

CABINET

10 FEBRUARY 2015

REFRESH OF COUNCIL PLAN INDICATORS 2015-2016 – ADDENDUM REPORT

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Jarrett, Deputy Leader and Finance
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Summary

This addendum report updates Cabinet on the discussions on the Council Plan which took place at the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 February 2015.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Assistant Director Communications, Performance and Partnerships introduced this report which asked members to consider the proposed suite of Council Plan indicators, with the committee's views being reported to Cabinet on the 10th February 2015, alongside the 2015/16 budget proposals.
- 1.2 The following indicators were discussed in detail:
- *The percentage of children permanently excluded from school*
- 1.2.1 It was suggested this be removed as many schools were outside the control of the council and also the target was difficult to understand. Members asked if it could be expressed as both the number of children and a percentage and also clarify that it related to all schools including academies. Other members felt that the target should be retained as it was still a useful statistic for the council to be aware of even if it did relate to non council controlled schools. It was agreed the target should be made more meaningful and retained.
- *Percentage of children who were absent from school for more than 15 percent of the school year*
- 1.2.2 Again it was suggested this be removed but other members argued against this and for its retention particularly as it was a key indicator for Ofsted to scrutinise. Officers agreed to clarify if it related to authorised and unauthorised absences, express the target in terms of numbers and clarify if academies were included. Members questioned whether 85% was too low and impacted on school performance.

- *Carer satisfaction with adult social care services*

1.2.3 It was agreed that the target should be retained at its current level of 46% otherwise moving to the national average of 42.7% represented a drop.

- *The percentage of service users who report they have control over their daily life*

1.2.4 It was agreed this should be retained provided it could be demonstrated that this was a meaningful target and did not involve any additional work for officers given that it formed part of a survey the Council was required to undertake.

- *The proportion of carers who felt that they had been included or consulted in discussions about the person they care for*

1.2.5 It was agreed that the current target of 75% should be retained.

- *Percentage of opiate users that left drug treatment successfully (free of drug(s) of dependence)*

1.2.6 Members felt this target appeared to have been set at a very low level. Confirmation would be sought from the Director of Public Health that the target was appropriate and had been built into the new contract.

- *Number of cardiovascular health checks completed.*

1.2.7 Members queried the relevance to the council of cardiovascular checks but proposed no change after the commissioning role of public health in this matter was explained.

1.3 Generally, Members found the removal of indicator numbers unhelpful and asked for them to be reinstated. The report to Council would summarise which measures and targets were outstanding, why and when the information would be available. Members were happy overall with the plan and its state of development, and felt it compared favourably with a few years ago when no target information was available or targets were not challenging enough.

2. Assistant Director's comments

2.1 Further clarification has been sought from the appropriate service leads for each of the indicators queried above as appropriate.

- *The percentage of children permanently excluded from school*

2.1.1 To remain consistent with national reporting Academies are included in this measure. The use of percentages for this indicator matches the format for national data for this measure. Due to the low numbers of children captured by this measure, presenting this indicator in actual numbers would be challenging as any return of 5 children or less would require the figure to be suppressed (which would cause monitoring issues). It is therefore recommended that the indicator to remain in this format, with actual figures provided where this is deemed appropriate.

- *Percentage of children who were absent from school for more than 15 percent of the school year*

2.1.2 This indicator reports the authorised and unauthorised absence of pupils at state-funded primary, secondary and special schools (maintained & academy). These figures are calculated from locally collected persistent absence returns and should be treated as provisional until national data is published.

2.1.3 From the beginning of the next academic year 2015/16, the government is reducing the persistent absence threshold from 15 per cent to 10 per cent. Currently persistently absent pupils are defined statistically according to the absent sessions threshold – presently 56 or more sessions of absence for the full academic year. The Department for Education’s absence statistical first release for the autumn term 2014 is scheduled to be published in May 2015. Medway Council will fall in line with these changes in the persistent absence return. This will commence in the new financial year, ready to be incorporated in the term 4 collection.

2.1.4 It is therefore recommended that this measure be titled to “The percentage of children who were persistently absent from school” and the target changed to ‘TBC’. In line with the forthcoming national changes to persistent absence thresholds from 15% to 10%, a target will be set in Q1 when the first national data is released in May 2015.

- *Carer satisfaction with adult social care services / who felt that they had been included or consulted in discussions about the person they care for*

2.1.5 The Care Act 2014 which will be implemented from April 2014 has extended the Council’s duties around support for Carers. Given the current financial constraints and a potential increase in demand for carers services it is recommended to set our ambitions accordingly – in this case, in line with the national average.

- *Percentage of opiate users that left drug treatment successfully (free of drug(s) of dependence)*

2.1.6 The current target set at 8% will put Medway in the top quartile against comparator Local Authorities, and is inline with what is built into the performance management sections of the contract with the current service provider. It is therefore recommended that the target remain the same.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the Cabinet consider the comments of the Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the Council Plan Indicators for 2015-16 (Appendix 1) and Key projects for 2015-16 (Appendix 2);
- 3.2 That Cabinet considers the specific recommendation by officers in response to comments of the Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee to amend the indicator *Percentage of children who were absent from school for more than 15 percent of the school year*.
- 3.2 That Cabinet note that Members of the the Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed with the overall proposals and felt it compared favourably with previous versions of the Council Plan scrutinised by the Committee.

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