

REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Cabinet met on 12 June and 3 July 2012. Attendances:-

Councillor Jones (Chairman) (2)
Councillors Belsey (2), Bennett (2), Bentley (2), Elkin (2), Freebody (2), Glazier (2), Lock (2) and Maynard (2)

1 Council Plan 2011/12 Monitoring

1.1 The Cabinet has considered the Council Plan 2011/12 monitoring report and was pleased to note the following achievements:

Portfolio for Strategic Management and Economic Development

Our Local Broadband Plan, which details how we will work with partners to improve broadband speeds across the county and support the local economy was approved by Government. Investment in Broadband for East Sussex has reached £50 million. Two bids to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's 'Growing Places Fund' have been successful, subject to final checks; this will fund business infrastructure and office construction in Hastings, and could create over 1,000 jobs.

Portfolio for Community and Resources

We improved the energy management of buildings and street lighting, resulting in a 3% reduction in our carbon footprint and a saving of over 1,000 tonnes of CO₂. We have agreed a procurement partnership with Surrey County Council in principle, which it is hoped will deliver both a more strategic approach to procurement and savings.

Portfolio for Community Services

We acquired a building on Newhaven High Street which will become a modern library that will help to regenerate the town. Construction of the new Historical Resource Centre, 'The Keep', continues on time and within budget. Our library email alert service provides instant updates on the availability of items and has helped to improve the speed of our service to customers, and reduced printing and delivery costs.

Portfolio for Economy, Transport and Environment

Government announced provisional approval of £56 million grant funding for the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road; we are putting arrangements in place to allow main construction works to begin in 2013, with completion in December 2014, and the earliest possible delivery of the economic and social benefits to the area. The Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility is now fully operational. Compared to last year we landfilled less than half the amount of waste and sent 30,000 more tonnes of waste for energy recovery, generating approximately 68,000 megawatts of electricity.

Portfolio for Community Safety

Multi Agency Risk Conferences review cases of domestic violence, with the aim of reducing repeat victimisation; 17.6% of cases reviewed in 2011/12 were repeats, meeting our target of less than 28%. Latest data (quarter 3) shows that 61% (national average 47%) of adults receiving drug rehabilitation treatment and 58% (target 50%) of adults receiving treatment for alcohol related problems, completed their programme.

Portfolio for Children and Families

Only 11.2% of children with a child protection plan had that plan for more than 18 months, good performance in light of the continued high number of child protection plans. 8.8% of looked after children had three or more placements, better than the national average (10.7%) and a 0.9 percentage point improvement on 2010/11. The under 18 conception rate is 31.3 per 1,000 for 2010, a reduction on the 2009 rate of 35.1 per 1,000.

Portfolio for Learning and School Effectiveness

80.2% of young people have a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19 (2010/11 academic year), a 2.7 percentage point improvement on 2009/10. 91% of 16-17 years old are in education, employment or training and we have reduced the number with 'unknown' status to 2% of 16 year olds and 7.2% of 17 year olds.

Portfolio for Adult Social Care

16.6% (1,905) of the people we helped to live at home were aged 18-64 with a physical disability, 6.5% (750) were aged 18-64 with a learning disability, 8.1% (929) were aged 18-64 with mental ill health, and 68.8% (7,921) were aged 65 and over. We supported 57.7% (9,084) of service users through Self Directed Support, and 68.2% (2,098) of carers through Carers Grants. We have completed 62 extra care places in Eastbourne. 992 older people were at home 91 days after their discharge from hospital to intermediate care, out of a total of 1,129 people.

Performance Summary

2.2 The Cabinet considered a summary of performance for all Council Plan measures (Appendix 1 of the report to the Cabinet). Commentary was provided for all targets scored red or that are carry overs to Quarter 1 of 2012/13, i.e. end of year outturn is currently unavailable. The Savings Monitoring considered by the Cabinet was attached as Appendix 2.

2.3 The Council has made good progress in 2011/12 despite having to make significant savings. We have focused on minimising any negative impact on service users and this is evidenced by the targets achieved. Appendix 1 shows, where available, the year end position for all 147 Council Plan 2011/12 measures and the direction of travel from 2010/11 or latest previous comparable year.

2.4 Of the 147 targets: 110 (74.8%) were achieved, 26 (17.7%) were not achieved, 11 (7.5%) are carry overs. Results at year end 2010/11 were, 177 targets: 75.1% achieved, 21.5% not achieved and 3.4% carry overs; after carry overs reported results were 77.4% achieved and 22.6% not achieved.

2.5 Of the 136 known outturns, 78 can be compared to the previous year. Of these 54 (69.2%) have improved, 11 (14.1%) showed no change and 13 (16.7%) deteriorated. At year end 2010/11 63.2% of measures had improved compared to the previous year, 17.9% had shown no change and 18.9% had deteriorated.

2.6 Ofsted judged both our Adoption and Fostering Services as 'outstanding', and our Children's Services as performing well. We achieved significant improvements in GCSE results; agreed a £500 million four year Capital Programme aimed at economic regeneration and growth to help local people and communities; and established shadow arrangements for health provision before full implementation in 2012/13. The number of adults and older people receiving self directed support in 2011/12 has risen by 17.42 percentage points; this is a significant improvement on already good results for 2010/11, when our performance was 17th highest of 150 councils and significantly above the national average. Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility became fully operational in autumn 2011 and has already halved the amount of wasted sent to landfill.

2.7 The budgeted savings target for 2011/12, excluding reductions in specific grants, was £27.7 million. We missed our planned savings target by £0.2 million, but planned mitigating actions have been identified that generated a further £1.9 million resulting in a final position which exceeds the target by £1.7 million. Members will be aware that the provisional outturn on the overall budget showed an underspend of £12.67 million.

2 Rationalisation of Children's Centres

2.1 The proposal to merge 4 pairs of Children's Centres was taken forward separately from our ongoing fundamental review of Children's Centre provision. The review of Children's Centre provision which will be concluded in July is focusing on whether our current service offer is enabling us to achieve the County Council's desired outcomes for the provision of service for 0-5 year olds and their families. The decision in relation to the merger of children's centres will not fetter any proposals arising from the review. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to consult on any significant change to Children's Centres. A consultation plan in relation to the proposal to merge four pairs of children's centres was developed and consultation activity took place during March and April 2012. A wide range of stakeholders were consulted, including service users, health practitioners and local members.

2.2 The overwhelming feedback from Centre users was that they valued the services at their local Centre and were anxious that services might be withdrawn. The consultation events that took place enabled staff to talk directly with parents. Service providers and staff were able to offer reassurances that the existing groups and activities could be sustained but co-ordinated from the neighbouring Centre. The absence of a Centre based staff team was not the focus of concern. Some parents pointed out the advantages for some of attending groups at smaller venues where the atmosphere is different and less confident children find it easier to participate. Concerns expressed about increased numbers in groups will be monitored. The important thing was that the group they attend continues to be available. (The consultation report was attached as appendix 2 to the report considered by the Cabinet)

2.3 One issue that attracted a high level of response was the accommodation of the Oaks After School Club at the Dunbar Drive Children's Centre. Staff at the club reported that they are unable to find alternative accommodation and may be forced to close if they were unable to continue to use the Centre. The Dunbar Drive Centre is

adjacent to a social care building and has been identified as a potential venue for an increased number of supervised contact sessions for Looked After Children. The consultation event at Dunbar Drive provided an opportunity for Children’s Centre staff to discuss the situation with managers from the club and it was agreed that further conversations would take place to either support Oaks to find an alternative venue or to agree continued accommodation within the Children’s Centre in partnership with other users including social care.

2.4 The Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 3 of the report considered by the Cabinet) identified that proactive measures will need to be taken to communicate the mergers with minority ethnic groups and families with disabilities. There is a potential for positive impact in relation to outreach activity, through improved sharing of best practice.

2.5 Children’s Centres are working with families to shape services that effectively respond to local needs. Families have told us that a familiar face at the Centre is important in breaking down barriers to accessing support. Feedback from parents/carers about the importance of good relationships with staff has led to the development of a Centre based team structure which we began in July 2011. However, the cost of implementing this across all 35 Centres is prohibitive. After careful consideration of the financial implications of a Centre based team model and a re-consideration of Government guidance on how many children under 5 a designated Centre should support, it was proposed that the number of discrete, separately designated Children’s Centres in East Sussex be decreased by 4 from 35 to 31 by merging 4 pairs of Children’s Centres.

2.6 The merging of 4 pairs of Children’s Centres will not have a significant effect on the provision of services as it is proposed to maintain current services by naming the merged Centres as satellites to the hub Centre, detailed below. This would not require additional centre based staff teams, as practitioners would travel to the Centre from the hub to facilitate activities. Through the merging of these centres, the County Council will be able to ensure a higher proportion of budget is spent on the delivery of front line services.

Current separately designated Centres	Proposed merged Centre hub
Shinewater, Eastbourne	Shinewater*
West Rise, Eastbourne	
Pebsham, Bexhill	Sidley*
Sidley, Bexhill	
Battle, Rother	Battle*
Robertsbridge, Rother	
Hailsham East, Wealden	Hailsham East*
Dunbar Drive, Wealden	

* the names of newly merged Centres would be consulted on locally

2.7 The Cabinet has agreed to the merger of 4 pairs of Centres (as outlined in the table above) and that the Department for Education be informed that East Sussex will be decreasing its compliment of designated Children’s Centres from 35 to 31. In response to feedback, services that are currently offered at the 4 merged Centres will be sustained as outreach activity from the neighbouring hub Centre. The projected

savings achieved by not needing to implement the Centre based team structure in the 4 merged Centres will be approximately £130,000.

3 Dementia – caring for people with challenging needs

3.1 The Cabinet has considered a report of the Adult Social Care and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee on its review of dementia – caring for people with challenging needs. The report is included elsewhere on the agenda (see agenda item 7). The Scrutiny report has previously been circulated to all members.

3.2 The aim of the review was to assess the capacity and capability of homecare services and care homes to provide effective care for people who develop challenging behaviour due to dementia.

3.3 In welcoming the findings of the Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet has considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care (as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, circulated separately to all members) on the specific recommendations and endorsed it as its response to the recommendations. The actions outlined in the action plan provide an opportunity to improve how statutory agencies across health and social care identify and subsequently support those with dementia. This will benefit both those with dementia and their carers.

3.3 The Cabinet, in welcoming the report, recommends the County Council to –

- ☆ approve the response of the Director of Adult Social Care on the implementation of the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee’s report

4 School Exclusions

4.1 The Cabinet has considered a report of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee on its review of school exclusions. The report is included elsewhere on the agenda (see agenda item 8). The Scrutiny report has previously been circulated to all members.

4.2 The Scrutiny Review has provided a useful insight into the pertinent issues that relate to exclusion from school and school management, including governance. A number of issues arise from the initial findings of the Scrutiny Committee’s report in relation to school leadership, governance and the ongoing role for the Children’s Services Department and the County Council in providing a steer for schools in respect of children who are vulnerable to disaffection and exclusion.

4.3 In welcoming the findings of the Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet has considered a report by the Director of Children’s Services (as set out in Appendix 2 to this report, circulated separately to all members) on the specific recommendations and endorsed it as its response to the recommendations. The actions outlined in the action plan provide an opportunity to refocus attention on some important aspects of the inclusion agenda and to highlight to schools areas of significant disparity between their practice and the national norm.

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- 4.4 The Cabinet, in welcoming the report, recommends the County Council to –
- ✧ approve the response of the Director of Children's Services on the implementation of the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee's report

3 July 2012

PETER JONES
Chairman