

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 2 December 2019.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs M E Crabtree and Mr E E C Hotson

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director of People and Communications), Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director Strategic & Corporate Services), Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr M Dunkley CBE (Corporate Director for Children Young People and Education), Miss E Feakins (Chief Accountant), Mrs C Head (Head of Finance Operations), Mr J Ratcliffe (Principal Transport Planner - Strategy), Mr A Scott-Clark (Director of Public Health), Ms P Southern (Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health), Mrs K Stewart (Director of Environment Planning and Enforcement), Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer) and Mr B Watts (General Counsel)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

120. Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 October 2019

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2019 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

121. Verbal Updates from Cabinet Members

(Item 5)

Each Cabinet Member was invited to update Cabinet on recent events within their portfolio:

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services:

- The revenue budget was near completion;
- Infrastructure – 2 major projects were being developed and there was a five-year plan for asset utilisation;
- Traded Services – completing restructure into HoldCo.

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health:

- Public Health decision to extend the partnership with Kent Community Foundation Trust for five years;
- Adult Social Care – Mrs Bell had been on a number of visits around the county as well as attended training sessions, conferences and events;
- Winter pressures – latest DToc figures were below target but there was some strong teamwork with excellent communication and an ongoing recognition of community services;

- There was a three year programme to ensure sustainability in the system to continue to respond to challenges.

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

- Provisional school results for KS4 & KS5 showed that attainment in Kent Schools had increased for the third year running;
- Proportion of children achieving strong passes and standard passes continued to increase – the detail of this would be shared with the CYPE Committee and others at the appropriate times;
- School funding – KCC was set to receive approx. £52million for 2021;
- Provision planning - a growing school age population required school sizes to increase and a number of schools had increased in size;
- Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2020 would be discussed at the CYPE Cabinet Committee on 10 January 2020. The Leader confirmed that the Commissioning Plan would also be discussed at Cabinet in due course.

Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services:

- There was a significant emphasis on the SEND agenda with considerable progress involving parents and carers;
- An award for Resilience and Emotional Wellbeing had been presented to Ashford Oaks school following work through the Headstart programme;
- Mrs Chandler attended the Kent Association of Head Teachers Conferences which included an excellent presentation from VSK's young people.

Cabinet Member for Communications, Engagement and People:

- The budget consultation ran between 16 October and 25 November, the communications campaign objectives were to increase public engagement in the consultation and increase public understanding in a number of areas including pressures on KCC and the services provided and what it cost to provide them. 1360 responses had been received;
- The consultation was promoted in a variety of ways and the Cabinet Member offered thanks to all those who contributed to the consultation;
- The staff survey had been shared across KCC, this covered 13 distinct areas and response rates from staff were high;
- 8 new graduates had recently been welcomed onto the graduate scheme.

Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services:

- The library strategy had been implemented following a county wide review of opening hours;
- There had been nearly 100,000 visitors to the Turner Contemporary Gallery in Margate since the Turner Prize exhibition had opened there, which was an excellent boost to the area;
- Trading Standards – the Ports Team at Dover had dealt with over 200 referrals involving nearly a million products, a quarter of which were prevented from entering the UK;
- In Ashford the Javelin Way development would start in the new year and finish in December 2021.

Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport:

- Following a successful trial using electric park and ride buses Kent teamed up with Renault to provide the first electric mini-bus in England, centred around Paddock Wood;
- KCC signed up to a joint declaration for the low carbon transition of the maritime industry;
- Road resurfacing project: £25million of the £29million programme had already been delivered with the remainder being delivered after winter;
- The LED conversion project was substantially complete ensuring continued energy saving and carbon reduction;
- Regarding windmills, demonstrable progress could be shown.

Cabinet Member for Environment:

- Referring to the Low Energy Strategy consultation 365 responses had been received, 1370 people had downloaded the consultation document;
- The level of engagement in this new portfolio had been very encouraging and even more good progress would be made.

Cabinet Member for Economic Development:

- The ambition was that Kent needed to be best place to live, work, learn, invest in and visit and Economic Development worked with groups internally and externally to help make those ambitions a reality;
- There were a number of excellent business support programmes in Kent and these helped business establish in Kent. The Cabinet Member passed on his congratulations to Visit Kent and others on their Silver Award for Kent as the best place for young people to visit;
- The award winning 'no use empty' scheme was delivering 500 new homes per year and was expanding into commercial premises delivering additional council tax and business rate revenue.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the verbal updates from Cabinet Members.

122. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring September 2019-20

(Item 6)

Emma Feakins, Chief Accountant, was present for this item.

1. Mr Oakford introduced this report, the forecast revenue pressure was £1.3million, this was a reduction of £2.5million from August. CYPE still forecast a pressure of £7.7million – this was in SEN, home to school transport and integrated children's services.

2. He set out the current position regarding the revenue budget which included savings for this financial year of £45million, he congratulated the effort required to make these savings.

3. Emma Feakins explained that within the CYPE directorate the schools dedicated budget should be considered, this was detailed in the appendix. Both elements should be considered together.

4. Cath Head commented that there was also the monitoring of revenue reserves which should be noted. The Leader noted that the Council was perhaps in a better position than in previous years, there continued to be pressure in CYPE, this was not

simply SEND and Asylum (where there was less pressure because of review of under 18 financing), there were pressures around care leavers and Looked After Children placements.

5. The Leader offered thanks to colleagues, both Members and Officers for their efforts in delivering the savings set out within the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- i) Note the forecast revenue budget monitoring position for 2019-20 and capital budget monitoring position for 2019-20 to 2021-22, and that the forecast pressure on the revenue budget needs to be eliminated as we progress through the year.
- ii) Agree the capital budget cash limit adjustments set out in section 6.4.
- iii) Note the BRAG Update at Appendix 3
- iv) Note the Reserves Monitoring at Appendix 4
- v) Note the Prudential Indicators Report at Appendix 5

123. Quarterly Performance Report, Quarter 2 2019/20 (Item 7)

Rachel Kennard was present for this item.

1. This was the second quarterly performance report for this financial year and set out results to the end of September 2019.
2. A summary table was provided within the report and this reflected a positive position with the number of green rated indicators increasing to 28.
3. Environment and Transport
 - a. Routine pothole repairs completed within 28 days and emergency incidents attended within timescales both improved, moving back above the targets set and were RAG rated green.
4. CYPE
 - a. Percentage of case holding posts which have been filled by permanent qualified social workers had moved above target and was the highest figure recorded to date.
5. Public Health
 - a. The number of NHS Health Checks completed over the last 12 months increased to move above target and was RAG rated green.
6. Two KPIs continued to perform below target and were RAG rated red:
 - a. Education, Health and Care Plans in timescale which remained below the revised floor standard.
 - b. 16-18 year olds starting an apprenticeship.
7. Overall performance remained positive with the majority and an increasing number of indicators RAG rated green however there were two KPIs below the acceptable level of delivery and these continued to be monitored by both the Directorate and Corporate Teams.

8. Miss Carey raised the issue of the new policy for charging for soil, plasterboard and rubble at household waste recycling centres. The recycling rate had reduced at the household recycling centres, and this was because a certain amount of waste at the centres was non-recyclable. The soil and rubble could be recycled (at a cost) so the reduction in this being taken to the household centres had resulted in a reduction in recycling but it was considered that waste minimisation was better than waste recycling. There were concerns about a potential increase in fly-tipping but the levels had remained broadly the same with the composition of the fly-tipping also remained broadly the same. There had been a modest increase in the amount of trade waste and an increase in the number of skip permits that had been requested. The KPI was shown as amber but could be considered to be green.

9. The Leader explained that the aim was for reporting to be consistent across all districts within the county and to report transparently to sustain public confidence in this policy.

10. Mr Whiting noted that with regards to No Use Empty in the last 3 months there were 138 long term empty properties that had been brought back into use. This was a very successful scheme. Referring to Kent Film Office, there had been 167 requests for filming bringing an estimated £1.7million direct spend into Kent, Mr Whiting congratulated the Film Office on the work they did.

RESOLVED the Cabinet NOTE the Quarter 2 Performance Report.

At 11am Members of the Cabinet Committee stood for a minute of silence to remember the victims of the London Bridge attack on Friday 29 November 2019.

124. Corporate Risk Register

(Item 8)

Mark Scrivener was present for this item.

1. Mark Scrivener presented this report; it was a living document and presented a snap shot in a period of time. The paper would go to Governance and Audit Committee and then the relevant Cabinet Committee which gave Members the opportunity to input.

RESOLVED that Cabinet note the refreshed Corporate Risk Register.

125. 19/00085 - Thanet Parkway Railway Station - Delivery

(Item 9)

1. The Leader explained that the report set out progress to date on Thanet Parkway, explained the commitment by KCC of up to £17.8million to the project and explained the £14million committed to this project by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).

2. The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee had met on Friday 29 November and discussed this issue. The Committee took note of the issues and cost developments and submitted an amendment recommending to the Cabinet Member that before any further action is taken to effect the recommendations that KCC undertake a further public survey and consultation with one of the questions on the

survey being “do you want the Thanet Parkway Station?”. The Leader considered it important to recognise the recommendations and views of the Cabinet Committee whilst being aware of the timeline driven by SELEP Accountability Board meeting on 14 February 2020 and the requirements to deliver the project by March 2021 (the end of the LEP financing period)

3. The Leader suggested that the decision be deferred to the meeting of Cabinet on 27 January 2020 so as to take account of the results of the survey. This was a project on which there had been extensive engagement, deliberation and consultation since at least 2014. This was not a last-minute consultation but given the points raised by the Cabinet Committee it was considered important to honour them.

4. Mr Payne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, considered that this project would help ease congestion, reconnect to London and act as a placemaking project. Thanet District Council had pledged £2million towards the project and KCC was aspiring to redress the balance between east and west Kent.

5. Mr Payne explained that there was a robust discussion at Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee regarding the costs, reassurance on safety standards and the request for a survey to understand the views of the public in the area. Hence the recommendation to defer the decision to Cabinet on 27 January. It was important to note that the £14million of LGF funding would be lost if this project did not go ahead, it would be available to all areas included in the SELEP area, not just for Kent.

6. Katie Stewart, Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement, explained that the original cost estimate, in 2014, was £14million, this covered construction costs only. Since then the costs had increased due to archaeology, design and level crossings for example (the level crossing cost was £10.2million).

7. Joe Ratcliffe offered some reassurance about the level of consultation and community engagement undertaken to date which included the following:

- Two full public consultations, 2015 – asking about overall concept of station (492 responses). 2017 – specific questions on design (355 responses);
- The report was available on the website;
- Thanet District Council (TDC) was briefed in advance and letters of support from local companies had been received;
- Feedback had led to design changes, including removal of bridge and the use of existing subway;
- Concerns around security of an unstaffed station – the train operator was fully engaged with the project and was working to address those concerns;
- Parking in residential streets was also a concern, this would be closely monitored and potential schemes to prevent commuter parking would be considered.
- A newsletter was posted to all 800 households in Cliffsend informing residents of the design changes to the scheme and encouraging people to respond to the forthcoming consultation on the new planning application for the scheme.
- TDC was briefed again last week.

8. A Member asked whether all the information given by Mr Ratcliffe on the consultation was given to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee last

Friday – Barbara Cooper confirmed that it was not. It was considered that there had been a lot of consultation done previously, it was important to remember that if a decision was not made by 14 February 2020 that the SELEP money would be reallocated and in all probability lost to Kent.

9. A Member commented that there was a considerable population in the North Dover districts that would benefit from this project and it was understood that Dover District Council supported the station. Ms Stewart confirmed that the survey would be for the catchment area so would include North Dover.

10. A Member thanked Mr Ratcliffe for his explanation of an excellent consultation exercise, however it was considered the right decision to defer. All consultations should be included with the report to Cabinet on 27 January so that all the information was available.

11. The Leader thanked Mr Ratcliffe for his contribution to the Cabinet and for all his work previously; it was considered the right decision to recognise the concerns of the E&T Cabinet Committee. However, this should be looked at in the context of the significant consultation that had already taken place. This project would also be subject to an assessment by the Technical Evaluator at SELEP.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

12. Defer the decision until a survey of public opinion in the catchment area of the proposed station is undertaken.

126. Cabinet meetings - Update
(Item 10)

1. Ben Watts, General Counsel, explained that there was further to work to be done and it was suggested that Members await the broader review, note the update and look forward to a review outcome in March 2020.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- Note the update regarding the future of Cabinet Meetings
- Agree that the Leader and General Counsel should review the Council's meeting structure with non-executive Members and develop proposals to be considered in March 2020.