

Record of Cabinet decisions

Tuesday, 4 April 2023

4.00pm to 5.32pm

Date of publication: 5 April 2023

**Subject to call-in these decisions will be effective from 17 April 2023
The record of decisions is subject to approval at the next meeting of the Cabinet**

Present:	Councillor Alan Jarrett	Leader of the Council
	Councillor Howard Doe	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services
	Councillor David Brake	Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services
	Councillor Rodney Chambers, OBE	Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships
	Councillor Jane Chitty	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation
	Councillor Adrian Gulvin	Portfolio Holder for Resources
	Councillor Gary Hackwell	Portfolio Holder for Business Management
	Councillor Mrs Josie Iles	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services – Lead Member (statutory responsibility)
	Councillor Martin Potter	Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools
	In Attendance:	Neil Davies, Chief Executive
	Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director, Legal and Governance	
	Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer	

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Filmer.

Record of decisions

The record of the decisions from the Cabinet meeting held on 7 March 2023 was agreed by the Cabinet and signed by the Leader as correct.

Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

Risk Strategy Annual Review

Background:

This report provided details of the annual review of the Risk Strategy. The report stated that the Risk Management Strategy was reviewed annually to ensure it remained up to date and continued to reflect the Council's approach to risk management. The proposed 2023/24 Risk Strategy was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The annual review had been considered by the Audit Committee on 16 March 2023, which had noted the report. The Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee also considered the report on 30 March 2023 and its comments were set out in an addendum report within Supplementary Agenda No.1.

Decision number:

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the outcome of consideration of the report by the Audit Committee, as set out at paragraph 4.1.6 to the report and the comments of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in the addendum report.

49/2023

The Cabinet approved the 2023/24 Risk Strategy at Appendix 1 to the report, which set out the Council's approach to risk management.

50/2023

The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, to consider adding to the Risk Strategy, references to resource risks, risk ratings and unexpected risks, as set out in paragraphs 1.9 to 1.11 of the Addendum report and if considered appropriate, to make the relevant changes to the Risk Strategy.

Cabinet, 4 April 2023

Reasons:

The establishment of a corporate framework for risk management is recommended by CIPFA and SOLACE and will complement and support the work already being carried out within each directorate to manage risks.

Household Support Grant: 2023/24 Full Year Allocation and Free School Meals

Background:

This report set out a proposal to use the latest round of funding allocated to the Council through the Household Support Fund for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The Council had been allocated £4,524,926 for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The report proposed that the Council continue the existing grant scheme in Medway, which was considered to be working well.

The report explained that for 2023/24, local authorities were required to complete a delivery plan to outline their priorities, approach and how they intended to allocate their funding and to nominate a Senior Responsible Officer. Submission of the Plan to the Department for Work and Pensions was required by 17 May 2023.

Decision number:

Decision:

51/2023

The Cabinet agreed the proposals set out in section 3 of the report as the Council's approach to delivering the Household Support Fund and agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, to finalise and implement these proposals.

52/2023

The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, to submit a Delivery Plan for Medway to the Department for Work and Pensions in line with the Cabinet decision.

53/2023

The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, to make minor amendments to the proposals to enable them to continue to support vulnerable households in Medway, including amending any discretionary eligibility criteria where discussions remain ongoing and where further Government advice is provided.

Cabinet, 4 April 2023

Reasons:

Given the lack of cost to the local taxpayer it is appropriate for the Council to introduce these measures to support our most vulnerable residents.

Rochester Airport Improvement Works - Capital Additions

This agenda item was withdrawn.

Additions to the Schools Capital Programme

Background:

This report set out proposals to ensure that appropriate levels of good quality mainstream and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school places would be available through to 2027. It requested that the projects be approved, and that the Cabinet recommend to Full Council for them to be added to the Education Capital Programme.

The report set out proposed mainstream projects worth £19.44million and SEND projects worth £16.2million. The report advised that the mainstream proposals, together with occasional bulge classes at other schools on a rota basis, including the two new free schools, should ensure that Medway would have sufficient primary and secondary school places for the foreseeable future. In relation to the proposed SEND projects, these were a mix of special school expansions and new resourced provision attached to mainstream schools. This would ensure that the most appropriate provision was in place to meet the pupil need.

Decision number:

Decision:

54/2023

The Cabinet noted and approved the projects set out in sections 3 and 4 of the report and recommended to Full Council that these individual schemes be added to the Capital Programme.

55/2023

The Cabinet authorised the Director of People – Children and Adults to enter into a formal agreement with academy trusts to engage them, where the Council had no asset interest in the school site, to undertake the projects as set out in section 5 of the report.

Reasons:

By approving the recommendations in section 11 of the report, the Cabinet will be ensuring that the Council meets its statutory duty to ensure sufficient good quality school places are available.

Cabinet, 4 April 2023

Proposals to Amend and Make Additions to the Education Travel Assistance Policy

Background:

This report set out proposed amendments to the Education Travel Assistance Policy and requested authority to commence a period of consultation on the proposals.

The report advised that the Education Travel Assistance Policy set out what the Council must do to facilitate travel to school and the eligibility criteria for granting that support. The changes proposed would provide a fairer and more progressive Policy, which promoted independence and more sustainable methods of travel. The wording of the policy had also been reviewed for clarity with the proposed updated version attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The report also set out that consultation on the proposed changes to the Policy would take place in Spring 2023 and that the outcomes of the consultation would be presented to the Cabinet in July 2023.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken in relation to the proposed change to the Education Travel Assistance Policy. This was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

Decision number:

56/2023

Decision:

The Cabinet considered the proposals set out in the report and authorised the Director of People – Children and Adults, to commence the six-week period of consultation to gauge views on the proposed changes to the Education Travel Assistance Policy, as set out in section 3 of this report.

The Cabinet noted that at the end of the consultation period, an Outcomes of Consultation report would be prepared and presented to Cabinet in July 2023 for determination of the proposals, with implementation from 1 September 2023.

Reasons:

Approving the commencement of the consultation period will ensure that the Council complies with appropriate process to make changes to the Education Travel Assistance Policy.

Cabinet, 4 April 2023

School Place Planning Strategy Update: Principles on Selection

Background:

This report outlined a proposed extension to the School Place Planning Principles, set within the School Place Planning Strategy 2022-27. This included principles to cover the selective sector and the selection process in more detail.

The report explained that Medway Council had a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places. The School Place Planning Strategy described the principles, methods and challenges of this duty. The proposed principles would help meet the Council Plan Priority of 'Supporting Medway's people to realise their potential', and the outcome of 'All children achieving their potential in schools'.

The report set out that following a consultation and subject to a decision by the Regional Schools Director in Spring 2023, from September 2024, three of Medway's selective single gender schools would move to co-education. The proposals to change three schools to co-educational would result in a reduction in the number of more distant out of area pupils able to acquire a place at a Medway Grammar School. In view of this, a number of underpinning principles for selection were proposed for addition to the School Place Planning Strategy in order to help guide decision making on selective schools.

Decision number:

Decision:

57/2023

The Cabinet approved the principles, as set out in sections 3.1.1 to 3.1.7 of the report and authorised their addition to the School Place Planning Strategy.

Reasons:

By approving the recommendations in section 9 of the report, the Cabinet is ensuring that the Council meets its statutory duty to ensure sufficient good quality school places are available.

Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2025

Background:

This report requested the Cabinet to approve Medway's Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2025 – 'A place called home'. The Strategy detailed how Medway Council as the corporate parent would provide and commission the right care and support for Children in our Care (CiC) and care experienced young people that would best meet their needs. Central to enabling this was provision of enough places that children could call home, with the right love, care and support wrapped around them.

The report had previously been considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 March 2023 and its comments were set out at section 6 of the report.

Cabinet, 4 April 2023

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken in relation to the Sufficiency Strategy. This was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

Decision number:

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the comments from the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out at Section 6 of the report.

58/2023

The Cabinet approved the 2023/25 Sufficiency Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

Reasons:

Approval of the Sufficiency Strategy ensures the Local Authority is fulfilling its duty to secure, as far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation and support within their local area which meets the needs of children and young people that the local authority is looking after, and those who have recently left care at the age 18.

Shared Prosperity Fund and Multiply Year 1 Update and Year 2 Proposal

Background:

This report requested Cabinet approval of the Shared Prosperity Fund and Multiply year 2 for 2023-24 and set out what had been achieved during year 1 of the programme in 2022-23.

The report explained that the Government had announced the launch of the new £2.6 billion UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), including Multiply, in mid-April 2022 with an allocation of £1.855million to Medway and an additional £1.448million of Multiply. SPF was a significant component of the Government's ambitious Levelling Up agenda and was the successor to EU structural funds.

The final award of and approval of the Council's Investment Plan (IP) had been confirmed in December 2022. The Council had used the approved IP to begin the delivery of year 1 (2022-23) with a focus on Council led projects to ensure completion given the programme delivery window of 3 months.

The report had previously been considered by the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 March 2023, the comments of which were set out at section 7 to the report.

Cabinet, 4 April 2023

**Decision
number:**

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the comments of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in section 7 of the report.

59/2023

The Cabinet approved the proposed Shared Prosperity Fund and Multiply Year 2 programme.

60/2023

The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Regeneration, Inward Investment and Partnerships to deliver the SPF and Multiply Year 2 programme of projects.

Reasons:

Approval of the Year 2 programme is in support of Medway's regeneration priorities and enables Medway to access SPF and Multiply allocations for another year.

"Reducing Hypertension in Medway" Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2021-2022

Background:

This report provided details of the Director of Public Health's Annual Public Health Report (APHR) for 2021/22. The report advised that Directors of Public Health had a duty to produce an Annual Public Health Report. The aim of the Annual Public Health Report was to identify issues that currently, or had the potential to, impact on the health or wellbeing of the local authority's population. Directors of Public Health were tasked with making recommendations to address identified issues.

The 2021/2022 report stated that this edition of the APHR focused on hypertension, which was one of the current major public health challenges and how the health and wellbeing of residents could be improved through prevention, early detection and treatment of hypertension (high blood pressure).

The APHR had been considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 9 February 2023 and by the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 March 2023, details of which were set out in sections 5 and 6 of the report.

Cabinet, 4 April 2023

Decision number:

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the comments of the Health and Wellbeing Board, as set out in section 5 of the report.

The Cabinet noted the comments of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in section 6 of the report.

The Cabinet noted the Annual Public Health Report 2022/23.

Reasons:

There is a statutory duty for Directors of Public Health to produce an Annual Report and Local Authorities to publish the report.

GP Access Task Group - Minority Report

Background:

This report set out the minority views and the decision of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in relation to the GP Access Task Group. Paragraph 11.2 of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny rules stated that:

If an Overview and Scrutiny Committee cannot agree on one single final set of proposals or recommendations to the Council or Leader/Cabinet (as appropriate), then a minority view which is supported by the largest minority, but at least three members, may be prepared and submitted for consideration by the Council or Leader/Cabinet (as appropriate) with the proposals and recommendations supported by the majority of the Committee.

In this case five members of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee had given support for a minority view at its meeting on 9 March 2023. This minority view was to submit the GP Access Task Group interim report and interim recommendations to the Cabinet. The decision of the Committee had been not to submit the interim report to the Cabinet pending further Task Group work that would be completed in Summer 2023.

Cabinet, 4 April 2023

***Decision
number:***

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the interim report of the GP Access Task Group.

61/2023

The Cabinet agreed that the Task Group report and its draft recommendations be revisited in Summer 2023 to enable completion of the work, including further engagement with GPs.

62/2023

The Cabinet requested that the completed Task Group report be presented to a future Cabinet meeting.

Reasons:

The Cabinet has a choice to consider the minority report, the decision of the committee and determine what action to take in response as set out in paragraph 11.2 of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules.

Leader's Announcement

The Leader reflected on some of the highlights of the Council administrations since 2001. These included:

- The Children's Services improvement journey which was progressing well, with significant investment taking place to ensure sustained improvement.
- Strong performance of schools in Medway and the provision of grammar schools and places in Medway.
- Regeneration across Medway and the new homes and jobs being provided. Highlights included the redevelopment of the centre of Chatham, the redevelopment of Britton Farm and Innovation Park Medway.
- The maintenance of weekly household waste collection services and the excellent service provided.
- The importance of putting Medway residents first.
- Strong partnership working, a recent example being the development of the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy.
- The Council's response to the Covid pandemic response which was considered to have been exemplary.
- Council officers and Cabinet Members were thanked for all their hard work.

Cabinet, 4 April 2023

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Leader of the Council

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Date

Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer/Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer

Telephone: 01634 332715/332104

Email: democratic.services@medway.gov.uk

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