

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 29 June 2023.

PRESENT: Mr R W Gough (Chairman), Mrs C Bell, Mr D L Brazier, Miss S J Carey, Mrs S Chandler, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr R C Love, OBE, Mr D Murphy and Mr P J Oakford

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D Robey

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Apologies

(Item 1)

Apologies were received from Mrs Prendergast.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 March 2023

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 30 March 2023 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

3. Quarterly Performance Report (Q4 - 2022-2023)

(Item 4)

Matt Wagner, Interim Chief Analyst and David Whittle, Director of Strategy were in attendance for this item

1) Mr Whittle and Mr Wagner outlined the report for Quarter 4 (Q4), 2022-2023 and said that out of 37 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) contained within the Quarterly Performance Report (QPR), 15 achieved target (rated green), 10 achieved and exceeded the floor standard but did not meet the target (rated amber), and 12 did not meet floor standard (rated red). It was noted that there was a lot of variation in how much different KPIs rated red had fallen below the floor standard and whether the direction of travel was 'flat' or worsening. There were some amber rated KPIs with a worsening direction of travel. High demand was an important factor to be considered when looking at the red and many of the amber rated KPIs.

Mr Whittle said KCC needed to ensure the targets and floor standards for the KPIs were appropriate and where they were not, they should be changed accordingly. It was important to draw a link to the Council's other reporting frameworks. It was suggested that the Quarterly Performance Report be changed so that contextual information and management actions were separate and clearly defined.

2) Further to comments and questions from Members, it was noted:

- The KPIs in Quarter 4 in comparison to Quarter 3 reflected the situation more broadly with increased demand for services and the core service pressures being experienced. There had also been challenges in responding to the extreme winter weather which had affected particularly indicators relating to highways and transportation.
- The suggestion that the Quarterly Performance Report be changed so that contextual information and management actions were separated out was supported.
- The indicator relating to Early Help was rated green and this was seen as a positive as this work was preventing cases progressing into the more serious categories.
- Highways and transport were affected by the weather and the demand had been unprecedented. Operational teams had been working at capacity for many months. There had been a large increase in the number of potholes and this was caused by the very wet weather in January and March. There had been a backlog of work due to the snow and ice in December.
- Demand had increased for Adult Social Care in Quarter 4, with more people making contact and making requests for assessments.
- Work was being undertaken to improve statistics for Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests and Members were advised that the Information Commissioner's Office had made it clear that KCC needed to act regarding meeting statutory responsibilities in this regard.
- In the latest Ofsted report, it showed very few councils were issuing EHCPs within the 20 week timeframes. Only half of EHCPs, nationwide, were issued within 20 weeks. New working practices were being rolled out to improve this and a revised culture was being built, having looked at the best practice in other authorities.
- The KPIs reflected KCC's budget position more generally and concerns were raised about how social care was funded. More government funding was required to deal with demand led services.

3) RESOLVED to note the report and proposed indicators for 2023-2024.

4. Revenue and Capital Budget Outturn 2022-23

(Item 5)

Zena Cooke, Corporate Director for Finance was in attendance for this item

1) Mr Oakford (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services) introduced the report. The 2022-2023 budget was prepared against the backdrop of increased uncertainty and risk, following recovery from the pandemic and rising inflation. The Risk Reserve established in 2021-2022 had continued to be available to mitigate risk for the 2022-2023 budget.

The provisional revenue budget outturn position for 2022-2023 was an overspend of £44.424 million (excluding schools and roll forward requests of just under £2 million).

Within the overall outturn position there are significant overspends in Children's, Young People and Education totalling £32.7 million, and in Adult Social Care & Health totalling £24.4 million.

There had been requested for 'roll forwards' totalling £1.960m. These roll forwards met the agreed criteria of projects where there was already a commitment in 2023-24, increasing the overspend to £46.384m. There was an additional request to roll forward a further £0.726m of member grant underspend which increased the provisional revenue budget outturn position to an overspend of £47.1 million.

This level of overspend was to require the full utilisation of the risk reserve of around £25 million with the remaining up to £22 million being drawn down from the General Fund reserve.

The capital outturn position was an underspend of £158.4 million, £159.2 million of slippage and rephasing and £0.8 million real net overspend.

Earmarked and general reserves had been reduced by £53 million, reflecting the drawn downs to fund the overspend and contribution to the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit under the Safety Valve arrangements. This would impact KCC's financial resilience going forward and would need to be addressed in future Medium Term Financial Plans.

2) RESOLVED to agree the recommendations as outlined in the report.

5. Care Leavers' Covenant

(Item 6)

Caroline Smith, Assistant Director (Corporate Parenting); Nimesh Patel, Head of Service (North/West) and Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director of Children's Young People and Education were in attendance for this item

1) Mrs Chandler introduced the report. It was noted that many of the ambitions outlined in the Care Leavers' Covenant were already being delivered within the service.

2) It was emphasised that it was an organisational approach in terms of KCC's corporate parenting responsibilities. It was a formal recognition of work with Care Leavers and the work on the Covenant had been led and driven by Care Leavers themselves. The Covenant would help KCC to reach other signatories in health, education and private businesses to give Care Leavers opportunities.

3) RESOLVED to agree the recommendations as outlined in the report.

6. Adoption of the KCC Developer Contributions Guide

(Item 7)

Colin Finch, Strategic Programme Manager was in attendance for this item

1) Mr Murphy introduced the report.

2) Mr Finch outlined the report.

3) Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- The document was timely as there was a myth that there wasn't a formula being used to calculate S106 agreement contribution amounts.
- The terms of the agreement entered into need to be adhered to. Some districts are raising concerns that money is being raised in one district and being spent in another. The ongoing relationship with districts was important.

4) RESOLVED to agree the recommendations as outlined in the report.

7. New Nuclear at Dungeness

(Item 8)

David Godfrey, Policy Adviser and David Smith, Director of Economic Development were in attendance for this item

1) Mr Murphy and Mr Robey introduced the report. Mr Robey had been chairing a group working on new nuclear at Dungeness. It was felt this was a valuable project as there were national needs, it would help with aims to achieve Net Zero, with energy security and would produce affordable energy. It was asserted that Dungeness Power Station had helped to protect the environment and would continue to as a site for nuclear.

High level discussions were ongoing and site visits were being arranged for stakeholders. A specific proposal to put forward to government was being developed.

2) Mr Godfrey said the power station was an important employer. Previously, the site had not been considered by the government because of the size of the new generation reactors being looked at but the small modular nuclear reactors, with their reduced space requirement offered a new opportunity.

3) Mr Smith said there were economic benefits for the local community in Kent and surrounding areas. The project ownership was with the government and they would decide the technology used and facilitate the funding. Nuclear was considered critical for Britain's electricity supply because while solar and wind power were being used, the baseline production for electricity depended on nuclear power stations.

4) Further to questions and comments, it was noted:

- Previously, there had been concerns about how to gain access and the construction of a nuclear plant on that site. The move to small modular reactors has transformed the picture and can be operated on the site. There were huge economic and environmental benefits.
- Work was to be undertaken with neighbouring authority areas. It was noted that the MP for Rye had already been involved. The technical information was being put together in the first instance.

5) RESOLVED to note the report.

8. Devolution Position Statement

(Item 9)

David Whittle, Director of Strategy was in attendance for this item

1) The Leader introduced the report.

2) Mr Whittle outlined the report.

3) Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- It was important for KCC not to be 'left behind' and it was felt that a devolution deal would provide opportunities. There was a risk that without moving towards a devolution deal, KCC might only be able to provide statutory services and non-statutory services valued by residents could disappear.
- It was also recognised that a devolution deal was not a panacea but it did offer a direction of travel for KCC.
- The de-linking of devolution and local government reorganisation was welcomed. Concerns were raised about the additional layer of governance and the additional costs that came with having an elected mayor.

4) RESOLVED to agree to:

Develop and submit an 'Expression of Interest' to government to begin the negotiations for a Kent and Medway devolution deal.

9. Family Hubs

(Item 10)

Stuart Collins, Director of Operational Integrated Children's Service, was in attendance for this item

1) Mrs Chandler introduced the item.

2) Mr Collins outlined the presentation (attached).

3) It was noted that there was a huge opportunity with Family Hubs, with the focus on early help and early intervention. The delivery of Family Hubs was to be in partnership with the NHS and built on the significant achievements of the last few years.

4) RESOLVED to note the presentation.