

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 14 April 2008.

PRESENT: Mr P B Carter (Chairman), Mr N J D Chard, Mr M C Dance, Mr K A Ferrin, Mr G K Gibbens, Mr R W Gough, Mr M Hill, Mr A J King , Mr K G Lynes and Mr C Wells.

OFFICERS: Mr P Gilroy, Chief Executive; Ms A Honey, Managing Director, Communities, Ms L McMullan, Director of Finance and Ms M Peachey, Director of Public Health. Dr L Davies was present on behalf of the Managing Director for Regeneration and Environment, Mr B Anderson was present on behalf of the Managing Director for Children Families and Education and Mr S Leidecker was present on behalf of the Managing Director for Adult Social Services.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 March 2008

Subject to the correction of a typographical error in paragraph 2.1, the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2008 were agreed as a true record.

2. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Exception Report

(Item 3 – Report by Mr Nick Chard, Cabinet Member for Finance, and Ms Lynda McMullan, Director of Finance)

(1) Mr Chard said that this was the last Monitoring Exception report before the submission of the outturn. There was still a forecast underspend of some £7.4m and he placed on record his thanks to officers for the part they had played in achieving this. However, some £3.8m still remained to be recovered on asylum costs so that needed to be taken into account when looking at the final outturn figures. Mr Carter reported on a recent meeting of the LGA Task Group on Asylum and Refugees. He also reported that the County Council would be hosting a seminar at the House of Lords on 23 April 2008 under the Chairmanship of Lord Bruce-Lockhart with other Joint Council Members in order to make the situation more widely known to MP's and Peers. However, it was understood that the Government had now arranged a meeting with representatives from the LGA on 22 April 2008, and the outcome from that meeting would be fed into the discussions taking place on 23 April 2008.

(2) Mr Chard said that there was a residual year end pressure of some £800,000 in respect of Adult Education Services and that would need to be rolled forward with progress monitored against an agreed action plan. Mr Hill said that there were issues relating to the Adult Education budget and that would be the subject of a report to a future meeting of Cabinet.

(3) Cabinet then noted the latest forecast Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring position for 2007/08; the Revenue virement detailed in Section 1.2 of the Cabinet report; and the additional revenue funding from the Learning and Skills Council to fund specific projects with Health to address Teenage Pregnancy Issues, as detailed in Section 2.2.1 of the Cabinet report.

3. Annual Unit Business Plans

(Item 4 – Report by Mr Paul Carter, Leader of the County Council and Mr Peter Gilroy, Chief Executive)

See Record of Decision on Page 4.

4. Decisions from Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – 26 March 2008

(Item 5 – Report by Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager)

(1) This report set out the decisions from the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee held on 26 March 2008 and invited responses from Cabinet.

Kent Health Watch

Mr Gibbens confirmed that in response to a request from the Scrutiny Committee, he would arrange to submit a monitoring report to its meeting in December 2008. Mr Gibbens also said that data collection issues and confidentiality would be considered along with NHS colleagues as part of the implementation process and protocols and procedures would be signed off by the Kent Health Watch Policy Board. Mr Gibbens also said that it had always been the intention that Kent Health Watch would ultimately become an independent entity and that an exit strategy would be devised once other issues became clearer around matters such as Making Experiences Count and LINK. With regard to the Gateway programmes, discussions had already be opened with colleagues as to how that can be linked into KHW. Mr Gibbens also confirmed the procurement arrangements and gave details of the transition period for LINK. Also a review of LINK and Kent Health Watch would be undertaken in November 2008 to ensure there were not any operational conflicts.

Mr Carter said that together with the Chief Executive he had met last week with the Chief Executive and Chairman of the South East Coast Strategic Health Authority to discuss the introduction of Kent Health Watch. Mr Carter said that during these discussions the Chairman of the Health Authority was gracious enough to accept that had a Kent Health Watch been in place at the time of the problems experienced at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Hospitals, these may have come to light earlier and earlier action taken to address them. Mr Carter also said that the focus now needed to be on the launch of Kent Health Watch to ensure it is effectively marketed and publicised.

A21 and East Coast Access Phase 2 – Cost Increases

Mr Ferrin said that as the A21 Improvement Scheme was being undertaken by the Highway Agency, it was difficult for KCC to argue that its costs should be lower without employing independent consultants. He said that the cost increases were extraordinary but the proportional increase in the construction costs of the East Kent Access Phase 2, demonstrated that controlling cost increases was very difficult. What was essential was to ensure that the A21 Scheme remained a priority with the Highways Agency road building programme and the County Council needed to do all that it could to keep up pressure on the government to ensure that the money to construct this scheme was made available. Mr Carter said that the Highway Agency should be asked to demonstrate how it had costed this scheme and held to account as to how these costs had increased to the degree that they had. The County Council needed to see what it could do to bring down scheme costs and understand the component parts of how the scheme had increased in price. Mr Chard said there was a lot of concern within the local community about whether this scheme would be built. It would be an essential link to the new PFI hospital to be built at Pembury and therefore everything had to be done to ensure that it did not drop out of the road building

programme. Mr King said the original reason to upgrade the A21 was to generate economic recovery particularly as the southern end of the A21 and to reduce congestion at the northern end. There was now another priority for the road which was to provide speedy access to the proposed new hospital at Pembury. It was therefore essential that this scheme was commenced as soon as possible.

Modernisation of Queen Elizabeth Resource Centre, Dartford

Mr Lynes said that he welcomed the opportunity to debate this matter but the Scrutiny Committee discussion had been very lengthy and he raised some concerns that he had regarding the mechanics and process of how the matter was dealt with. On the points raised by the Scrutiny Committee, Mr Lynes said that there was a detailed response to these set out in paragraph 3 of the Cabinet report. With regard to the request to undertake a consultation, Mr Lynes said the County Council would always do this if it related to one of its own services and indeed there was a protocol setting out the procedures to be followed in those circumstances. However, with a service provided either through the private or voluntary sectors, then it was not feasible to expect the County Council to undertake a consultation exercise, particularly in circumstances where there was an urgent need to take action. Therefore, whilst there had been a useful, albeit lengthy debate on this matter, he would not commend any action being taken on the question of undertaking a consultation exercise. This was agreed. Mr Carter said that he was concerned at the point which had been raised regarding the management processes and said he would ask the monitoring officer to ensure that the protocols for the management of the scrutiny process were being adhered to.

Award of Construction Contract for 24 New Build Centres

Cabinet noted that in the light of the information provided, in response to questions, the Scrutiny Committee had not forwarded any formal comments for consideration by Cabinet.

Mr Carter concluded discussion on this item, saying that he welcomed the new process for considering the decisions and feedback from meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and it was right that Cabinet provided a proper and considered response to the points raised.

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
RECORD OF DECISION**



DECISION TAKEN BY

Cabinet 14 April 2008

DECISION NO.

08/01170

3. Annual Unit Business Plans

(Item 4 – Report by Mr Paul Carter, Leader of the County Council and Mr Peter Gilroy, Chief Executive)

(1) The Annual Unit Business Plans identify the Medium Term priorities and goals within the County Council’s Directorates and also include the 2008/09 annual plans for individual units. The Business Plans represent the operations of the Council’s Services within the context of its Policy Framework and underpins its Medium Term Plan and budget as approved by the County Council of 19 February 2008.

(2) During the course of discussion, Cabinet discussed the need to streamline the business planning process and how information was presented. Mr Carter said and it was agreed, that a report should be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet which discussed ways of improving the way information was presented and ensured that this was done consistently across directorates. The report also needed to reflect upon ways in which technology could be used to present information and reduce the amount of paperwork produced.

(3) Cabinet agreed the Annual Unit Business Plans for 2008/09 and noted that there would be a report to a future meeting on the business planning process.

(Signed)
Chief Executive

April 2008

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Decision Referred to Cabinet Scrutiny			
YES		NO	

Cabinet Scrutiny Decision to Refer Back for Reconsideration			
YES		NO	

Reconsideration Record Sheet Issued			
YES		NO	

Reconsideration of Decision Published
DD/MM/YY