

Record of Cabinet decisions

Tuesday, 30 July 2024

7.00pm to 8.34pm

Date of publication: 1 August 2024

Subject to call-in these decisions will be effective from 9 August 2024

Present:	Councillor Vince Maple	Leader of the Council
	Councillor Teresa Murray	Deputy Leader of the Council
	Councillor Simon Curry	Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration
	Councillor Nina Gurung	Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure
	Councillor Harinder Mahil	Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment
	Councillor Alex Paterson	Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement
	Councillor Louwella Prenter	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness
	Councillor Zoë Van Dyke	Portfolio Holder for Business Management
In Attendance:	Richard Hicks, Chief Executive	
	Mark Breathwick, Assistant Director, Culture and Community	
	Lee-Anne Farach, Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive	
	Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director, Legal and Governance	
	Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer	

Leader's Announcement

The Leader said that his thoughts were with everyone affected by the shocking recent stabbings that had taken place in Southport and of a soldier in Gillingham. The Leader thanked the following for their response to the latter - Kent Police, the Army, especially the Royal Engineers and South East Coast Ambulance. He also thanked Lauren Edwards MP and Medway Council officers for their support.

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The Leader congratulated local swimmer, Nathan Hales, who had recently won a gold medal at the Olympics and said that he would look for arrangements to be made for the Council to congratulate him.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Coombs and Councillor Price.

Record of decisions

The record of the meeting held on 9 July 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.

Cost of Living Crisis Response Plan 2024-2025

Background:

This report presented a refreshed Cost of Living Crisis Response Plan for 2024-2025, summarising the activity delivered to date along with plans for the coming year. The Plan was set out in Appendix 1, within Supplementary Cabinet Agenda No.1.

The report also sought delegated authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to explore Medway continuing with the ReferKent scheme which was currently being re-procured by Kent County Council. At this stage the cost was not known but was not expected to be significant, and for 2024-25 could potentially be funded from the Household Support Fund.

**Decision
number:**

Decision:

108/2024

The Cabinet approved the refreshed Cost of Living Crisis Response Plan 2024-25 for Medway, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

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109/2024 **The Cabinet delegated authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to continue the use of the ReferKent platform for Medway subject to the availability of a suitable budget.**

Reasons:

Approving a refreshed Cost of Living Crisis Response Plan 2024-2025 for Medway will continue to help ensure residents are aware of, and encouraged to, access all support and services available to help mitigate the cost of living crisis.

Revenue Budget Monitoring - Round 1 2024/25

Background:

This report presented the results of the first round of revenue budget monitoring 2024/25, based on returns submitted by individual budget managers.

The first round projected an overspend which the Council was not in a position to fund on the scale currently projected. The forecast outturn for 2024/25 currently represented a pressure of £16.473million. It was therefore necessary for the Council's senior managers and elected Members to implement urgent actions to bring expenditure back within the budget agreed by Full Council, or as a minimum to within that which could be funded from general reserves.

Decision number:

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the results of the first round of revenue budget monitoring for 2024/25.

110/2024 **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 - Round 1 2024/25

Background:

This report presented the results of the first round of the Council's capital budget monitoring process for 2024/25. The first round forecast a projected underspend within the Regeneration, Culture and Environment directorate of £4.665million. All

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other Services/Directorates were forecast to complete their capital schemes within the approved budget.

**Decision
number:**

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the results of the first round of capital budget monitoring for 2024/25.

111/2024

The Cabinet approved a virement of £500,000 from the projected underspend on the scheme at Victory Academy to the Greenacre Academy scheme to cover a projected overspend on that scheme.

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.

Treasury Management Outturn Annual Report 2023/24

Background:

This report provided an overview of treasury management activity during 2023/24. Throughout this period the Council had complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements.

The report had previously been considered by the Audit Committee on 15 July 2024, the comments of which were set out at section 12 to the report.

It was noted that a letter had been received from Jim McMahon, MP regarding national level audit issues that had been experienced in recent years. This would be shared with the Chief Operating Officer and the Chairperson of the Audit Committee.

**Decision
number:**

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the comments made by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 15 July 2024.

The Cabinet noted the Treasury Management Outturn Annual report.

Reasons:

Section 7.1 (e) of the Council's Financial Rules state that the Chief Operating Officer shall report to Cabinet and the Audit Committee not later than September on treasury management activities in the previous year.

Medway 2.0 Roadmap

Background:

This report sought approval for the proposed roadmap for Medway Council's Medway 2.0 transformation programme.

The report explained that the One Medway Financial Improvement and Transformation (FIT) Plan had been agreed by Cabinet on 30 April 2024. The Medway 2.0 Roadmap directly supported the delivery of the plan's targets by providing dedicated service design and improvement capability, which would enable services to streamline and improve their operations, in particular customer-facing activity. It was anticipated that the delivery of savings would be achieved over the four-year duration of the FIT Plan; the roadmap therefore looked beyond the current financial year (2024-2025). Medway 2.0 was about reimagining what Medway Council does, and how it does it.

The report had been previously considered by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 June 2024, the comments of which were set out at section 9 to the report.

Decision number:

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the comments of the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out at section 9 to the report.

112/2024

The Cabinet agreed the rationale, core principles, approach, timeline, and the resource needed to undertake the work outlined within the report.

113/2024

The Cabinet agreed the external and internal services and processes prioritised for discovery, set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

114/2024

The Cabinet approved the formation of a cross-party "Member User Testing Group" to allow Councillors to experience and beta-test new services that have been developed: as follows:

Reasons:

Agreeing a clear rationale, core principles, approach, and timeline will provide clarity to services about the Council's priorities and the principles for re-designing services, which were detailed within this report.

The formation of a cross-party "Member User Testing Group" will provide an informal opportunity for Councillors to experience and beta-test new services that have been developed, provide feedback, and see the progress that is being made in-between the formal reporting cycles.

Adoption of a Street Naming and Numbering Policy

Background:

This report sought approval of a new Street Naming and Numbering Policy, which aimed to:

- ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and national standards and guidelines for street naming and numbering;
- provide clear and comprehensive guidance for the council when carrying out its legal duties and responsibilities for creating unique and unambiguous addresses for every property in Medway;
- promote the use of street names and property names that had a local, historic or heritage significance, and avoid names that may cause confusion, offence, or inconvenience; and
- Increase transparency and accountability within street naming and numbering processes.

Decision number:

Decision:

115/2024	The Cabinet approved the draft Street Naming and Numbering Policy, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.
116/2024	The Cabinet delegated authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, to implement the policy and make any minor changes to the policy as necessary.
117/2024	The Cabinet agreed that, subject to the exemptions process set out within the policy, the Cabinet would be the decision maker for the use of names of recently deceased persons, who had given or been recognised for outstanding service to Medway and its communities, within the naming and numbering of streets and properties in Medway.
118/2024	The Cabinet agreed that it would be the decision maker in relation to considering and deciding on requests to alter an existing street name where there was at least two-thirds support for the proposal amongst affected council tax and business rate payers.

Reasons:

The Street Naming and Numbering Policy will provide clear and comprehensive guidance for the Council in carrying out its street naming and numbering functions, which are essential for the creation of unique and unambiguous addresses for every property in the authority.

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The policy will indirectly support the delivery of various public services, such as emergency response, postal delivery, utilities connection, electoral registration, council tax and non-domestic rates collection, and evidence-based decision making.

The policy will also promote the use of street names and property names that have a local, historic or heritage significance to the area, and avoid names that may cause confusion, offence, or inconvenience to the public.

The policy will ensure compliance with the relevant legislation, such as the County of Kent Act 1981, the Local Government Act 1972, the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 and the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023, as well as the national standards and guidelines, such as the British Standard for addressing, BS7666.

Regulator of Social Housing - Consumer Standards

Background:

This report outlined the changes to the regulatory regime of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) following the introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. It also provided a progress report on the action taken to date to review Medway Council's housing service to ensure that the Council operated within the RSH's regulatory framework.

The report also outlined the two regulatory standards that housing services were required to comply with, including highlighting key risks and mitigation strategies.

Decision number: **Decision:**

The Cabinet noted the report.

Reasons:

To ensure the Cabinet is informed of the changes to the regulatory regime of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and on the action taken to date to review Medway Council's housing service to ensure that the Council operates within the RSH's regulatory framework.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Performance 2023/24

Background:

This report provided an update on performance within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Landlord Services. This was an annual report, the contents of which were provided on a quarterly basis to the HRA Governance Group.

Ensuring that the Council has effective scrutiny and transparency of performance information in relation to its housing stocks and tenancy management was a fundamental part of complying with the new Consumer Standards, as set out by the Regulator for Social Housing on 29 February 2024 and effective from 1 April 2024.

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Cabinet would receive updates on a quarterly basis on HRA performance through the One Medway Council Plan going forward.

Decision number:

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the report.

Reasons:

Receiving this report ensures the Cabinet is fully updated in respect of performance within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Landlord Services.

Activity of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Governance Group

Background:

This report set out the Council's arrangements for governance of its Housing Revenue Account (HRA). An annual report was a commitment from the Terms of Reference agreed by the HRA Governance Group.

The report set out that the purpose of the Group was to "ensure good strategic management of the HRA, the scrutiny of key performance indicators and governance of decision making that will impact Medway Council's tenants and leaseholders. Driving improvement and ensuring that Medway Council is a benchmark for other providers".

The Group was supported by the Tenants' Panel that comprised 11 residents who were supported to provide scrutiny to HRA functions. The Group may also refer issues into the HRA Governance Group.

Decision number:

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the report.

Reasons:

This report ensures the Cabinet are fully informed about the activity of the HRA Governance Group and its impact.

Application of the Provider Selection Regime (PSR)

Background:

The Provider Selection Regime (PSR) came into force on 1 January 2024. This regime provided alternative procurement routes for health-based services that did not necessitate competitive procurement processes in all circumstances. The report set out the background to PSR and proposals as to how PSR should be applied at Medway.

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**Decision
number:**

Decision:

- 119/2024** **The Cabinet agreed that a threshold of £663,540 for health-based services would be applied as a procurement threshold for Gateway 1 and 3 reporting (the same level for other Gateway reporting).**
- 120/2024** **The Cabinet agreed that anything under this threshold would be initiated solely by the Category Management Engagement Form.**
- 121/2024** **The Cabinet agreed that a competitive process (current processes) should apply for all health-based services, unless the Cabinet approved an alternative approach presented in a GW1 report (business case) or there were other compelling reasons identified within the Category Management Engagement Form.**

Reasons:

This decision supports the Council's delivery of the FIT plan, enhances transparent decision making and embeds best values across all procurement activity.

Broadside Office Lease Renewal

Background:

This report sought delegated authority to complete the lease renewal for the Broadside Office as the agreed rent was in excess of £20,000 per annum, which was outside the employees delegated scheme.

An Exempt Appendix to the report contained commercially sensitive information in relation to the lease agreed.

**Decision
number:**

Decision:

- 122/2024** **The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, to sign and execute a new lease on the best terms reasonably obtainable as set out in the Exempt Appendix to the report.**

Reasons:

To ensure the provision of suitable office accommodation for the Children's Service after the existing lease expires on the 5th of August 2024.

Regional Care Co-Operative (RCC)

Background:

This report provided information on the development of the Regional Care Cooperative (RCC) Pathfinder which was a Department for Education (DfE) funded project to encourage local authorities (LAs) to work together more closely on the commissioning and procurement of placements for looked after children. The South East had been approved as a national pathfinder and the report sought approval for Medway to join the RCC Pathfinder for the South East.

Decision number:

Decision:

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| 123/2024 | The Cabinet agreed that Medway Council join the Regional Care Co-Operative Pathfinder and enter into relevant discussions and collaborations with DfE/other Local Authorities as appropriate. |
| 124/2024 | The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to finalise and enter into relevant agreements such as Partnership Agreements and Service Level Agreements that result from Medway's involvement in the Regional Care Co-Operative Pathfinder |
| 125/2024 | The Cabinet agreed to receive a further report on the development of the Regional Care Co-Operative later in the year when more detailed information about the implications and opportunities of the project for Medway Council are available |

Reasons:

Medway can benefit by working collaboratively on selected areas of development with other SE Local Authorities. Other South East authorities have agreed to join and being part of the RCC opens Medway up to further collaboration and funding opportunities over the next 2 years.

Redevelopment of Aut Even

Background:

This report sought to outline changes to original capital plans to develop a suite of in-house Children's Homes for Medway Council and proposes an updated direction of travel and costing proposals for the development of Aut Even, funded primarily from the DfE Regional Care Co-Operative Capital grant enabling the removal of borrowing agreed to fund the previous plans from the capital programme.

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**Decision
number:**

Decision:

126/2024

The Cabinet agreed to progress with the redevelopment of the Aut Even project as a specialist 5 bedroom home for young people with Learning Disabilities and Autism and neurodiversity at a total cost of £1,112,872.

127/2024

The Cabinet agreed to recommend to Full Council that the Redevelopment of Aut Even be added to the capital programme, funded from:

- the DFE Regional Care Co-Operative Grant of £912,872.**
- a virement of £200,000 from the Children’s Assessment Unit scheme in the existing capital programme, with the balance of £950,336 (funded from borrowing) removed from the capital programme.**

128/2024

The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive to enter into any legal agreements required to allow the Council to accept the DFE Regional Care Co-Operative Grant.

Reasons:

The renovation of Aut Even will provide specialist residential provisions for Medway, ensuring much needed high quality local capacity and allowing children to either remain in Medway or move back from other areas. Funding these works from grant will enable the removal of borrowing agreed to fund the previous plans from the capital programme.

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Leader of the Council

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Date

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