

THE CABINET

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Luttrell Room, County Hall, Taunton, on Monday 11 June 2018 at 10am.

PRESENT

Cllr D Fothergill (in the Chair)

Cllr M Chilcott
Cllr D Hall
Cllr D Huxtable
Cllr C Lawrence
Cllr F Purbrick
Cllr J Woodman

Junior Cabinet members:
Cllr G Fraschini
Cllr M Pullin

Other Members present: Cllr S Coles, Cllr J Hunt, Cllr M Lewis, Cllr J Lock, Cllr L Redman, Cllr A Wedderkopp

Apologies for absence: Cllr F Nicholson

97 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – agenda item 2

Members of the Cabinet declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a District, City/Town or Parish Council:

Cllr M Chilcott	West Somerset District Council
Cllr J Woodman	Sedgemoor District Council

Junior Cabinet Members declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a District, City/Town or Parish Council:

Cllr M Pullin	Mendip District Council
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98 **Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 May 2018** - agenda item 3

The Cabinet agreed the minutes and the Chair signed these as a correct record of the proceedings.

99 **Public Question Time (PQT)** – agenda item 4

No members of the public had registered to speak.

100 **Capital Investment Programme 2017/18 – Outturn Report** - agenda item 5

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott, introduced the report, highlighting: the report detailed the financial aspects of the Capital Investment Programme for the 2017/18 financial year including a £1.352m underspend; the report detailed investment in both assets and infrastructure; and that £7.632m of capital receipts had been generated during the year. Cllr Chilcott further noted that Appendix A details the programmes achievements, Appendix B specifies actual expenditure, and Appendix C details future approvals.

The Director of Finance and Performance, Kevin Nacey, noted the importance of generating further capital receipts to fund future proposals.

Further points raised in debate included: the qualification measures for Innovation Centres, and the inactive proposals list; the Small Improvements Scheme (SIS) managed overspend, and alternative funding sources; and the importance of S106 monies to aid school developments.

In response to the points raised in debate, the Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner, Paula Hewitt, noted that: there is a network of both Innovation and Enterprise centres across the county which offer space for small 'start-up' business, primarily in rural areas; and that it was hoped the further centres would be developed. The Director of Finance and Performance, noted the Small Improvement Schemes programme is on-going and so any overspend would be subsidised from future years funding allocations.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill, requested Cllr Leigh Redman be sent a written response to his question regarding the SIS managed overspend.

Cllr Fothergill summarised the points raised by Members and highlighted the level of financial investment detailed in the paper.

Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion the Cabinet resolved to:

- Approve the supplements and virements as detailed in Section 2.2.2 and Section 2.2.3 and Appendix C
- Approve the managed 2017/18 overspends in the 2018/19 Capital Investment Programme as detailed in Section 2.9

The Cabinet further noted the contents of this report.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

The Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee, Cllr Mike Lewis, requested details of the SIS schemes approvals and financial spend be available for consideration at the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee meeting scheduled to take place on Tuesday 11th June.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott, introduced the report, noting: the report detailed the outturn position at the end of the 2017/18 financial year; and that there was a £2.18m overspend, which equated to 0.7% a variation. Cllr Chilcott further noted: concern at the Children's Services overspend, highlighting the importance of a sustainable budget; that the aged debt provision was improving; increased income including business rates; LGA assistance; and that the recent Peer Review highlighted that the Council has a track record of delivering core objectives.

Further points raised in debate included: the levels of reserves and associated risks; the importance of considering the Children's Services baseline budget; staffing underspends; the importance of robust budget management; transport budget overspends; home to school transport in West Somerset; the West Somerset Opportunity Fund; Children's Services funding at other local authorities; the Children's Social Care budget and associated mechanisms for reporting LGA assistance; the importance of transparently reporting work with the LGA; the Learning Disability operations overspend; using reserves to 'write-off' overspends; and provision for Learning Disability staff redundancies.

The Chief Executive, Patrick Flaherty; the Director of Finance and Performance, Kevin Nacey; the Director of Adult Social Services, Stephen Chandler; the Director of Children's Services, Julian Wooster; and the HR and OD Director, Chris Squire, responded to the points raised in debate, noting: the reserves held by the Council had previously been lower, and that currently most services were underspending; that the staffing underspend was as a result of both planned vacancies and some recruitment difficulties; that recruitment to key front line roles and apprenticeships was continuing; consideration of home to school transport costs, with reference to rural and urban areas; that additional funding had been allocated to Children's Services for the 2019/20 and 2010/21 financial years; work to change Children's services cost drivers and to adjust budgets accordingly; that 'good performing' local authorities were also reporting Children's Services overspends; that the LGA was providing sector experts at no cost to SCC; the new SLT process for tracking all financial challenges; the importance of looking for good practice exemplars from elsewhere; and that no Learning Disability staff redundancies were expected as a result of the reported overspend.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott, highlighted: the importance of fairer funding for rural authorities; setting realistic financial budgets and targets; and the importance of establishing an accurate baseline in areas reporting a budget overspend.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill, summarised the points raised in debate, noting: the £2.18m budget overspend was unacceptable; work to reduce the overspend; and the LGA Peer Review. The Leader further thanked finance officers for their work.

Following consideration of the officer report and discussion the Cabinet resolved:

1. To note the contents of this report and the outturn position for the year and approve carry forward requests of £0.999m to be used against future commitments (Section 4);
2. To agree specific requests to write off overspends to the General Reserves totalling £12.660m (Section 2, Table 2 and appendices) and the future use of the reserves (Section 5, Table 4 and 5).

The Cabinet further resolved:

To note the transfer back to General Reserves of £9.480m from underspends (Section 2, Table 2 and Section 5, Table 4);

To note the treatment of the £17.416m Schools Budget balance, as approved by the Schools Forum (Section 3);

In addition, the Cabinet noted the Aged Debt Analysis as shown within Section 6.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

102 **Corporate Performance Report – End of March 2018 (Q4)** – agenda item 7

The Director of Corporate Affairs, Simon Clifford, introduced the report, noting: the endorsement of the County Vision; finalising the Business Plan which supports the vision; the proposed new performance reporting framework; that 'Managing our Business' was currently the only area rated as red; and the only area which was showing declining performance was 'Working with our Public' which was due to the transformation of the Contact Centre.

Further points raised in debate included: the completion of Adult Social Care leadership training; the work of the TAP Programme; paperless working; and the importance of robust budget planning and monitoring.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill, noted the Contact Centres excellent work.

The Director of Children's Services, Julian Wooster, highlighted that OFSTED has noted the work of the Contact Centre was both excellent and outstanding. The Director of Corporate Affairs, Simon Clifford, noted that the Contact Centre was currently being judged for a Contact Centre of the Year Award.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott, noted that: much of the Council's work was needs driven, making budget forecasting very difficult; and the importance of preventative work.

Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion the Cabinet:

1. Considered and commented on the information contained within this report specifically those areas identified as a potential concern under Section 3.0 of this report and the 'Issues for Consideration' section of Appendix A.

2. Considered that the proposed management actions are adequate to improve performance to the desired level.

3. Agreed this report and Appendix A as the latest position for Somerset County Council against its County Plan.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

103 **County Council Business Plan 2018-19** – agenda item 8

The Chief Executive, Patrick Flaherty, introduced the report, noting: the County Vision sign-off; the importance of clearly setting out what the Council wants to achieve; and identifying barriers and measuring success. The Chief Executive further noted that the Business plan: did not include setting a specified budget; was a living document; would be supported by a series of service plans; and was an open and transparent pledge.

The Service Manager – Commissioning Development, Alastair Higon, added to the points highlighted by the Chief Executive, noting: the plan is multi layered and interactive; and would also allow staff to access services plans. In addition, the Cabinet were informed that a new colour pallet was being developed.

Further points raised in debate included: support for the look and feel of the plan; the importance of policies being available and accessible to the public; the importance of the colour pallet used; the use of SharePoint; the importance of including aspirational elements; the relationship with the work of the Council's contact centre; reviewing and updating the Council's website; flooding and the new Killams development in Taunton; renewable energy use at County Hall; and the potential to include a 'how to' help guide.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill, highlighted the amended recommendations as detailed in the supplemental paper.

Following consideration of the officer report, appendix and discussion the Cabinet resolved to:

1. Approve the Business Plan (set out in Appendix A), as amended by the supplemental paper, as the County Council's vehicle for delivering the County Council Vision, subject to:
 - a. Activity not yet approved through the Council's decision-making processes (including financial requirements) remains

- aspirational in the Business Plan until individual approval of that activity is secured.
- b. Activity that is dependent on external funding remains aspirational in the Business Plan until and unless funding is secured.
 - c. Activity requiring the County Council to work in partnership will be driven in part by the policy, financial and decision-making frameworks in which our partners operate and therefore also remains aspirational until specific partner and County Council endorsement or sign-up is secured.

2. Endorse the requirement for all Council decisions and impact assessments to have regard to the Business Plan.
3. Endorses publication of the Business Plan as an interactive website.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

104 **People Strategy** – agenda item 9

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott, introduced the report.

The HR & OD Director, Chris Squire, added to Cllr Chilcott's introduction noting: the culture workshops; the strategy was available as an e book and a PowerPoint; and the strategy would now be launched to all staff.

Further points raised in debate included: a meeting value calculator; the relationship between a meetings financial cost and its value; the importance of sharing 'culture hacks'; encouraging entrepreneurial working; the importance of giving staff ownership; the importance of embedding technology; and ensuring there is a mechanism for staff to make suggestions.

In response to the points raised in debate the HR and OD Director, Chris Squire, and the Director of Corporate Affairs, Simon Clifford noted: the Council employs 3200 staff, with an average length of service of 11 years; work on leadership competencies; and the Bright Ideas Scheme.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill, noted his support for the People Strategy.

Following consideration of the officer report, appendix and discussion the Cabinet resolved to welcome and endorse the proposed People Strategy.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

105 **Any other urgent items of business** – agenda item 10

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill, thanked Kevin Nacey for his work, noting his 31 years of service.

Cllr David Huxtable further added his thanks.

(The meeting ended at 11.51am)

CHAIR