew Balfour, spoke to the item. He reported to members that the increase in waste tonnage was largely a result of the improvement in the economic climate and congratulated Officers and his predecessor as Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the work done in other areas to partially address this. He welcomed the Leader's comments regarding road maintenance and relished the opportunity to make improvements in that area.

CABINET Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 3 23 March 2015	
1.	That the report, including the latest monitoring position on both the revenue and capital budgets, be NOTED
2.	That the changes to the capital programme as detailed in the actions column in table 2 of the annex reports and summarised in Appendix 3, be AGREED.
REASON	
1.	In order that Cabinet can effectively carry out monitoring requirements.
2	In order that the budget accurately reflects the real time position and is fit for purpose enabling necessary actions to be taken.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED	None.
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	None.
DISPENSATIONS GRANTED	None.

109. Performance Monitoring - Quarter 3 - 2014/15
(Item 6)

Cabinet received a report of the Leader and Corporate Director of Strategic and Corporate Services detailing the key areas of performance for the authority at Quarter 3 of 2014/15.

Richard Fitzgerald, Performance Manager, was in attendance to speak to the item. He reported that the majority of indicators were classed as 'green' and therefore achieving or overachieving the target set and that there had been more positive direction of travel than otherwise in those that had changed status. He highlighted for those present the key areas of success, change, or 'red' ratings, as follows:

- i. Customer Services:
 - The contact Centre had exceeded the target related to call-answering in quarter 3, much improved from earlier monitoring reports and has also achieved a green rating for answering complaints within the required timeframe; up from an amber rating in quarter 2
- ii. Growth Environment and Transport:
 - Economic indicators showed a return to pre-recession levels and the annual population survey showed that employment rates in Kent were growing faster than nationally.

- The RGF loan funds, managed by KCC were almost fully subscribed, with 5000 jobs to be created as a result.
 - Highways activity had reported a drop in performance as a result of systems changes made by the contractor. An action and support plan was now in place to improve performance.
 - Diversion from landfill figures remained strong, partially as a result of a 2.5% increase in the household recycling rate, now almost at the EU target of 50%. This improvement was credited to new kerbside collections rolled out by District Councils in Kent and supported by KCC.
- iii. Education and Young Peoples Services:
- Annual attainment figures for pupils in Kent were not included in quarterly reports but had been good in 2014 – Key Stage 2 results were now at the national average and there had been a reduction in the attainment gap between those pupils receiving free school meals and those who were not. The indicator reported quarterly, the percentage of schools rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ in Ofsted reports, continued to improve at both Primary and Secondary level. Early years performance in the same category had dipped slightly but still remained above the national average at 90%.
 - Figures for those young people classed as NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) had not met the January target but had shown a positive direction of travel and the number of apprenticeships created had remained constant from the same time in 2013. In the 18-24 year old age range a reduction in jobseeker allowance claims to pre-recession levels, was reported KCC was also employing more young people, having and improved total of 7.7% of the workforce now being under 25.
 - The ‘Early Help and Preventative Services’ division was now fully integrated in to the KCC organisational model, having been newly created, and the Kent Family Support Framework had been rolled out to replace the common assessment framework, which would mean that more families would now receive integrated support.
- iv. Children’s Social Care showed continued good performance:
- Adoption rates had increased to over 20% which was above expectation
 - Increased stability of placement for children in care was reported
 - The total number of children in care had been reduced.
 - More permanent social workers were now employed by KCC and latest figures suggested that this would continue to improve.
- v. Adult Social Care
- Core transformation indicators continued to improve and report well, particularly in the areas of enablement and telecare and as a result there had been a significant reduction in new admissions to permanent residential care.
 - Slow progress was being made on the target relating to the promotion of independence reviews and that was currently the only ‘red’ rating in the report.
- vi. Public Health
- Delivery of Health Checks showed a small dip in performance over the quarter but it was expected that the annual target would be achieved.

Finally, Mr Fitzgerald directed members to the inclusion of information pertaining to risk within the report and confirmed that full risk reporting would be considered by Cabinet Committees at the next cycle of meetings.

The Leader welcomed the report, in particular reductions in the unemployment rate for the county aided by the Council's use of regional growth fund monies to create jobs; improvements in Ofsted ratings for schools in Kent, particularly Primary schools which had returned the best inspection results in 17 years; and important improvements achieved in the creation of more stable placements for children in care.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform spoke to the item; he was pleased with the results recorded for primary schools achieving good or outstanding judgements from Ofsted in an area where there had been an historic weakness in Kent attainment was pulling ever closer to the national average. He reported that the trend had continued in Ofsted reports since December. Finally he confirmed that a strong plan was in place to raise the number of apprenticeships in the county.

The Leader congratulated the Cabinet Member and officers within the Directorate for achieving such rapid turnaround for many of the schools recovering from below standard Ofsted reports to 'good' or 'outstanding'.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Mr Mark Dance reported that the TIGER and Escalate funds were now fully committed and thanked the business representatives involved in the scheme and officers at KCC for helping to achieve this in a new area of work. The funds had helped to achieve developments at Discovery Park and investments had been made by businesses in the buildings there, such that they were now world class examples of their type. A recent World summit of nano technology was held at the park recently and it was hoped as a result further market engagement would be conducted regarding the letting of Building 500.

It was RESOLVED that the report be NOTED.