



Record of Cabinet decisions

Tuesday, 21 November 2023

7.00pm to 8.16pm

Date of publication: 23 November 2023

Subject to call-in these decisions will be effective from 1 December 2023

Present:	Councillor Vince Maple	Leader of the Council
	Councillor Teresa Murray	Deputy Leader of the Council
	Councillor Tracy Coombs	Portfolio Holder for Education
	Councillor Simon Curry	Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration
	Councillor Lauren Edwards	Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment
	Councillor Naushabah Khan	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property
	Councillor Harinder Mahil	Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure
	Councillor Tristan Osborne	Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement
	Councillor Adam Price	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (including statutory responsibility)
	Councillor Zoë Van Dyke	Portfolio Holder for Business Management

In Attendance: Richard Hicks, Chief Executive
Adam Bryan, Director of Place
Lee-Anne Farach, Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive
Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director, Legal and Governance
Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer
Phil Watts, Chief Operating Officer

Leader's announcements

The Leader gave a brief update on the situation at Gun Wharf in relation to the presence of RAAC concrete. He explained that work continued in identifying options which would then be fully considered. He thanked Members, staff, partners and the public for their continued support, flexibility and understanding.

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Apologies for absence

There were none.

Record of decisions

The record of the meeting held on 24 October 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)

Councillor Curry explained that item 5 (Capital Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – Round 2) referred to Luton Primary School, of which he was a Governor. However, as the report was simply reporting on money already approved for a project at the school and as no direct reference to the school or the scheme was made during the meeting, Councillor Curry was able to remain in the meeting and take part in the discussion and decision on this item.

Other interests

There were none.

Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 - Round 2

Background:

This report presented the results of the second round of the Council's revenue budget monitoring process for 2023/24. The report set out that at its meeting on 23 February 2023, Full Council had set a total budget requirement of £388.269million for 2023/24.

Since approval of the budget, additional grant funding had been announced, primarily the Household Support Fund, Holiday Activity Fund, Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (Workforce Fund) and Start 4 Life funding. The final allocations for Schools funding and the Public Health Grant had also been confirmed. The net impact of these amendments took the Round 2 budget requirement to a total of £392.543million. The second round of revenue budget monitoring currently projected an overspend of £12.251million.

**Decision
number:**

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the results of the second round of revenue budget monitoring for 2023/24.

174/2023

The Cabinet instructed the Corporate Management Team to implement urgent actions to bring expenditure back within the budget agreed by Full Council.

Reasons:

Full Council is responsible for agreeing a balanced budget in advance of each financial year. Cabinet is responsible for ensuring that income and expenditure remain within the approved budget, including instructing corrective action to prevent any forecast overspend from materialising.

Capital Budget Monitoring 2023/24 - Round 2

Background:

This report presented the results of the second round of the Council's capital budget monitoring process for 2023/24. The report explained that this forecast an underspend of £5,000 within the Children's and Adults Directorate and £40,000 within Members Priorities, whereas the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Directorate was forecasting an overspend of £261,000. All other Services/Directorates were forecast to complete their capital schemes within the approved budget.

The report also presented a number of changes to the capital programme and asked the Cabinet to recommend to Council the removal of a number of budgets relating to schemes that were either complete or no longer required.

**Decision
number:**

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the results of the second round of capital budget monitoring for 2023/24 and the management actions to resolve the projected overspend in Children's and Adults.

The Cabinet noted the changes made to the capital programme, as set out in 11.1 to 11.4 of the report.

175/2023

The Cabinet recommended to Full Council the removal of the following budgets relating to schemes that were either complete or no longer required:

- Motorway Signage, £60,000 funded from Capital

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Receipts.

- **World Heritage Site & GLHP, £31,000 funded from Capital Grants.**
- **Civic Centre Decant, £24,000 funded from Reserves.**
- **Mountbatten House Purchase, £92,000 funded from Borrowing.**
- **MDC Queen Street, £20,000 funded from Borrowing.**
- **MP St Mary's Amateur Boxing Club, £40,000 funded from Capital Receipts.**

Reasons:

Full Council is responsible for agreeing the capital programme. Cabinet is responsible for ensuring that expenditure remains within the approved programme, including instructing corrective action to prevent any forecast overspend from materialising.

Draft Capital and Revenue Budgets 2024/25

Background:

This report presented the Council's draft capital and revenue budgets for 2024/25. It noted that the draft budget was based on the principles contained in the Medium Term Financial Outlook 2023-2028 (MTFO), which had been reported to Cabinet on 26 September 2023. Draft budget requirements for the directorates in 2024/25 were set out in sections 7 to 9 of the report.

The report explained that initial projections for the costs of services in 2024/25 amounted to an increase in the budget requirement of £60.123million. Allowing for initial projections for income growth of £21.378million, the MTFO projections had arrived at a potential budget gap for the Council of £38.745million. Work undertaken since the MTFO was projected to increase the Council's income and deliver savings that would reduce the projected gap to £35.798million.

The report reflected the introduction of a new approach to balancing the Council's budget, whereby each Directorate would operate within an agreed budget allocation for 2024/25. The Directorate budget allocations reflected in the Draft Budget therefore assumed the delivery of savings and additional income equal to the potential budget gap identified.

The report noted that in accordance with the Constitution, this report was the first stage of the budget consultation process leading to further consideration by Cabinet on 13 February 2024 and formal budget and council tax setting by Council on 29 February 2024. Budget proposals would now be submitted to the Council's overview and scrutiny committees for consideration.

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**Decision
number:**

Decision:

176/2023

The Cabinet instructed officers to continue to work with Portfolio Holders in formulating robust proposals to balance the budget for 2024/25.

177/2023

The Cabinet referred the Draft Capital and Revenue Budgets to overview and scrutiny committees, inviting them to offer comments on the proposals.

178/2023

The Cabinet recommended to Full Council that in February 2024, when setting the Council Tax, the following changes be applied to Council Tax premia in line with the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018, as set out in paragraph 9.18 of the report:

- The 100% premium for long-term empty properties may be brought forward so that it could commence after being empty for one year rather than two, with effect from 1 April 2024; and
- A 100% premium may be charged for properties that were unoccupied but furnished (known as second homes), with effect from 1 April 2025.

179/2023

The Cabinet recommended to Full Council that in February 2024, when setting the Council Tax, the following changes be applied to the Council Tax discretionary discounts, as set out in paragraph 9.18 of the report:

- Reduce the discount in respect of class C to 0% from the day on which a property becomes vacant; and
- Reduce the discount in respect of class D to 0%.

Reasons:

It is the responsibility of Cabinet to develop initial budget proposals for consideration by overview and scrutiny committees. These Draft Budget proposals were the first stage of the budget consultation process leading to further consideration by Cabinet on 13 February 2024 and formal Council Tax setting by Council on 29 February 2024.

Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024 - 2029

Background:

This report requested Cabinet approval of the multi-agency Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024 – 2029, which would replace the existing Strategy. The Strategy identified joint commitments for those impacted by domestic abuse, and was inclusive of those who were abused, those who perpetrated through abuse, and children who witnessed abuse, using the voice of people who had experienced abuse to identify areas of priority.

The report set out that an action plan would be formed in line with the Strategy. This would include actions for partners across Kent and Medway, including Medway Council. Governance of the action and delivery plan would be overseen by the partnership group Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse Executive Group (DASAEG).

The draft Strategy was set out at Appendix 1 to the report. A Diversity Impact Assessment in relation to the Strategy was attached at Appendix 2.

Decision number:

Decision:

180/2023

The Cabinet agreed the joint Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024 – 2029, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

181/2023

The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council to make any minor changes required prior to publication in December 2023.

Reasons:

There is a statutory duty for the local authority to have a domestic abuse strategy in place and published. On average, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic abuse. In 2022 Medway had higher recorded rates of domestic abuse when compared to the national average. Without a strategic response to domestic abuse and allowing for collaborative work and commissioning across the system there would be an increased risk of serious harm or homicide in cases of domestic abuse. A partnership strategy allows for accountability from individual agencies and coordinated multi-agency work. To ensure a cohesive approach across geographical Kent the strategy has been coauthored, consulted and approved with Medway and Kent partner organisations.

Kent and Medway Business Fund Re-Launch

Background:

This report informed the Cabinet about the re-launch of the Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF). The fund had, since 2017, provided 104 loan investments with a total loan investment of £13,889,299.

The KMBF would offer 0% interest free loans of up to £600,000 to businesses in Kent and Medway, repayable over a period of five years. A 10% administration fee would apply and no repayment would be required for the first six months. The fund would be open to Small and Medium Businesses (SMEs) in eligible sectors, including start-ups and could be used to help develop or expand existing products, services and processes.

The Accountable Bodies for the decision making of KMBF, known as the Investment Advisory Board and Sub Investment Advisory Board, had been established by Kent County Council and the report advised that the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Lauren Edwards, would be the Board Member for Medway Council.

Decision number:

182/2023

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the re-launch of the Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF) and supported the Economic Development Team to promote the fund to businesses.

Reasons:

To note the KMBF re-launch and to maximise the opportunities this could provide to Medway businesses, including the creation of new jobs. Restoring Medway's involvement in KMBF is in line with the Council signing up to the Federation of Small Businesses Kent's Local Leadership pledge earlier this year.

Council Plan Performance Monitoring Report and Strategic Risk Summary - Quarter 2 2023/24

Background:

This report provided details of how the Council had performed during quarter 2 in 2023/24 against the Council's three priorities and the actions being taken to improve performance. The report also presented the quarter 2 review of strategic risks.

There were 47 Council Plan measures for 2023/24, of which it was possible to report on 44 as the data for two measures were not available this quarter and one measure was data only. In summary, 21 out of the 45 measures reported to have met or

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exceeded target, seven were slightly below target and 16 were significantly below target.

The report was due to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees during November and December 2023.

**Decision
number:**

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the Q2 2023/24 performance against the measures used to monitor progress against the Council's priorities.

183/2023

The Cabinet agreed the Strategic Risk Summary set out at Appendix 4 to the report.

Reasons:

Regular monitoring of performance and risks by management and Members is best practice and ensures achievement of corporate objectives.

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Leader of the Council

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Date

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