

REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Cabinet met on 11 June 2013 and 5 July 2013. Attendances:-

Councillor Glazier (Chairman) (2)
Councillors Bennett (2), Bentley (2), Chris Dowling (1), Elkin (2),
Maynard (2), Simmons (2) and Tidy (2)

1. Council Plan Monitoring: year end 2012/13

1.1 The Cabinet considered a report which set out the Council's position at year end 2012/13 for Council Plan targets, provisional outturn for revenue and capital, and risks.

1.2 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 (SI 2011 No 817) require that local authorities' financial statements must be certified by 30 June and the Statement of Accounts must be published by 30 September following the audit of the Statement, which will be undertaken by BDO (Accounts) and KPMG (Use of Resources).

Monitoring Summary

1.3 148 performance targets are reported at year end: 110 (74.3%) were achieved, 34 (23.0%) were not achieved, and 4 (2.7%) are carry overs.

1.4 Of the 144 targets with an outturn, 71 can be compared to previous performance. Of these, 47 (66.2%) have improved, 8 (11.3%) showed no change, and 16 (22.5%) deteriorated.

1.5 Appendix 1 of the report, previously circulated to all Members shows, where available, the year end position for all Council Plan 2012/13 targets and the direction of travel from 2011/12 or latest comparable year. Commentary is provided for all targets rated red or carry over. Key successes and achievements are provided below; target references are also included below e.g. 2.01b.

1.6 There is a provisional net underspend of £11.99m on the Revenue Budget (Appendix 2 of the report previously circulated to all Members) (3.3% of the current budget, 2.01b). There is an underspend of £1.98m on the Dedicated Schools Grant. This grant is ring-fenced, therefore the funds have been transferred to a specific reserve and will be carried forward to 2013/14 for consideration and allocation by the Schools' Forum. Chief Officer commentaries on their departmental positions and issues are set out at Appendix 3 of the report previously circulated. The £19m savings planned for

2012/13 were achieved, details are provided in Appendix 6 of the report previously circulated.

1.7 The overall position for the Capital Programme is set out at Appendix 5 of the report previously circulated to all Members. There is a variation of £13.0m against gross expenditure on a programme of £126.5m.

Key Issues

1.8 In Children's Social Care the THRIVE programme has made significant progress with reductions in referrals, assessments and Child Protection Plans (6.01a). Further improvements are expected in 2013/14. Reduced pressures and a range of underspends across Children's Services mean that the £2.5m spent on THRIVE activities in 2012/13 has been met from the Children's Services annual budget with no need to draw on the reserves earmarked for THRIVE. The total Children's Services underspend for the full year is £0.18m.

1.9 We made good progress against our attainment targets: we narrowed the gaps in attainment for Early Years and Free School Meal (FSM) pupils (7.01a, d, f); a higher proportion of pupils achieved level 4 or above in both English and maths at Key Stage 2 (7.01b); and we exceeded our targets for progress of Looked After Children (LAC) in maths between Key Stages 1 and 2 (6.03b), and in English between Key Stages 2 and 4 (6.03c).

1.10 There is a net underspend of £5.32m in Adult Social Care, of which £0.99m is attributable to Community Safety and Supporting People underspends. Other underspends are £3.0m within independent sector care budgets and £1.4m within Directly Provided Services, and Management and Support. This reflects the good progress made in implementing new ways to deliver services e.g. clients receiving self directed support up to 74% (8.01b), and direct payments up to 24.3% (8.01c). More people are being helped to live independently (8.03c, d, e), although we still aim to reduce delayed transfer of care from hospitals (8.03a, b).

1.11 Whilst there was a net overspend of £751k on highways, the condition of our principal and non-principal roads improved (4.01a, b). As expected, unclassified roads (4.01d), not prioritised for maintenance have deteriorated following another cold, wet winter. We continue to deploy additional resources to deal with potholes and we are developing plans to improve the condition of C and unclassified roads (risk Strat-10).

1.12 Major infrastructure improvements are progressing despite in year delays; legal challenges to the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road caused a £2.9m slippage in capital spend, but the target is back on track (1.01f); and the Newhaven Transport Interchange (1.01b) is now expected to be constructed in 2013/14.

1.13 Other key variations to the Capital Programme include:

- Adult Social Care: slippage of £2m on Warwick House, the result of delays due to adverse weather conditions, but the Council Plan target (3.02b) has been met for this year; and £1m slippage on Extra Care/Supported Accommodation due to delays with planning permission being granted.
- Economy, Transport and Environment: underspend of £1.3m on Sidley Depot, reflecting the revised depot rationalisation plan and decision to develop alternative sites.
- Corporate Resources: £1.1m slippage on ICT Strategy Implementation, the result of a more informed understanding of requirements and links with projects e.g. Agile (2.06d).
- Children's Services: there has been a change in profile for both expenditure (£1.56m) and income (£1.42m) in relation to Hastings Academy – both amounts slipping to 2013/14, though the project is still expected to complete by the planned date.

1.14 Other notable progress:

- The broadband plan was approved and the delivery contract awarded (1.01e).
- The integration of Public Health with the County Council is complete (1.02c, 3.01d).
- SE7 contributions to savings of £0.3m, although below target, were significant (1.02a).
- Increased satisfaction levels in libraries where we have made improvements (3.02c).
- The Keep historical resource centre constructed and searchable online database in development (3.04a, b).
- Although the target for waste sent to landfill has been missed (4.03b), there has been a reduction in landfill usage since 2011/12, and the volume of waste recycled (4.03c) and incinerated for energy recovery (4.03d) has increased.
- Work with the Police and Crime Commissioner has progressed well (5.01c, d, e).
- Children's Services made good progress with the SEND pathfinder pilot, exceeding the Government's expectations even though our ambitious target (6.05c) for new support plans was not met.

1.15 The frozen base interest rate is having consequences for the treasury management budget, however, matters such as slippage in the Capital Programme and the Revenue Budget underspend mean there is a projected underspend of £4.4m. This includes £1.3m released by reviews of provisions and reserves in closing the accounts.

Reserves and Underspend

1.16 The Council's reserves policy is to maintain general balances at 2.25% of net expenditure, hence the movement into general reserves of £0.595m from the underspend. In implementing the new reserves policy approved by Cabinet and Council, business cases for use of the underspend in future years have been considered and agreed by the Corporate Management Team (CMT). Appendix 4 of the report previously circulated shows the approved sums and the allocation of the provisional underspend at the end of 2012/13 to the Strategic Reserves.

Risk Register

1.17 The strategic risk register is at Appendix 7 of the report previously circulated to all Members. Two new 'high risks' have been added, risk 11 (school governance changes) and risk 10 (potholes). The latter replaces the previous risk 9 (conditions of roads) to help better reflect the specific challenges currently being experienced. Risk 4 (ineffective corporate support functions) has been deleted as the consolidation process approaches a conclusion. Likelihood scores for risks 5 (staff motivation), 1 (resource reductions) and 3 (capital programme) have been reduced from 3 to 2 and has increased from 3 to 4 for risk 6 (health changes).

1.18 The Cabinet has welcomed the following successes and achievements:

Strategic Management and Economic Development

Planning conditions have been signed off to enable the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road scheme to progress in April. Rural businesses and organisations across East Sussex are set to benefit from a massive £1 million funding boost. We have approved grants for nine projects put forward by businesses, organisations, groups, a college and a local council through our Rural Growth and Employment Fund (RuGEF). The grants and loans will be used to help set up new businesses or expand existing ones, create new jobs and support training. An innovative and creative approach to local public sector communications in the South East has moved a step closer thanks to a new agreement between East Sussex County Council and Medway Council. Our website has once again received top marks in a national survey. The website – eastsussex.gov.uk – is one of just 37 in the country to get the coveted four star rating, out of 474 local authority websites surveyed by the Society of IT Managers (SOCTIM). The website typically gets about 300,000 visits and 1,000,000 page views every month. It was redesigned early last year with a focus on enabling people to access popular services such as reserving a library book, quickly and easily.

Community and Resources

In February, the County Council approved a freeze on council tax for the third year in a row; and huge capital funding for economic development, roads,

schools and broadband. The Council has agreed its budget for 2013/14 and is sticking to its plans to boost economic prosperity, keep a lid on council tax and make £60 million worth of revenue savings over the next three years. First time buyers are set to be given help to get on the property ladder, thanks to a Council-backed mortgage scheme. Subject to full council approval, we will now look for partnerships with district and borough councils who will contribute extra funding.

Community Services

We have significantly improved resident satisfaction following improvements to library buildings and facilities for communities. Initial results for the question 'taking everything into account, what do you think of this library?' show that our satisfaction rating for those who opted for very good or good, rose from 89% overall to 91% overall. In particular, where we opened new libraries and significantly improved buildings the resulting increases in satisfaction rates are impressive: (i) Forest Row achieved 93% (up 16%), (ii) Wadhurst achieved 99% (up 31%) and (iii) Rye now at 95% (up 24%) on the 2009 survey. Wi-fi has been enabled at Eastbourne, Lewes and Rye libraries. We have completed main construction work at the Keep and the internal fit out is well under way. Outside, trees and shrubs are being planted with grassy areas including a butterfly bank and an outdoor seating area. Late Spring/early Summer will see handover of the building take place, after which the transfer of the archives will begin. Our sample survey of birth and death registrations showed an excellent satisfaction rating with our service. Of the 252 responses 96% were 'very satisfied' and 4% 'satisfied'.

Transport and Environment

We have fixed 30,000 potholes since January, and Highways crews in East Sussex resurfaced roads equivalent to an area of more than 75 football pitches in the past year. Resurfacing schemes carried out during the year include a major project to resurface a 10-mile stretch of the A22 between Uckfield and Polegate, including work on the Hailsham bypass. During the winter period, our gritters travelled 65,569 miles of road (equivalent to travelling around the world 2.5 times). A new 'green' plan for dealing with waste and minerals could lead to the need for landfill in the East Sussex area virtually disappearing within three years. The blueprint has been adopted by East Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council and the South Downs National Park Authority. The Joint Waste Collection Contract is now in place saving £30 million (the majority of which is for the Borough and District Councils) over ten years. The free 'East Sussex Walks' app which was 100% externally funded can now be downloaded onto smart phones or tablets and includes a number of beautiful circular countryside walks to follow. Construction of Eastbourne Seafront Cycle Scheme is now complete. The successful transfer and integration of the Hastings on street parking function to NSL and East Sussex County Council from Hastings Borough Council Parking. A cross authority service review was completed with agreement to establish a joint team providing emergency planning

services for Wealden, Lewes, Eastbourne, and Hastings Councils, and East Sussex County Council including Public Health.

Community Safety

The Police and Crime Commissioner has published their Safer in Sussex Police and Crime Plan for 2013/17 which aims to reduce the risk of crime in Sussex. A programme of domestic abuse risk assessment training commenced across the council. In quarter 4 all senior practitioners in Adult Social Care were trained to improve the identification of those most at risk of harm. The outcome 'improved wellbeing, confidence, and resilience of people at risk of significant harm from anti-social behaviour or targeted harassment' has been included in the Commissioning Grants Prospectus, which was published in February.

Children and Families

There has been particularly good performance in terms of reduction in referrals, social care assessments, Child Protection (CP) Plans, and initiated care proceedings. Demand is reducing and savings are being realised as a result. Our investment in Social Care and Early Help practice is also showing positive results. The implementation of the Screening Hub has had a significant impact on the referrals and further drops are expected for 2013/14 as this approach embeds further. The Family Assessment (as a single assessment process) has further enabled us to reduce assessment activity more quickly than anticipated. The reduction in the number and rate of children with Child Protection (CP) plans is a key success. Higher quality assessments, consultation with SWIFT (Specialist Family Services), reduced caseloads, emphasis on relationship based practice, and social workers working with families to achieve change, have all contributed to the reduction of new CP plans and ceasing of plans. We have achieved a reduction in the number of Looked After Children (LAC) as part of the THRIVE agenda, from 622 in 2011/12 to 596 in 2012/13. We have achieved this through:

- a reduction in the number of care proceedings
- robust thresholds for 13+ admissions
- improved performance in adoption matches

86% of children designated as school action have achieved two levels of progress between KS1 and KS2 in English; this is 6 percentage points above the outturn for the previous academic year. This is a key achievement as we continue to support teachers to work with children who have special educational needs.

Learning and School Effectiveness

Key Stage 2 free school meals (FSM) pupils' performance is very positive with the FSM/non-FSM gap narrowing by 5% to 20%. This was a direct result of an improvement in attainment of Key Stage 2 FSM pupils. The proportion that

achieved level 4 or above (expected level for 11 year olds) in English and maths improved by 10%, and now stands at 60%. This continues a very encouraging 3 year improving trend. The 14 primary schools which were directly targeted and supported by the Standards and Learning Effectiveness Service (SLES) closed the gap by 17.5%, from 33.1% in 2011 to 15.6% in 2012 compared to a closing of the gap by 5% for all East Sussex schools. 302 clients have had cases closed having had a Targeted Youth Support (TYS) intervention since 1 April 2012, and none of those are currently accommodated by the Local Authority; achieving a 100% outturn, against a target of >85%. The total of First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System for 2012/13 (as of April 2013) is 139, therefore achieving an end of year reduction of 76% on the 2010/11 baseline year. The introduction of Community Resolution has had the effect of diverting young people from entering the criminal justice system and has accounted for a drop in FTE. We have also seen a drop due to the Targeted Youth Support Referral Pathway.

Adult Social Care

In 2012/13 we have supported 74.0% (14,466) of clients and carers through Self Directed Support, against a target of 60%. Initial results from the recent Adult Social Care Survey show that 66.1% of respondents who use services were either extremely or very satisfied with their care and support. This has exceeded the target of >65.4%. In 2012/13, 88.6% of older people discharged from hospital to reablement services were at home 91 days after their discharge from hospital, against a target of >87%. STEPS (a free and confidential housing support service, which can visit people at home, and help them work out what support they personally need to keep living independently) has worked with a total of 1,707 people to help them maintain independent living, against a target of 1,050 people.

2. Street works on the highways of East Sussex

2.1 The Cabinet, on 11 June 2013, considered a report of the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee on its review of street works on the highways of East Sussex. The report is included elsewhere on the agenda (see agenda item 6). The Scrutiny report has previously been circulated to all members.

2.2 The Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee established a review to consider the considerable disruption to road users, local residents and businesses caused by the street works associated with maintenance and improvement of the road network and the utility distribution networks.

2.3 In welcoming the findings of the Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet has considered a report by the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment (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 bring a clear focus

on the importance of road reinstatement and the effect utility company workings have on the overall condition of the road network, resulting in the launch of a code of conduct with utility companies to enable all customers to receive consistent information about roadworks regardless of who is undertaking them.

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

- Y approve the response of the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment on the implementation of the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee's report

3. South East 7: Update

3.1 The Cabinet, on 11 June 2013, considered a report of the Chief Executive on the work of the South East 7 (SE7) Councils which have committed to explore collaborative opportunities to improve the quality of services and to achieve efficiency savings. Cabinet Members and Chief Officers represent ESCC at SE7 meetings and are working to ensure the delivery of maximum benefits for ESCC.

3.2 The SE7 Conference took place at Sandown Park Racecourse in Surrey on 7 March 2013 with over 270 delegates attending from across local and central government, private sector and partner organisations. The event which was chaired by Heather Jameson (Editor, The MJ magazine) included speeches from Cllr. Jones (former Leader of ESCC) and Cllr. Hodge (Leader, Surrey County Council) and insights from industry speakers. Information stands and break out workshops provided details on the ambition and activities of the SE7 workstreams. Other partners, including district and borough colleagues, contributed to workshops in order to promote their examples of successful partnership working and to strengthen their involvement in SE7 workstreams. The Rt. Hon Eric Pickles MP (Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government) delivered the closing address. Sponsorship of £3,000 from May Gurney was provided for the conference. ESCC's contribution was £2,090 (equivalent to £7.60 per delegate). The event significantly raised the profile and standing of SE7.

3.3 Updates on the five active workstreams were given to Leaders and Chief Executives at the last SE7 meeting on 13 March 2013 (details of the workstreams, their objectives and progress were attached as Appendix 2 of the report to Cabinet, previously circulated to all Members).

3.4 The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) workstream (led by ESCC) continues to influence national thinking through the Department for Education's (DfE)/Department of Health's (DH) SEND Pathfinder programme. The Bill had its second reading on 25 February 2013 and is now in the Committee Stage. It has been confirmed that the Pathfinder Programme has been extended until September 2014. SE7 have been successful in being

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chosen to become a Pathfinder Champion and have been asked to work in the wider south east region in partnership with Southampton. SE7 have also been asked to supplement the Pathfinder Champion work in London as it is a large region consisting of 33 Local Authorities and has only 4 Pathfinder areas (two of which are a partnership). There will also be a national role for SE7. Further information is awaited on all of these strands.

3.5 It was agreed that the Waste workstream business case would include options setting out the options for Joint Venture and Trading Company approaches to the future of waste management.

3.6 Steve Clow (Hampshire County Council) presented an update on the Property Services Cluster (Surrey, Hampshire, Reading and West Sussex), setting out the method used to achieve savings on capital programmes. ESCC, Brighton & Hove City Council, Kent County Council and Medway Councils will discuss the learning and consider the potential to replicate the Property Services Cluster approach.

3.7 Issues with the Highways Agency (HA) were discussed. Leaders agreed to write to Patrick McLoughlin, Secretary of State for Transport, with a formal invitation to enter into discussions about the transfer of some HA powers to the SE7 councils. The Highways workstream will coordinate this.

3.8 The SE7 has been sharing information on our individual approaches to Academies and free schools. Medway Council will prepare a paper on SE7 approaches to trading services and potential opportunities for the partnership for the meeting in June. The paper will set out the services that are currently provided to schools, what the legal duties are for providing the services, and options for provision in the future.

3.9 Councillor Glazier was appointed Chair of the partnership at the meeting of Leaders and Chief Executives on 26 June 2013.

3.10 The workstreams will continue to implement their action plans and will update on progress at the June meeting.

3.11 Where decisions need to be made which impact on service delivery across the Council, formal endorsement will be sought through Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources and other relevant governance mechanisms.

3.12 The Cabinet recommends the County Council to –

- Y note that the work of the SE7 continues to progress well and is fulfilling its remit to deliver service improvements and achieve savings.

4. Ashdown Forest Trust

4.1 At its meeting on 5 July 2013 the Cabinet considered the Ashdown Forest Trust's Income and Expenditure Account for 2012/13 and Balance sheets as at 31 March 2013. The Income and Expenditure Account shows an annual deficit in 2012/13 of £30, 996 compare with a projected deficit of £31,980 reported to Cabinet on 29 January 2013.

4.2 The main source of income was the rent from Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club, which is £70,000 per annum. Most of the expenditure relates to the grants paid to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest, being £65,1000 annual grant and additional one-off grants of £25,000 and £8,800 approved during 2012/13 to contribute to the purchase of a new tractor and consultancy advice regarding the development of the visitor centre. The accumulated General Reserve totalled £173,988 at 31 March 2013.

4.3 A formal annual report and statement of accounts will be compiled in accordance with the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practice. The accounts will be independently examined before being submitted to the Charity Commission by 31 January 2014.

Keith Glazier
(Chairman)

5 July 2013