

THE CABINET

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Shire Hall, on Monday 11th March 2019 at 10.00am.

PRESENT

Cllr D Fothergill (in the Chair)

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

Junior Cabinet members:
Cllr G Frascini
Cllr M Pullin

Other Members present: Cllr S Coles, Cllr G Frascini, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr T Munt, Cllr L Redman, Cllr N Taylor, Cllr A Wedderkopp

Apologies for absence: Cllr F Nicholson, Cllr J Woodman

183 **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 F Purbrick – Yeovil Town Council

Cllr D Hall further declared a personal interest as the local member for the proposed Bridgwater Special School.

184 **Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 19th February 2019** - agenda item 3

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

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

The Council's Monitoring Officer, Scott Wooldridge read a question submitted by Nigel Behan regarding Revenue Budget Monitoring.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott responded to the points raised.

186 **Award of Contract for Bridgwater Special School** – agenda item 5

The Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation introduced the report, highlighting: the school would offer additional place capacity; access to education in the local area; the project would allow the expansion of mainstream provision; the resultant reduction in transport and independent placement costs; and the social value of the contract.

The Assistant Director Inclusion, Annette Perrington and the Strategic Manager – Sufficiency of Early Years and School Place, Phil Curd noted: the project would bring together the two existing special schools; the local first strategy; the capital investment requirement; the opportunities for children of all ages; the feasibility study co-location conclusion; how existing special schools sites would be re-purposed for mainstream provision; the new special school would provide 120 places and include post 16 provision; reducing reliance on the independent sector; and work to ensure the development includes spaces which are fit for the future.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report, points raised included: air quality at the proposed site given its proximity to the M5 and A38; the design of the swimming pool; transport to and from the school; the associated increase to mainstream capacity; the borrowing required to finance the project; the inclusion of furniture and ICT equipment within the overall project cost; and the new schools name.

The Assistant Director Inclusion, Annette Perrington and the Strategic Manager – Sufficiency of Early Years and School Place, Phil Curd responded where appropriate, noting: the inclusion of an acoustic bund to screen noise from the M5; winds in the area are typically South Westerly so taking fumes away from the site; access to the proposed swimming pool; the need for SEN provision in the local area; and that transport would be provided based on statutory entitlement, with transport for children living within statutory walking distance being considered on a case by case basis.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill opened the debate to other members present, points raised included: build quality standards; the use of renewable energy technology; the excellent engagement with local members; learning from the design of the Mendip School; and consultation with parents.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill noted his delight that this scheme was being brought forward.

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

- 1. Authorise the County Council to enter in to a call-off contract with the winning contractor (as identified in Appendix B) under the Southern Construction Framework for the construction of a 160-place special school at Bower Lane, Bridgwater for September 2020 at a gross maximum project cost (detailed in Appendix B).**
- 2. Agree that Appendix B be treated as exempt information and to be treated in confidence, as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.**
- 3. Agree to exclude the press and public from the meeting where there is any discussion at the meeting regarding exempt or confidential information (Appendix B)**

4. Delegate authority to the Head of Corporate Property, in consultation with the County Solicitor, to finalise and execute the call-off contract referred to in recommendation 1.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

187 Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Enhanced Programme of Flood Risk Management and the SRA Memorandum of Understanding and Constitution - agenda item 7

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure introduced the report, highlighting: the continued success of the SRA; and work to establish the SRA as a precepting authority.

The Senior Manager – Somerset Rivers Authority, David Mitchell noted that the Rivers Authority was currently not a legal entity and clarified the revisions to the Memorandum of Understanding. The Director of Commissioning & Lead Commissioner for Economic and Community Infrastructure further highlighted ongoing work in this area.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invited views from other members present. Points raised included: the precept level; and the central government grants received by other County's who have experienced flooding issues.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure noted the SRA'S work was focused on on-going management and additional work.

Following consideration of the officer report and appendices the Cabinet resolved to approve and endorse:

- 1. The proposal to implement new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements alongside changes to the Children's Trust arrangements.**
- 2. Consultation with the wider partnership on the proposed new integrated arrangements to meet the Council's and other local agencies' duties to children under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Children Act 2004.**
- 3. That the Director of Children Services and the Head of Legal services undertake further discussions with local Safeguarding Partners with a view to agreeing contractual arrangements whereby certain safeguarding duties and tasks will be undertaken by identified members of the regional Safeguarding Partnership.**

4. **Delegation to the Director of Children’s Services of final approval of the Somerset Safeguarding Partnership arrangements to be published by 29 June 2019 following consultation with Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee and a further report having been brought to the Cabinet meeting on 10 June 2019.**
5. **The retention of a maximum of the current Somerset County Council budget allocation for this first year, and the identification of efficiencies with partners for 2020/2021, hence delivering a reduced budget requirement in future years.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

188 **Social Value Policy Refresh – agenda item 9**

The Director of Commissioning & Lead Commissioner for Economic and Community Infrastructure introduced the report noting that Social Value was key to both commissioning and procurement.

The Strategic Manager – Commissioning Development, Vikki Hearn further noted that the Policy had been considered by the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee who discussed: links with the Local Enterprise Partnership; the potential for a plain English version of the policy; outcomes and performance monitoring; raising member awareness; the use of case studies to demonstrate success; and the addition of the climate change emergency.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation noted the importance of ISO 14001 compliance.

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

1. **The refreshed Social Value Policy Statement.**
2. **For the statement to be published as a statement of Somerset County Council’s agreed social value priorities**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

189 **Month 10 Revenue Budget Monitoring – agenda item 10**

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott introduced the report and made a number of points including: the report detailed actual spend until the end of January 2019; the importance of the Council’s financial resilience; potential contributions to reserves; a robust 3 year

Medium Term Financial Plan; reviewing relevant strategic risks; and that the £1m collection fund surplus accounting.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invited views from other members present. Points raised included: Adult Social Care demand management; the Learning Disability Equalisation Reserve; and capital receipts flexibility.

The Leader of the Council summarised the points raised in debate, highlighting the continued trend towards financial sustainability.

Following consideration of the officer report and appendix the Cabinet:

- 1. commented upon the contents of this report and particularly noted the progress being made with controlling the budget for 2018/19, including the intention to partially replenish earmarked reserves to improve the resilience of the Council for future years;**
- 2. noted the additional uses of the revenue contingency budget (£0.212m);**
- 3. noted the potential for specific carry forwards where funds have been received in advance of need or are unspent against specific projects.**
- 4. Supported the use for urgency and agrees to set the Council's net budget requirement for 2018/19 (Revenue Budget) as £317,881,900 (see section 1.7)**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

190 Item referred from Full Council – Precautionary Salting Network – agenda item 11

The Director of Commissioning & Lead Commissioner for Economic and Community Infrastructure introduced the item, noting: that the Council had made the decision to reduce the precautionary salting network from 21% of the County's roads to 17% based on the Council's financial position at that time; a review was on-going with feedback being collected; and that routes were being reinstated.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report, asking a number of questions to officers. Points raised included: the disposal of vehicles; staffing redundancies; the lack of evidence regarding an increase in road traffic accidents; and consideration of increased settlement sizes.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill further requested that the Monitoring Officer write to all Members regarding the importance of sharing information and evidence to substantiate statements.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill opened the debate to other members present, points raised included: consultation with members who divisions include affected roads.

Following debate on Cllr Rigby's recommendations, the Cabinet were assured by the Lead Commissioner for Economic and Community Infrastructure and by the planned service review in Spring 2019 that was agreed at the Cabinet meeting in February 2019.

191 **Proposed merger of the existing Children's Safeguarding Board Arrangements with the Children's Trust Board – agenda item 6**

The Director of Children's Services, Julian Wooster introduced the report, noting: the Children's Social Work Act 2017; the importance of a responsive system; reducing duplication; and the importance of robust challenge.

The Cabinet heard from Mike Prior, who welcomed the arrangements in his role as the Chair of the Somerset Children's Trust.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report, and invited views from other members present. Points raised included: the importance of scrutiny appropriate arrangements; the inclusion of Child Death Review Panels; ensuring Cabinet sign-off for the final arrangements; and the potential to work towards a shared budget position.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill opened debate to other members present, points raised included: consulting the Chair of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee; and ensuring the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee are involved in related policy development.

Following consideration of the officer report the Cabinet approved and endorsed:

- 1. The proposal to implement new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements alongside changes to the Children's Trust arrangements.**
- 2. Consultation with the wider partnership on the proposed new integrated arrangements to meet the Council's and other local agencies' duties to children under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Children Act 2004.**
- 3. That the Director of Children Services and the Head of Legal services undertake further discussions with local Safeguarding Partners with a view to agreeing contractual arrangements whereby certain safeguarding duties and tasks will be undertaken by identified members of the regional Safeguarding Partnership.**
- 4. Delegation to the Director of Children's Services of final approval of the Somerset Safeguarding Partnership arrangements to be published by 29 June 2019 following consultation with Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee and a further report having been brought to the Cabinet meeting on 10 June 2019.**

- 5. The retention of a maximum of the current Somerset County Council budget allocation for this first year, and the identification of efficiencies with partners for 2020/2021, hence delivering a reduced budget requirement in future years.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

192 **Equality Objectives 2019 – 2023 and Equality Commitment** – agenda item 8

The Director of Public Health, Trudi Grant and the Council's Equality Manager, Thomas Rutland introduced the report noting: public sector equality duty; the strong consultation response; and collective working.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill opened debate to all members present, points raised included: involving local communities and outside agencies; and ensuring a fair balance across the five objectives.

Following consideration of the officer report and appendices the Cabinet

- 1. Agreed and endorsed the proposed five Equality Objectives for the organisation from April 2019 till April 2023.**
- 2. Agreed and endorsed the revised Joint Equality and Diversity Policy**
- 3. Requested Directors to identify further actions to support the identified Objectives.**
- 4. Requested an annual review of the equality objectives and outcomes achieved by 30 September 2020.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

193 **Any other urgent items of business** – agenda item 12

There were no items raised.

(The meeting ended at 12.10pm)

CHAIR