

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 5 March 2025

PRESENT: Mr D L Brazier (Chairman), Mr M Dendor (Vice-Chairman), Mr P Bartlett, Mr T Bond, Mr A Brady, Mr N J D Chard, Mr P C Cooper, Ms M Dawkins, Mr A J Hook, Mr J A Kite, MBE, Rich Lehmann, Mr H Rayner and Mr P Stepto

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P J Oakford

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Shipton (Head of Finance Policy, Planning and Strategy), Mr M Scrivener (Head of Risk and Delivery Assurance), Mrs R Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mr D Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance), Ms L Gannon (Director of Technology), Ms C Maynard (Head of Commercial and Procurement) and Ms P Blackburn-Clarke (Delivery Manager - Engagement & Consultation)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

247. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

Apologies were received from Mr Barrington-King, Mr Cooke and Mr McInroy, for whom Mr Webb was in attendance as a substitute.

248. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda

(Item 3)

Mr Kite declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 of the agenda, 25/00004 – Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives, as Leader of Dartford Borough Council.

Mr Brady declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 of the agenda, 25/00004 – Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives, as Councillor for Canterbury City North.

249. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2025

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2025 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

250. Risk Management: Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive Departments

(Item 5)

Mark Scrivener (Head of Risk & Delivery Assurance), Alison Petters (Risk & Delivery Assurance Manager) and David Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Gough highlighted the strategic risks that had impacted each respective directorate's portfolios. The additional risk of CRR0065 related to the implementation of the Oracle cloud programme was noted as having reached a critical phase of implementation.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, the discussion covered the following:
 - In response to the queries raised against the medium risk rating for CRR0065 – implementation of the Oracle Cloud Programme, given the significance of its implementation, officers advised that implementation of a not-fit for purpose system would score highly in terms of risk. There were however mechanisms in place and extensive testing to ensure that was mitigated at all costs. For this reason, the risk was rated as medium. However, the risks did not capture the cost of the programme, and this would require a separate risk rating and further conversations should additional funding be required to support the successful implementation of the programme.
 - With regard to the high-risk rating for CRR0053 and the associated policy that had facilitated this originally, it was asked if the new policy was able to mitigate a repeat of the past issues that had been previously observed. Mrs Spore explained that the previous asset management strategy of warm, safe and dry (WSD) past implementations. It was stated that increased maintenance would not exceed the current WSD strategy. Commitment to key buildings would adhere to statutory regulations. No significant undertakings of maintenance work across the KCC estate would occur. Mrs Spore emphasised the budgetary challenges that had be faced in clearing the backlog of maintenance issues.
 - As to whether the upcoming targeted move from the strategic headquarters had been captured on the risk register, officers clarified that the report had only captured a top-level risk view. Future asset management risks had covered some aspects relating to the move from SHQ. Mr Scrivener confirmed that he would be happy to discuss further with officers and members if required.
 - In response to concerns raised regarding risk CRR0009 and the wording that had been used in regard to the proposed funding from central government, officers acknowledged the concern and added that the metric discussed had remained static at its highest level for a notable period of time. The associated wording for the risk discussed had not reflected current funding concerns.
 - Members enquired about the current risks around cyber security and the impacts KCC had faced. Further queries were raised in relation to staff training on cyber risks and whether mechanisms were in place to measure success rates. Supply chain compromises with 3rd party partners such as

Microsoft and Oracle were also discussed as was how current data was stored geographically. The Chair deferred the question to item 20 on the agenda on 'Cyber Security Update' which would be held in closed session and which the press and public be excluded from on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

RESOLVED to consider and comment on Risk Management: Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive Departments.

251. Contract Management Review Group update

(Item 6)

Clare Maynard (Head of Commercial and Procurement) Paige Edwards (Commercial Policy and Governance Lead) and Katie Smith (Commercial Policy and Governance Officer) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Oakford prefaced the update by highlighting the exceptional work that had been completed by Mr Rayner and Mrs Maynard since the inception of the group in 2016. £25 million pounds worth of contracts had been reviewed in the past year alone.
2. Mrs Maynard noted the importance of the report as being a key part of the informal commercial governance. Gold and Silver contracts had been reviewed at their respective mid-points and also prior to extension. The associated paper focussed on the four contracts reviewed since July. Bi-monthly meetings had occurred, but Mrs Maynard explained this did limit the review scope.
3. The reviewed four contracts had an cumulative cost of £45 Million pounds. Mrs Maynard further commented on the level of maturity that had been seen in contracts submitted to the meeting. Any concerns that were raised had been passed onto the respective directorates.
4. Social value elements had seen an increased presence. Joint works had been completed alongside commissioning to ensure that lessons learnt would be shared with the commissioning pipeline. Mrs Maynard highlighted that these improvements was an aspect of continuous improvement that would better aid contract management in the future.

RESOLVED to consider and note the Contract Management Group update.

252. Commercial and Procurement Performance Report - Quarters 2 and 3, 2024 / 2025

(Item 7)

Clare Maynard (Head of Commercial and Procurement) Paige Edwards (Commercial Policy and Governance Lead) and Katie Smith (Commercial Policy and Governance Officer) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Gough highlighted the achievements and how KCC was delivering on areas such as savings, social value transparency and compliance. Mr Gough

proposed that the report be returned on a 6-month cycle so that monitoring of the remarkable work that had been undertaken continued.

2. Mrs Maynard explained that the supplied overview had encompassed the totality of the council working together and how contracts had achieved the respective requirements. The four key priorities listed were: financial benefit and return on investments, wider public benefits, supply and management partnering, and transparency and compliance. It was further noted how these four elements had aligned with the recently introduced National Policy procurement Statement that had been implemented in February 2025 to co-align with the Procurement Act.
3. Section 2.2 detailed financial benefits and savings, Mrs Maynard highlighted the error in dates and clarified that the reports actual start date was from September 2023 and not September 2024. £19 million worth of savings had been observed on contract activities, this indicated an observed average of 4.3% against contracts that were able to accommodate a saving.
4. Mrs Maynard highlighted that the 4.3% saving had been driven by aspects such as negotiation, benchmarking against other authorities, Pré-extension reviews and specification reviews. Due to the positive savings that had been observed a request was received to work alongside Adult Social Care and aid the Brokerage and Placement Teams in improving those respective teams negotiating skills.
5. Section 2.4 raised the discussion around the added values of social value, carbon reduction and recycling. Mrs Maynard added that contracts would be evaluated to ensure that they had captured those required aspects. Feedback received from CMT members regarding the quality of service had been implemented, providers that had not been able to meet the quality threshold was not to be considered for progression.
6. Further achievements were summarised such as the updated KNET pages in aid of the new procurement act, The observed 62% spend associated with Kent suppliers and market analysis had enabled the right mix of suppliers to be engaged. Improvements on cost with the largest providers in Adult Social Care had been explored as had work with VCSE and SME providers on spending the council's money progressed.
7. It was discussed that the No PO, No Pay policy had been implemented. A significant benefit was observed with the reduction of retrospective PO's. Mrs Maynard added that the report would be delivered in a 6-month cycle.
8. Further to questions and comments from Members, the discussion covered the following:
 - Mrs Maynard confirmed that all providers had to adhere to KCC requirements to support effective oversight. Requirements had also been inserted into previous contracts and in turn those measures would be passed down from prime contractors to subcontractors.

- Concerns were raised on the numeric figure of 30% retrospective POs being realised since the implementation of the No PO No Pay policy. Since, a formal policy that was implemented and endorsed by CMT. Mrs Maynard noted that a downward trajectory had already been observed in the realisation of POs.
- On the issue of subcontracting, further clarification was sought on why KCC had not directly engaged with those smaller providers and explored potential savings. Members also asked for clarity on added social value, partnership working benefits and in-house opportunities.
- Mr Gough responded that KCC had remained open minded on the subject of inhouse solutions and noted the completed works that had taken place within the domiciliary care contract as an example.
- Mrs Maynard addressed the Members' concerns on sub-contracting and indicated that there had been no incidents of a prime contractor having passed on the entirety of the workload to a subcontractor. Effective lotting had enabled KCC to retain a high number of Kent suppliers within the portfolio.
- Prime contractors that had managed the supply chain were subjected to a 10% overhead and reviewed at the cost monitoring evaluation stage. SIPs Branch had also continued to review Kent wide contracts.
- Mrs Maynard responded to further Member questions and explained that there had been a decline in waivers with additional work undertaken to address retrospective waivers.
- Some Members endorsed the drive to bring SMEs more in line with contracting arrangements and it was suggested that the provisions of Adult and Children's Service's was on a sound financial footing. Some Members commented that the current statistic of 80% commissioned services was too high.

RESOLVED to consider and note the report; and approve a six-monthly reporting frequency to the Committee on these matters.

253. 25/00004 - Council Tax Collection Subsidies and Incentives
(Item 8)

Dave Shipton (Head of Finance - Policy, Planning & Strategy) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Oakford introduced the item of council tax subsidies and advised that a decision had been taken by Full Council to agree the Capital Programme 2025-35 and Revenue Budget 2025-26 (including Council Tax Setting 2025/26) and that this included savings to be achieved via this proposed decision.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, the discussion covered the following:

- Regarding queries about future reviews on the impact of the decision, Mr Oakford responded that any future reviews would be the responsibility of a new administration post May elections.
- Members highlighted that the local taxation equalisation reserve was £11.95 million and had a drawdown of £1.8 Million. It was estimated that in 2025/26 an additional draw down of £3.48 Million may be observed and leave £6.67 million for March 2026. Clarification was sought as to whether this use of reserves was sustainable.
- Mr Shipton advised that there was an assumption on collection surpluses of an average of £7 million per annum. This had been the position for a number of years - if a higher surplus was to be observed, normal policy meant that it had been paid into the smoothing reserve.
- Mr Shipton explained that in the last two years the council tax surplus was lower the £7 Million. Mr Shipton added that the drawdown for 2025-26 had been related to the collection surplus for 2024-25 and not related to the proposed decision.
- Clarification was sought on paragraph 1.6 and the return of investment being set at 400% with regard to a subsidy paid to three Kent districts. It was further added that paragraph 1.7 stated that there was no evidence for CTRS payments. It was suggested by Members that this sentence was misleading.
- Members flagged that paragraph 1.8 stated that no billing authority had proposed or implemented any changes to discounts or premiums. However, it was highly likely that authorities would not impose any changes prior to a decision being made by the County Council. Concerns were therefore raised regarding the implications of progressing with the decision.
- Mr Oakford highlighted the discussions that had taken place during the previous budget debates as part of the budget development process. Mr Oakford commented that the concerns were speculative and it was unknown what collection rates would look like going forward. He explained that Districts had a statutory duty to collect council tax, and they had responsibilities to prevent collection failures.
- Responding to queries from the Chair, Mr Watts confirmed that the decision had not been taken and that there was still an opportunity for Members to comment and put forward recommendations to the Cabinet Member for consideration prior to the decision being taken.
- In response to queries raised regarding the consultation period for any changes should the grant be reinstated, Mr Shipton confirmed that in terms of the Council's medium term financial plan this had been assumed to be a sustainable saving. However, it was only a plan and there would be an opportunity to review and make the necessary changes for the 2026-27 budget.

- Clarification was sought on paragraph 2.3 on the subject of proposed recovery costs of unpaid council tax and the financial responsibility to bodies other than themselves. Mr Shipton responded that it was the legal responsibility of District and Borough authorities to recover unpaid council tax.
 - It was highlighted that subsidies to District and Borough authorities were discretionary and it was suggested that the subsidies no longer represented value for money for the taxpayer.
3. Mr Lehmann proposed that recommendations be made to the Cabinet Member to the effect that he be asked to explore a possibility of an option of incentive payments for pre-agreed target for councils.
 4. Members debated the procedural considerations of progressing specific recommendations beyond endorsement of the decision.
 5. The Chair accepted the motion put forward by Mr Lehmann and seconded by Mr Brady that a recommendation be made to the Cabinet Member to consider the following: :

“To explore the possibility of incentive payments for pre-agreed targets for those affected councils to reduce the risk of large amounts of council tax not being recovered”
 6. Mr Oakford stated that he would take into consideration any recommendations made by Members, however, he would not be prepared at that moment in time to amend a decision that had been agreed at the Budget County Council meeting. Further decisions on the matter would require resolution by the next administration.
 7. Mr Watts clarified the current position, that comments and recommendations had been made during the debate which the Cabinet Member could take into account and they would be recorded in the minutes.
 8. The Chair, in light of the debate suggested that Mr Lehmann withdraw his motion and this was accepted.
 9. Mr Rayner proposed, and Mr Webb seconded the motion that the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee endorse the proposed decision. The motion was carried.

RESOLVED, that the proposed decision be endorsed. Namely, that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services agree to:

- a) Cease the current arrangement with the Billing Authorities pursuant to which the Council provides financial support and incentive payments towards the cost of setting up and administering local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (CTRS) with effect on and from 1st April 2025.
- b) Cease the current arrangements with the Billing Authorities pursuant to which the Council makes incentive payments to support the removal of

- local discretionary empty property discounts and the charging of empty property premiums with effect from 1st April 2025.
- c) Delegate authority to Interim Corporate Director Finance to formally notify the Billing Authorities that payments will cease from 2025-26 financial year and to take any actions or make any decisions deemed necessary to the Interim Corporate Director Finance to implement the decisions of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services in (a) and (b) above

Mrs Dawkins asked for their vote against the recommendation be noted in the minutes.

254. 25/00033 - Extension of Domestic Abuse Act Framework and KIDAS contract
(Item 9)

Tricia Pereira (Strategic Advisor for Principle Social Work and Safeguarding Adult Social Care and Health), Sam Spiller, Rachel Westlake (Senior Commissioner), Iona Hunter-Whitehouse (Senior Project Officer for Domestic Abuse) and David Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Gough presented the proposed decision. One aspect was related to the further Tranche of safe accommodation grant funding and the extension of the domestic abuse framework into 2025-2027. The second aspect encompassed the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service Contract (KIDAS) which was due to end in March 2026. The proposed action was to extend beyond 2026.
2. Mrs Pereira explained the reasoning for extending the abuse act framework and the integrated domestic abuse service contract. Mrs Pereira shared the current statistics of one in five crimes reported to Kent Police had involved domestic abuse. It was noted that 60,000 people in Kent had experienced domestic abuse annually.
3. Mrs Pereira discussed the long-term impacts of domestic abuse. Aspects discussed were the struggle to remain in employment, instability of home life and long-term emotional effects. It was added that 33% of all suicides in Kent and Medway had been linked to past domestic abuse. It was highlighted that for the first time the figure for suicides had overtaken intimate partner homicides.
4. Mr Spiller discussed the statutory duties that had been set out to provide support to those residing in safe accommodation. The Domestic Abuse Duty Safe Accommodation Grant allocation of 2025-26 had been announced and KCC would receive £4,310,222. Current domestic abuse framework was in place until March 2025 with the proposal looking to extend until 2027.
5. Framework end dates would be in line with the proposed KIDAS extension, and all proposals would adhere to MHCLG guidance. The KIDAS contract had been in place from 2017 and had continued to be successful.
6. Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that

- Members acknowledged the robust framework and highlighted the male refuge aspect that had been captured within the report. Tribute was paid to the team for their hard work
- Clarification was sought on the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation grant and whether would it encompass wider supported needs. Mrs Westlake responded that the extension of the KIDAS Contract would be all encompassing.
- In response to concerns regarding ongoing education disruption that had impacted young persons that had moved into safe accommodation, it was explained that the priority had always been to remove a young person from harm and that unfortunately some disruption to schooling had to be expected.

RESOLVED that the proposed decision be endorsed, namely that the Leader of the Council agree to:

1. APPROVE extension of the framework arrangements set out in the report for ongoing management of the DA Act Funding 2025-27.
2. AGREE extension of the KIDAS contract and additional services up until March 2027 (12 months), permissible by PCR 2015 72(1)(b) and to continue to utilise this contract to support delivery of the requirements of the Act until the end of the contractual term.
3. CONFIRM the arrangements put in place via Officer Decision OD-23-0002, taken under delegated authority by the Chief Executive, arising from Key Decision 22/00040 to delegate acceptance of any future monies to the Corporate Director of Finance, providing funding is given on similar terms and to enter into relevant agreements with Government as required to accept the funding (2025-2026).
4. DELEGATE acceptance of any future monies (2026 onwards) to the Corporate Director of Finance, providing funding is given on similar terms and to enter into relevant agreements with Government as required to accept the funding.
5. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health to, in consultation with the Leader, Corporate Director for Finance and Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education, revise and amend the arrangement set out in the framework details, subject to the scope of the terms and conditions of the grant funding.
6. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education where applicable.

255. 25/00003 - Disposal of land at Stanhope Road, Ashford TN23 5RA.
(Item 10)

Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mark Cheverton (Head of Real Estate Services), Dan Parkes (Disposals Acquisitions & Investments), Niral Patel (Acquisition and Investment Surveyor, Investment & Disposals), Jason Harris (Assistant Surveyor) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Spore introduced the report which set out the planned disposal of land in Stanhope Road, Ashford.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, the discussion covered the following:
 - Assurance was sought that the green spaces would be protected. The Member updated on the current consultation of the Oakfield aspect of the site. Mrs Spore suggested that the green spaces future would be determined as part of any planning application that had been submitted. Ashford Borough Council had determined authority onsite and would be considering the terms very carefully. Any relocations would be supported by KCC if required.
 - The consultation for the site would end on March the 25th.
 - It was noted that the land was not formally designated as an open space, however, it is space that was utilised by members of the community, and it was therefore important that the correct consultation took place. The Cabinet Member would have full information available to them for consideration prior to taking the decision.
 - Mrs Spore responded to queries about monitoring future use of land by a purchaser, explaining that due diligence was undertaken in regard to bidders plans for the site, however responsibility for and control of the asset sat with the developer. Mr Cheverton explained that any potential buyer's ability to complete a project was also considered.

RESOLVED that the proposed decision be endorsed, namely that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services agree to:

1. the disposal of land at Stanhope Road, Ashford TN23 5RA; and
2. delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise the terms of the disposal and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above.

256. 24/00107 - Disposal of land adjacent to Stourmouth Road, Preston CT3
1HP
(Item 11)

Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mark Cheverton (Head of Real Estate Services), Dan Parkes (Disposals Acquisitions & Investments) and David Oyler (Disposals Acquisitions & Investments) were in attendance for this item.

RESOLVED that the proposed decision be endorsed: namely that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services agree to:

1. the disposal of land adjacent to Stourmouth Road, Preston CT3 1HP; and
2. delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise the terms of the disposal and execute all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above.

257. 25/00026 - Disposal of surplus land at Broomhill Bank school (North), Puddledock Lane and Rowhill Road, Hextable BR8 7RP
(Item 12)

Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mark Cheverton (Head of Real Estate Services), Dan Parkes (Disposals Acquisitions & Investments) and David Oyler (Disposals Acquisitions & Investments) were in attendance for this item/

RESOLVED that the proposed decision be endorsed: namely that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services agree to:

1. the disposal of surplus land at Broomhill Bank School (North), Puddledock Lane and Rowhill Road, Hextable BR8 7RP; and
2. delegate authority to The Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise the terms of the disposal and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above.

258. 25/00013 - Freehold disposal of Former Aylesford CTS Workshops, Landscape Services Depot and Rear of Danepack located at Forstal Road, Maidstone (Herein referred to as Aylesford Depot)
(Item 13)

Consideration of item 13 was moved to the closed session of the meeting as Members wished to refer to information within the exempt appendix.

Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mark Cheverton (Head of Real Estate Services), Dan Parkes (Disposals Acquisitions & Investments), Niral Patel (Acquisition and Investment Surveyor, Investment & Disposals), and Jason Harris (Assistant Surveyor) were in attendance for this item.

1. The Cabinet Member and officers responded to questions of detail from the committee.

RESOLVED that the proposed decision be endorsed: namely that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services agree to:

1. the disposal of Former Aylesford CTS Workshops, Landscape Services Depot and Rear of Danepack located at Forstal Road, Maidstone.

2. delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise the terms of the disposal and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above; and
3. note that the implementation of this decision is subject to any additional approvals or consents (such as Asset of Community Value, open space consultation, etc) as required by law.

259. 25/00027 - Formal Lease for an Electricity Sub Station within grounds of the former Walmer Science College, Deal - to serve The Beacon and the Southwood Centre, Deal
(Item 14)

Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mark Cheverton (Head of Real Estate Services) and Andrew White (Principal Estates Manager - Education Estate) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Oakford noted that the duration of the lease exceeded the twenty-year threshold and required a key decision.

RESOLVED that the proposed decision be endorsed: namely that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services agree to:

1. authorise the granting of a Lease in excess of 20 years to UK Power Networks in order that a new electricity substation can be built within the grounds of the former Walmer Science College site to serve new buildings for use by The Beacon and the County Council's operational Southwood Centre; and
2. delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services to take necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement this.

260. 25/00024 - Granting of Formal Lease for a Solar Panel installation within the grounds of St Nicholas' School, Canterbury.
(Item 15)

Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mark Cheverton (Head of Real Estate Services), Andrew White (Principal Estates Manager - Education Estate) and Julianna Munoz (Community and Domestic Energy Support Officer) were in attendance for this item.

1. Chairman sought agreement from members that item 15 and 16 be discussed together on the basis that the proposals were the same across two school sites. Members agreed.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, the discussion covered the following:
 - Members endorsed the recommendation, noting that 38 Kent schools were currently on the pathway. Mrs Dawkins also asked for it to be noted that

supported the scheme as a local member for St Nicholas School in Canterbury.

- Mr White explained the fixed term grant and the decisions made once the lease had expired. A decision would be made in 25 years' time on options to renewal with the County Council and associated operator. Mrs Menez clarified that schools had been encouraged to work with Laser Energy (KCC owned) in the procurement of solar panels, however, this would have required additional investment from the schools at a time when schools were not in a financial position to invest additional capital spend. In response to Members questions it was noted that heat pumps had currently not been part of the programme but could be an aspect to explore at a later date.
- Members queried whether any incentives would be available for the school. Mrs Menez responded that schools had to make an initial capital investment and would look to make a longer term saving and recuperate costs within 25 years.
- In response to queries about available loan schemes, Mrs spore confirmed that KCC has had a loan system for schools in place for a number of years. However, this came with associated risks for both the school and the Council.

RESOLVED that the proposed decision be endorsed, namely that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance agree to:

1. authorise the granting of a Lease in excess of 20 years to Solar for Schools in order that a new solar panel installation can be built within the grounds of St. Nicholas' School, Canterbury to serve the school; and
2. delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services to take necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement this.

261. 25/00025 - Granting of Formal Lease for a Solar Panel installation within the grounds of Brunswick House Primary School, Maidstone
(Item 16)

Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mark Cheverton (Head of Real Estate Services), Andrew White (Principal Estates Manager - Education Estate) and Julianna Munoz (Community and Domestic Energy Support Officer) were in attendance for this item.

1. Chairman sought agreement from members that item 15 and 16 be discussed together on the basis that the proposals were the same across two school sites. Members agreed.

RESOLVED that the proposed decision be endorsed, namely that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services agree to:

1. authorise the granting of a Lease in excess of 20 years to Solar for Schools in order that a new solar panel installation can be built within the grounds of the Brunswick House Primary School to serve the school; and
2. delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services to take necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement this.

262. 25/00028 - Construction of new office building at Henwood Highways Depot - Disposal of surplus office building
(Item 17)

Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Jo Taylor (Head of Capital) and Hugh D'Alton Acting Strategic Programmes Manager) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Oakwood explained that the asset had deteriorated and therefore disposal of surplus land and the construction of a new office building was the proposed option.

RESOLVED that the proposed decision be endorsed, namely that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services agree to:

1. APPROVE the Henwood Project and NOTE the contribution towards Corporate Landlord Medium-Term Financial Plan savings targets.
2. APPROVE the allocation of £1.5m from the Capital Programme Budget 2024-34 as approved by County Council on 19 February 2024 for the delivery of the proposed capital works at the Henwood Depot site
3. APPROVE the disposal of the Existing Henwood Office building following delivery of the Henwood Project; and
4. DELEGATE authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to enter into the necessary contracts and legal agreements to facilitate the implementation of the decisions.

263. 24/00101 - Contact Centre Procurement
(Item 18)

Amamda Beer (Chief Executive) and Pascal Blackburn-Clarke (Customer Experience and Relationship Manager) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Jeffrey presented the proposed decision on the call centre procurement. KCC had continued to receive around half a million calls a year. The current contact centre had been extended the maximum numbers of times allowed under relevant procurement arrangements and it was due to expire in December 2025. It was explained that greater savings would be made if call volumes decreased year on year. Contract value would be between £17.5 to £21 million range.

2. Further to questions and comments from Members, the discussion covered the following:
- Members acknowledged how valuable and important it had been to keep the facility in place and enquired if an additionality had been added to the contract in terms of KPIs improvements and deliverables. Mrs Blackburn-Clarke explained the Market tests on technological solutions would be explored and KPI reviews that could be measured against historical performance had also been discussed. Further detail would be available as the tender process progressed.
 - Members raised concerns about call response times and suggested that a notable improvement would be required in tandem with a strong KPI monitoring to deliver an efficient service. Mrs Blackburn-Clarke highlighted that the current contract in place prioritised emergency calls. Non-Emergencies had to wait longer. Penalties had been in place if KPIs were not be met on the existing contract.
 - Member concerns were noted by the Cabinet Member and Officers, the latter commenting that technological solutions would be explored but these had been subjected to the same financial constraints and resourcing demands aspects of the contract.

RESOLVED that the proposed decision be endorsed, namely that the Cabinet Member for Communications and Democratic Services agree to:

1. APPROVE the commissioning of a Contact Centre contract for up to 7 years (December 2025 – December 2032). Initial 4-year term, with the option of 3x one-year extensions
2. DELEGATE authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communications and Democratic Services, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision; and
3. DELEGATE authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communications and Democratic Services, to award extensions of the contract in accordance with the relevant clauses within the contract.

264. Work Programme

(Item 19)

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

EXEMPT ITEMS

(open access to minutes)

RESOLVED that, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds

that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

265. Cyber Security Update
(Item 20)

Lisa Gannon (Director of Technology) and James Church (Chief Information Security Officer) were in attendance for this item

1. Mr Oakford acknowledged the hard work the Mrs Gannon and Mr Church had completed throughout the last few years. Mr Oakford added how robust KCC had become to Cyber-attacks and had been performing above other councils in this respect. KCC internal securities had moved to an above average position and improvements had been noted.
2. Further to questions and comments from Members, the discussion covered the following:
 - Members discussed KCC response to cyber attacks and received relevant assurances of the current security arrangements. Mrs Gannon highlighted the good work undertaken by the Council but advised that they were not and should not be complacent.
 - Members were updated on progress in relation to Officer training in relation to cyber-security.
 - Responding to questions, Mr Church gave assurances that all data that had been stored within servers were compliant with GDPR guidelines as all Microsoft environments were stored in the UK or EU.

RESOLVED to note the Cyber Security Update.