

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Online on Monday, 21st September, 2020.

PRESENT: Mr R W Gough (Chairman), Mrs C Bell, Miss S J Carey, Mrs S Chandler, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr P J Oakford, Mr M D Payne, Mrs S Prendergast and Mr M Whiting

OTHER MEMBERS: Mr E E Hotson

OFFICERS: David Cockburn (Corporate Director Strategic & Corporate Services), Zena Cooke (Corporate Director of Finance), Barbara Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Dr Allison Duggal (Deputy Director of Public Health), Matt Dunkley CBE (Corporate Director for Children Young People and Education) and Benjamin Watts (General Counsel)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

161. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item 1)

There were no apologies for absence.

162. Declaration of Interests by Member in Items on the Agenda for this meeting
(Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

163. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 July 2020
(Item 3)

Resolved that the minutes of the meetings held on 20 July 2020 are a correct record, and that they be signed by the chairman.

164. Cabinet Member Updates (verbal item)
(Item 4)

- (1) Mrs Chandler said that conversations with the Home Office and the Department for Education had continued since the authority's decision on 17 August not to accept any more unaccompanied asylum-seeking children arriving at the port of Dover. She also said the Government was consulting on the National Transfer Scheme which was currently voluntary; however, cabinet members and directors of children's services in the south-east of England agreed with KCC's view that the scheme should become mandatory and would respond to the consultation accordingly.
- (2) Mr Long acknowledged that the summer had been an uncertain time for many young people, as they waited for GCSE and A Level results and thanked parents and students for their patience. He was pleased the Government had

decided to allow pupils to receive the higher of the grades from OFQUAL's algorithm or from Centre Assessed Grades. In the lead up to that announcement, the authority had been preparing to make representations to the Government on behalf of the young people affected. The confusion about results had an impact on young people in accessing their first-choice university, college or work placements and the authority's skills and employability service was continuing to provide support and advice. Mr Long also said that detailed Government guidance on transport and examinations was received late in August and thanked officers who had worked tirelessly to ensure pupils could return to school safely. He concluded his update by saying that detailed planning for the Kent Test, which would take place in October, was underway and thanking school staff for making sufficient resources available to facilitate all those who wished to take the test.

- (3) Mrs Bell said the Government had published its Adult Coronavirus (Covid-19): Adult Social Care Action Plan which set out the key challenges and actions for local authorities and other care sector providers in controlling the spread of infection in care and communities settings. She also said an additional £546 million had been provided to extend the Infection Control Fund to March 2021. She said that a meeting with the Kent Integrated Care Alliance and other providers, chaired by the Leader, would take place later in the week. Mrs Bell further said that: demand for Covid-19 tests exceeded the processing capacity of laboratories; only those with symptoms should book appointments for testing; and no one with symptoms should go to Accident and Emergency departments of doctors' surgeries to be tested.
- (4) Mr Payne said he had embraced the opportunity created by the Government's Active Travel Fund and that KCC's bid for funding from the first tranche of funding had been successful. He said the schemes being delivered to increase walking and cycling should not disadvantage other road users; however, many had been introduced quickly to comply with the funding conditions and to capture improvements in air quality experienced during the lockdown. The schemes had also been implemented to the Government's deadlines with the result that residents had not been consulted. He said the schemes would be reviewed and would cease if they were not working. He said a scheme at Somerset Road and Mace Lane in Ashford had ended over the weekend as it was not working as intended.
- (5) Mr Whiting said the Kent and Medway Economic Renewal and Resilience Plan, accompanied by an Economic Impacts Evidence Base report, had been launched in August and the first meeting of the Employment Task Force, chaired by the Leader of the Council, would take place on 1 October. He also said the Kent and Medway Business Fund had been relaunched to support local businesses. He said Visit Kent had reported that hotels and self-catering holiday accommodation were doing well, and work was underway to ensure that continued even if there was a second wave of Covid-19 infections. He said the Eat Out to Help Out scheme had encouraged people to support their local pubs, restaurants, and producers. He also said he had attended an event on 15 September to celebrate the campaign, 'Support Your Local', which was the brainchild of Produced in Kent and Visit Kent, to encourage people to support their local hospitality businesses. The campaign was supported by Shepherd Neame, who had donated a £100 voucher for the #caringcustomer award won by Gemma Keith from Marden. Mr Whiting concluded his update

by thanking the chief executive of the London Resort Company for his virtual presentation, to KCC members, about plans to develop a theme park in Swanscombe. He welcomed the development which would create jobs in the area.

- (6) Miss Carey said that a booking system had been introduced to control numbers and keep staff and visitors safe at household waste and recycling centres. The numbers of slots that could be booked had increased from 22,000 to 32,770 per week and each household could now book up to four visits per month. Demand, however, varied across sites with under 50% of slots being booked at New Romney, which was the quietest, and more than 90% of the slots for centres at Tovil, Tunbridge Wells and Folkestone being filled. Miss Carey also said that letters had been sent to 100,000 household asking if they wished to participate in the Solar Together project which would facilitate the installation of solar panels on domestic dwellings or enable those who already had such panels to increase their battery storage. Using KCC's buying power a reverse auction was planned for 6 October and only after that, when the cost was known, would householders be asked to commit to the scheme. So far, 1,887 households had registered interest in the scheme. Miss Carey concluded by saying that this was a good example of projects underway to reduce energy costs and emissions.
- (7) Mr Hill said that 30 libraries would be open by the end of September with a further two scheduled to re-open in October. These libraries were able to offer socially distanced browsing as well as the popular 'select and collect' facility. He thanked the Libraries and Registration staff for clearing the backlog of over 4,000 birth registrations that had built up during the lockdown period.
- (8) Mrs Prendergast said it had been a very busy time for the People and Communications team and that the agenda for the Cabinet meeting reflected the many challenges faced by the authority, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the efforts of staff to maintain quality services for residents and businesses. The focus of the team was to keep residents and staff informed, engaged, supported, and safe through the provision of timely information relating to public health and service updates. Updates were provided on the authority's website, using social media, press releases, traditional broadcast channels and by the provision of a weekly emailed update to which increasing numbers of residents had subscribed. She said the authority's offices were re-opening where it was safe, however, staff, who could, continued to work from home. She also said that it was important to ensure staff remained healthy and supported including providing flu vaccinations which were particularly recommended this year. Mrs Prendergast referred to the staff survey conducted in June, which had provided a snapshot of staff feelings and concerns at that time, and said it would be followed up with a further survey to be launched at the end of September. She thanked the staff for their work and commitment.
- (9) Mr Oakford said that the last meeting of the County Council had approved a revision to the budget, including £12.8million savings, and work had started on next year's budget. He said that, although it was challenging, it was important to prepare for the future and address known pressures. He said work was underway to make KCC's buildings Covid-secure and 111 of them would be

re-opened by the end of the month. He thanked staff for their work in bringing this about.

- (10) Mr Gough said he had been invited to give evidence to the House of Commons, Select Committee on Unaccompanied Child Migrants and had taken the opportunity to present the situation in Kent and press KCC's view that the National Transfer Scheme should become mandatory. He also said that the cross-party committee had commented favourably on the commitment and service provided by KCC, particularly its social work teams, in responding to the crisis. Mr Gough said that Active Travel schemes could only proceed with the support of local communities, and concerns about individual projects were being listened to and acted on as they had been in Ashford where an unpopular scheme had been terminated. He also said the economic recovery of the county would remain a key focus of the authority and that it was intended to provide as much support as possible to businesses and employees especially with the likelihood of further disruption and uncertainty as a result of the rising number of Covid-19 cases and the potential for further restrictions to be imposed by the Government.

165. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring & Forecast Outturn 2020-21 - Exception Report - July 2020-21
(Item 5)

Emma Feakins (Chief Accountant) was in attendance for this item)

- (1) Mr Oakford introduced the report which set out the budget monitoring position for both revenue and capital to 31 July 2020 but before the impact of the budget amendment agreed at the County Council meeting on 10 September. He said the revenue forecast was for an overspend of £7.9million (excluding Covid-19) which was a decrease of £6.7million on the previous forecast, however, if Covid-19 risks were included the forecast overspend was £24.5million. The biggest overspends were being forecast for Children, Young People and Education, Adult Social Care and Strategic and Corporate Services. Mr Oakford said an underspend of £121.6million was forecast for the capital budget which had increased by £73.6million from the previously reported forecast. He said the underspend was made up of £0.6 million real and £121 million re-phasing variance.
- (2) Mr Gough said it was encouraging to see the overspend, which had previously been forecast for some areas, going down and that to some extent the report had been superseded by the decision to amend the budget taken at the County Council meeting.
- (3) Resolved that the forecast revenue and capital monitoring position on 31 July 2020 be noted.

166. Quarterly Performance Report, Quarter 1, 2020/21
(Item 6)

(Rachel Kennard (Chief Analyst) was in attendance for this item)

- (1) Mr Gough introduced the report which set out information about key areas of performance to the end of June 2020. He said the report reflected the changes to performance reporting previously discussed by the Cabinet.
- (2) Miss Kennard said a summary of the changes to the indicator set was set out in appendix 2 of the report. She said: in Children, Young People and Education two indicators had been moved to the activity indicator section and replaced by two new ones; all five indicators in Adult Social Care had been removed and five new ones introduced; and in Public Health, the key performance indicator – ‘Proportion of clients accessing GUM services offered an appointment to be seen within 48 hours’ had been replaced with a more challenging indicator – ‘Percentage of new first-time attendances at sexual health clinics who take up the offer and are screened for chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, and HIV’. Miss Kennard said that of the 35 indicators, 22 had been RAG-rated green indicating that they were on or ahead of target and this was a decrease of one compared with the previous quarter; 10 indicators had reached or exceeded the floor standard and were RAG-rated amber, while three indicators had not achieved the floor standard and were RAG-rated red. One of the indicators rated red related to Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and the other two fell under Public Health and related to health checks and sexual health. All indicators which were RAG-rated red had been affected by the recent lockdown.
- (3) Mrs Bell said that it had been impossible to conduct health checks during the lockdown; however, other services, such as drug and alcohol services, had continued online. There was evidence that some people were more comfortable accessing services online than in traditional settings and this was being considered for the future of the services.
- (4) Miss Carey said that the target for greenhouse gas emissions from KCC’s estate (excluding schools) was an ambitious ‘stretch’ target and had been rated amber. Although the ‘stretch’ target had not been met, the floor target had. She said the authority’s £40million LED street lighting project had contributed to the achievement of the target and current projects, including the Solar Panels project, would contribute to further reductions in emissions making it likely that the ‘stretch’ target would be achieved by the end of the year. She also referred to the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) on municipal waste sent to landfill and said the authority made great efforts to ensure waste collected by district councils was recycled. She said less than 1% of Kent’s waste went to landfill and most of that was asbestos waste which was subject to specific deep fill regulations. About half of Kent’s waste was recycled and the other half was converted to energy.
- (5) Mrs Chandler said officers were working hard and good progress was being made in clearing the backlog of EHCPs. She also drew attention to the extraordinary efforts made by social care staff in placing children in care with adoptive families during the lockdown and referred to an uplifting story shared by an adoptive family at the recent meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- (6) Mr Gough referred to the positive performance in relation to the Economic Development and Communities KPIs which were all RAG-rated green. He also thanked Miss Kennard for the report.

(7) Resolved that the Quarter 1 Performance Report be noted.

167. Whole School opening from September 2020

(Item 7)

(David Adams (Interim Director of Education) was in attendance for this item)

- (1) Mr Long introduced the report which gave an update on the support given to schools to enable them to open to all pupils from September 2020, following the lockdown that began on 23 March 2020, and highlighted issues identified since the beginning of the autumn term. He said that, although general guidance for the return to schools had been issued by the Government well before the beginning of the summer holiday, detailed guidance was not received by local authorities until late in August. He thanked school leaders and teachers as well as David Adams and his team for the considerable efforts they had made to ensure the return to school was as smooth as possible for as many young people as possible. He said the situation continued to evolve but KCC was ready to respond.
- (2) Mr Adams said the most recent figures from the Department for Education, based on returns from 423 of Kent's 600 schools, indicated that school attendance was at about 90%. This was lower than the equivalent rate at the start of term and might be attributable to teachers and pupils having to self-isolate. It was, however, in line with the figures nationally. Since 9 September, 30 schools in Kent had reported Covid-19 related incidents and some schools had sent children home. Mr Adams said there were concerns about capacity to test for coronavirus and there was a risk that increasing numbers of secondary school pupils would be out of school because of the virus.
- (3) Mr Adams said that: school buses were running at 70% of their normal capacity; there had been a significant increase in applications for travel passes; and that additional resources might be required if the increase in applications continued. He also said there had been concerns about the pre-school sector, however 640 providers were open with 12 closed.
- (4) Mr Gough thanked David Adams and his team, school staff and the transport team for their work in the run up to whole school opening including their efforts to respond to the understandable anxieties of parents and pupils. He also said the position continued to evolve and it was important that it continued to be monitored closely.
- (5) Resolved that the report be noted.

168. Devolution – presentation

(Item 8)

Discussion of this item was postponed because of reported delays to the Government's White Paper.

169. Winter Risks

(Item 9)

(Mark Scrivener (Corporate Risk Manager & Interim Corporate Assurance Manager) was in attendance for this item)

- (1) Mr Gough said the purpose of including this item on the agenda was to consider the current corporate risk profile and whether the current risk levels associated with the Public Health, EU/UK transition, and winter weather risks were appropriate or whether further mitigating actions were required, and to create an opportunity to discuss their possible cumulative impact.
- (2) Mr Scrivener , Dr Duggal and Mrs Cooper gave a presentation to supplement the report which is attached as an appendix to these minutes.
- (3) Mr Hill said the major flooding event of 2013 had required the deployment of significant resources by KCC and partner organisations and, even though resources had increased, and resilience strengthened since then, responding to multiple events concurrently would be very challenging. Mr Gough said it was important to consider the potential impact of multiple events occurring at the same time and to link that with member engagement and the appropriate rhythm of reporting. He said the EU/UK transition would be considered at the County Council meeting on 22 October and other elements of risk would be considered at Cabinet or at all member briefings particularly when it was possible to draw out and build on the strengths of partnerships and from testing resilience. It was suggested that informal all-member briefings be held in mid-October and late November and to review the corporate risk profile again at the Cabinet meeting scheduled for December.
- (4) Mrs Chandler said a combination of severe weather and an increase in Covid-19 infections would have a major impact on the most vulnerable and that, even in a perfect storm of events coming together, it was important to prepare in advance and ensure that help got through to those most in need. Mrs Bell said that no matter how robust the contingency plans, they would only work if the guidance to stay safe and well was followed.
- (5) Resolved that:
 - (a) the report be noted; and
 - (b) all-member briefings be arranged for October and November; and the corporate risk profile be reviewed at the Cabinet meeting on 14 December 2020.

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Item 9 – **Winter Risks**

Winter Risks

Corporate Risk Profile

Cabinet
21 September 2020

Corporate Risk Profile – Winter Risks

Risk Title	Current rating
CRR0050: CBRNe incidents, communicable diseases and incidents with a public health implication – Coronavirus response and Recovery	High (25)
CRR0004: Simultaneous Emergency Response, Recovery and Resilience	High (25)
CRR0042: Post-Transition border systems, infrastructure and regulatory arrangements	High (20)

Corporate Risk Profile – Risks pertinent in the coming months (1)

Risk title	Current rating
CRR0007: Resourcing implications arising from Children's Services demand	High (20)
CRR0001: Safeguarding – protecting vulnerable children	High (20)
CRR0022: Suitable accommodation and funding for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)	High (20)
CRR0006: Resourcing implications arising from increasing complex adult social care demand	High (20)
CRR0002: Safeguarding – protecting vulnerable adults	High (20)
CRR0015: Managing and working with the social care market	High (25)

Corporate Risk Profile – Risks pertinent in the coming months (2)

Risk title	Current rating
CRR0009: Future financial and operating environment for Local Government	High (25)
CRR0003: Securing resources to aid economic recovery and enabling infrastructure	High (20)
CRR0014: Cyber attack threats and their implications	High (25)
CRR0049: Fraud and Error	High (16)

Corporate Risk Profile – Other Significant Risks

Risk title	Current rating
CRR0016: Delivery of new school places is constrained by Basic Need allocation and the Education and Skills Funding Agency	High (20)
CRR0044: High Needs Funding Shortfall	High (20)
CRR0047: Adequacy of support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	High (20)
CRR0039: Information Governance	High (20)
CRR0040: Financial, Governance and Service Delivery risks associated with KCC's Local Authority Trading Companies	High (20)
CRR0048: Maintenance and modernisation of KCC Estate	High (16)

Other Corporate Risks

Risk Title	Current Rating
CRR0051: Maintaining or improving workforce health, wellbeing and productivity throughout Coronavirus response and recovery	Medium (12)
CRR0005: Development of Integrated Care System / Integrated Care Partnerships in Kent and Medway NHS system	Medium (12)
CRR0045: Effectiveness of governance within a Member-led authority	TBC

Summary and Next Steps

- All risks have 'Target' residual ratings set as we aim to reduce the risks from current levels.
- We are drawing on lessons learned so far from Covid-19 response.
- Review of specific "Winter Risks" outlined, including mitigations and consideration of potential cumulative impacts.
- Refresh of broader corporate risk profile in late autumn with CMT and Cabinet Members

Public Health threats of Winter

Allison Duggal
Deputy Director of Public Health

Public Health threats of Winter 2020

- **COVID-19**
 - National upswing in cases, mirrored in southeast, and thought to continue through winter months as people congregate in doors.
 - Testing capacity for COVID-19 nationally a risk as schools return.
- **Influenza**
 - Mitigation to avoid the COVID-19/Influenza double is the largest influenza vaccine campaign ever over Sept/Oct/Nov...all at risk groups, all children up to and including year 7 plus in second tranche; all people over 50.
- Other general winter viruses such as RSV and Norovirus which increase in prevalence (respiratory syncytial virus)
- **Winter**
 - Drop in temperature have significant effect on health, the ill effects from cold homes for example are seen when outdoor temperatures drop to around 5-8C.
- **EU Exit**
 - Driver welfare and periods of cold that are COVID-19 compliant will also prevent additional issues on top of ongoing management of the Pandemic.

Transition and Winter weather risks

Barbara Cooper
Corporate Director – Growth, Environment & Transport

Transition Risks

- Exports checks only from 1st January
– import checks from 1st July
- Levels of traffic disruption primarily dependent upon levels of border readiness – communications key
- Multi agency KRF working with HMG on a revised traffic management plan for Kent
- Exercising, testing and refining
- Compliance and enforcement

Transition & Winter Weather Risks

- Revised winter service policy agreed ETCC 15th September – little change in fundamentals.
- Forecasting above average chance of bad weather this autumn/winter
- KRF agreed a single command and control for all emergencies
- KCC staff involved in Strategic/tactical/task and finish groups as appropriate

KCC Planning

- Continue to build on foundations already in place such as Corporate Resilience Group, situation reports and reviewing and updating service level Business Continuity Plans
- Sharing of 'lessons learned' as identified
- Resourcing – submitted funding ask of £1.6m to MHCLG for KRF (includes some funding for KCC eg communications/contact centre)
- Member reporting - Cabinet, member briefings ahead of January and to agree reporting rhythms