

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 29 March 2010.

PRESENT: Mr P B Carter (Chairman), Mr N J D Chard, Mr G K Gibbens, Mr R W Gough, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr K G Lynes, Mr R A Marsh and Mr J D Simmonds

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Gilroy (Chief Executive), Mr M Austerberry (Executive Director, Environment, Highways and Waste), Ms A Honey (Managing Director Communities), Mr O Mills (Managing Director - Adult Social Services), Ms R Turner (Managing Director Children, Families and Education) and Mr A Wood (Head of Financial Management)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 February 2010
(Item 2)

Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2010 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

2. Revenue & Capital Budgets, Key Activity and Risk Monitoring
(Item 3 - report by Mr John Simmonds – Cabinet Member for Finance and Lynda McMullan, Director of Finance)

(1) Mr Simmonds highlighted the main areas of pressure within individual portfolios which would need to be managed in order to have a balanced revenue budget by year end. He also gave a brief update on the current position with the good and steady progress the Council is making to recover investments in Icelandic Banks. Mr Simmonds also reported on the current position with the Capital budget and the rephasing of some projects.

(2) Following discussion Cabinet **Resolved that:**

- (a) the latest monitoring position on the revenue and capital budgets be noted,
- (b) the changes to the capital programme as detailed in the report be agreed; and
- (c) agreement be given to £19.537m of re-phasing on the capital programme being moved from 2009-10 capital cash limits into future years.

3. Annual Business Plans 2010 - 2011

(Item 4 - report by Mr Paul Carter, Leader and Mr Peter Gilroy, Chief Executive)

See record of Decision on page

4. Co-ordinated Casual Admissions Scheme and Local Authority Proposed Co-ordinated Schemes for Primary and Secondary Schools in Kent and Admission Arrangements for Primary and Secondary Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2011/2012

(Item 5 - report by Mrs Sarah Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education and Rosalind Turner, Director of Children Families and Education)

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5. Safeguarding children in Kent: defending and developing the service

(Item 6 – report by Peter Gilroy, Chief Executive)

(1) This report marked the final stage of the review commissioned by the County Council in December 2008, to be undertaken by the Chief Executive, of the arrangements in Kent for protecting vulnerable children. It gave an over view of the Review Team's assessment of arrangements in their local and national contexts and set out a number of recommendations for consideration at the meeting of the County Council taking place on Thursday 1 April 2010.

(2) Mr Gilroy said that rightly in the field of safeguarding children Kent had a strong reputation for innovation and also stability. The Council was currently seeking to strengthen the number of social workers to work in the children sector but was experiencing some recruitment problems but this was something which was common to many other Councils.

(3) Mr Gilroy also spoke about the need for there to be open and transparent communication on child protection issues and that this needed to stretch across not just the Council but other key partners and agencies such as the police, the health economy and other public sector agencies. Mr Gilroy also spoke about the importance of quality and consistent training for social workers and suggested the Council consider for the future doing more of this in-house. There also needed to be a constant pursuit to improve good practice and standards and with the Council the Kent Children's Safeguarding Board had an important role to play in this. Mr Gilroy also spoke about the position of KCC relative to other parts of the country and said in comparison Kent remained one of the safest environments. However no matter what there was no room in this field of work for complacency in order to meet the challenges which lay ahead. In conclusion Mr Gilroy said local and other sector bodies could not tackle these hard issues of child protection on their own and there was a need for communities and individuals to play their part in meeting these challenges.

(4) Mr Carter said he supported the views expressed by Mr Gilroy and supported the view that there needed to be more communication across agencies and that this could best be achieved by having more openness and transparency around these

issues. Mrs Hohler said that she welcomed the report and the fact that it provided a platform for discussion not only by Cabinet but also by the Vulnerable Children Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee before being the subject of a full debate by the County Council at its meeting on 1 April 2010. Mrs Hohler also praised the work of social workers in children's services who undertook their job in often difficult and challenging circumstances. Rosalind Turner endorsed what had been said and in particular about the role of social workers working in the field of child protection. The report itself raised a number of important issues and she welcomed the fact that it was to be widely discussed and debated. She also welcomed the recommendation that there should be at least an annual report to the Kent Children's Safeguarding Board coupled with a programme of reporting to Cabinet and the County Council in order to provide an open and systematic approach to quality assurance.

(5) Cabinet then placed on record it's thanks to Mr Gilroy for his comprehensive and wide ranging report which would now go forward for discussion by the Vulnerable Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee and debate by the County Council on 1 April 2010

6. Kent Children's Trust (KCT) and Local Partnership Arrangements

(Item 7- report by Mrs Sarah Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education and Rosalind Turner, Managing Director for Children, Families and Education)

(1) This report provided an update on the development of children's trust arrangements in Kent and sought Cabinet's agreement to further develop the Kent Children's Trust and local partnership arrangements.

(2) Mrs Hohler said that the consultations with key partners on the development of local partnership arrangements had gone well and the stage had been reached where this work could now be carried forward in order for the Council to meet its statutory obligations. Rosalind Turner said that this work also linked in well with the Total Place agendas it presented opportunities to develop cross agency effort and a sharing of resources.

(3) **Resolved** that

- Agreement be given to the decision of the Board of the Kent Children's Trust to develop a '*Change for Children*' programme to strengthen partnership arrangements including the seven key actions for implementation during 2010.
- Agreement be given to receiving further reports on the KCT Governance framework and developing the new Children and Young Peoples Plan; and,
- note the legislative requirements of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, with regard to children's trust development

7. Kent County Council Strategy for the Implementation of the Biodiversity Duty

(Item 8– report by Mr Nick Chard, Cabinet Member Environment, Highways and Waste and Mr Mike Austerberry, Director Environment, Highways and Waste)

(1) This report described the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Biodiversity Duty for local authorities and set out the Kent County Council's Strategy for the implementation of this Duty internally across the council and through its functions.

(2) **Resolved** that the Kent County Council Strategy for the implementation of the Biodiversity Duty under the terms of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 be approved.

8. Weather Damaged Roads: Major Road Repair Blitz

(Item 9 -report by Mr Paul Carter, Leader of the Council)

See Record of Decision on page

9. External Scrutiny

(Item 10 -report by Mr Alex King)

(1) This report detailed some of the issues for the Cabinet and the County Council arising from the ever increasing responsibilities being placed on local authorities to scrutinise areas of work and activity of partner bodies and agencies.

(2) Mr King spoke about the importance of local people being given the chance to participate and have their say in the work of local bodies and partnerships. As an example of this he spoke about the work under taken by the Kent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the provision of Women's and Children Services at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust. The Committee had consulted widely on these proposals and had submitted a robust statement to the Secretary of State for Health expressing concerns as to whether the proposals by the Trust would meet future needs. This has resulted in the Secretary of State saying the proposals of the Trust would be looked at with great care.

(3) Cabinet noted that it would receive regular reports on scrutiny activity relating to external partners and agencies which impacted on the County Council and its district/borough Council partners.

10. Decisions from Cabinet Scrutiny Committee - 10 February 2010

(Item 11 -report Alex King – Deputy Leader and Mr Peter Sass - Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership)

Resolved that the comments and actions detailed in the report be noted.