

THE CABINET

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the meeting room, Taunton Library, on Monday 10th June 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 Nicholson
Cllr J Woodman

Junior Cabinet members:
Cllr G Frascini
Cllr M Pullin

Other Members present: Cllr H Davies, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr J Lock, Cllr T Munt, Cllr A Wedderkopp

Apologies for absence: Cllr F Purbrick

201 **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 J Woodman – Sedgemoor District Council

Cllr David Fothergill further declared a personal interest as a member of the North Somerset Heritage Panel

Cllr David Hall further declared a personal interest as a member of the South West Heritage Trust Board

202 **Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 13th May 2019** - agenda item 3

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

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

The Cabinet received a petition from Mr Louis Agabani representing Wells City Council regarding parking on North Road in Wells. Mr Agabani requested improvements be made before September 2019 due to school expansion in the area.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill thanked Mr Agabani for presenting the petition.

The Cabinet heard from Mr John Osman also representing Wells City Council, highlighting: the blind corners on North Road; parking in the area;

and that a solution had previously been agreed but didn't proceed due to objections from local-residents.

The divisional member, Cllr Tessa Munt added to the points raised by the City Council, noting: this was one of 35 requests for road improvements in Wells; officers felt the use of double yellow lines may increase speed on the road; and that there have been a number of 'near misses' in the immediate area.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Cllr John Woodman responded to the points raised, noting that all correspondence would be included in the Wells parking review that is being undertaken. Officers have already visited the site and their findings will be considered during the initial policy review meeting with local councillors.

204 **Corporate Performance Report – End of March (Q4 2018/19) – agenda item 5**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill introduced the report noting: the focus on the Council's budget position; the importance of the services the Council provides; and the establishment of in-house coach operations for school transport. Cllr Fothergill further thanked all staff for their work during very difficult times.

The Director of Corporate Affairs, Simon Clifford, added to the points raised by Cllr Fothergill, noting: detailed metric's and measures were used by individual service areas; all major infrastructure projects were rated as 'green'; children's safeguarding had been rated as 'green' for the past 6 months; the excellent Adults Services performance; and the actions being undertaken in relation to the Connecting Devon and Somerset Gigaclear contract.

The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager, Ryszard Rusinek highlighted a typographical error in the report, noting that the report should state that there are 26 measures rated as 'green'.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and make a number of comments, points raised included: the excellent Adults Services Performance; the strong performance regarding the three large infrastructure schemes in the County; the partnership work in the West Somerset Opportunity area; adults with learning disabilities who live in their own homes; the work of Children's Services and the importance of 'narrowing the gap'; Health Visitors joining the Council; and the Connecting Devon and Somerset Gigaclear contract.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill opened the debate to other members present, points raised included: questioning if the 40 measures included in the report adequately cover all Council services; and considering the measures used in the Council's performance report.

The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager, Ryszard Rusinek highlighted that there are in excess of 250 performance measures which are

reviewed regularly by the Council's Senior Leadership Team and these feed into the overall performance report considered by the Cabinet.

Cllr Liz Leyshon, speaking on behalf of the opposition groups, thanked staff for their work over the past year in maintaining good performance outcomes.

Cllr David Fothergill welcomed the report and felt it was a credit to the Council's staff.

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

1. Considered and commented on the information contained within this report, noting the positive performance and thanking staff for their work.

2. Considered the proposed management actions already in place to be adequate to improve performance to the desired level.

3. Agreed this report and any appendices as the latest position for Somerset County Council against its Council Vision

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

205 **2018/19 Revenue Budget Outturn Report** - agenda item 6

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott introduced the report, highlighting: the improving financial position; the difficult decisions taken in September 2018; the £5.9m projected underspend; replenishing reserves; the use of capital receipts; and the Council's outstanding debt.

The Interim Finance Director, Sheila Collins added to the points raised by Cllr Chilcott, noting: the low level of carry forward requests; proposals for the use of capital receipts flexibilities; and the Council's current reserves position and projected to the end of 2019/20.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill thanked Cllr Chilcott, SLT and finance staff for their work.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invited views from other members present. Points raised included: redundancy costs attributed to individual departments and the HR & OD Director clarified these.

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

1. Carry forward requests of £0.417m to be used against future commitments (section 4 and appendix B);

2. The creation of new earmarked reserves totalling £9.020m (section 5, table 5) to fund future commitments as detailed in section 4 and appendix C;
3. The elimination of the negative balance of £2.936m of the Repairs & Maintenance (R&M) and Buildings Maintenance Indemnity Scheme (BMIS) reserves (sections 2 and 5) and;
4. The creation of a new earmarked reserve of £2.556m to enable the Council to support ongoing priorities with delegated authority to be given to the Leader, Cabinet Member for Resources, Chief Executive and Director of Finance (section 2)

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

206 **2018/19 Capital Budget Outturn Report – agenda item 7**

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott introduced the report and highlighted: school developments within the County; the Colley Lane Access Road project, and associated underspend. Cllr Chilcott further thanked staff for their work.

The Interim Finance Director, Sheila Collins added to the points raised by Cllr Chilcott highlighting: plans for future borrowing; and full utilisation of cash reserves.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invited views from other members present. Points raised included: the potential for internal borrowing to create cash flow complications and the Interim Finance Director provided assurance on this.

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

- **A virement of £1.224m from the underspend to fund additional Highways Small Improvement and Integrated Transport Schemes;**
- **The supplemental approvals as detailed in Section 2.9: £1.463m Devolved Formula Capital Grant for Schools; £0.312m Healthy Pupil Capital grant applied to Taunton Nerrols Primary School build.**

The Cabinet further noted the contents of this report, including the managed overspends detailed in Section 2.10.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

207 **Approval for the Improving Lives to Prevent Demand Fund, Members Improving Lives Grant Scheme and Somerset Young Peoples Fund – agenda item 8**

The Director of Public Health, Trudi Grant introduced the report noting: the Full Council approval in February 2019 to allocate funding, the importance of the prevention agenda; the importance of funding at a local level; and the work of the Youth Parliament.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing, Cllr Christine Lawrence highlighted her support for this work, the proposals within the report and the importance of the prevention agenda for communities and public services.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill noted: the importance of reducing demand; that proposals are already being brought forward; and welcomed the proposals for the Somerset Young Peoples Fund.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and make a number of comments, points raised included: how community-based solutions could save money and are preferred by the general public; and the importance of ensuring best value from all preventative work.

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

- **Agreed £850k to be made available for the Improving Lives to Prevent Demand Fund.**
- **Agreed £125k to be made available for the Members' Improving Lives Grant Scheme based on £2k per Member and £15k for resource to administer the fund. Agree £25k to be made available for Somerset Young People's Fund.**
- **Authorised the proposed approach, governance and process for the Improving Lives to Prevent Demand Fund and Members' Improving Lives Grant Scheme and provide delegated authority to the Director of Public Health following consultation with SLT and Improving Lives Prevention Panel to take officer decisions on the separate bids.**
- **Delegated authority for the Director of Public Health in conjunction with the Director of Children's Services to approve the governance and decision-making arrangements for the Somerset Young People's Fund.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

208 **South West Heritage Trust Annual Report and future funding arrangements** – agenda item 9

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure, Cllr David Hall, introduced the report noting: the wonderful heritage in Somerset and Devon; and grant agreement duration. Cllr Hall further noted that it had been a privilege to serve as a trustee on the Heritage Board, but that as he held this position he would not take part in the vote on this item.

The Service Manager, Commissioning, Jon Doyle added to the points raised by Cllr Hall offering a detailed account of the work and responsibilities of the Trust, including: that there are 3 million museum objects in Somerset; the awards won by the South West Heritage Trust; high visitor numbers; the importance of friends groups and volunteers; spotlight loans from national collections; and the importance of celebrating the areas rich and diverse heritage.

The South West Heritage Trust Chief Executive, Tom Mayberry thanked the Council for their support and highlighted the work achieved in partnership.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invited views from other members present. Points raised included: the duration of the budget agreement; additional funding sources; the importance of volunteers; the support the trust offers to small museums; apprentices; single use plastics; and the work of the Somerset Buildings Preservations Trust.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill, thanked Tom Mayberry for his work.

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

- 1. Welcomed and considered the Annual Report of the South West Heritage Trust (SWHT) for the 2017/18 period**
- 2. Agreed in principle to the award of a new annual grant to the SWHT at the level set out in this report for a period of five years from 1 November 2019;**
- 3. Pursuant to recommendation 2 above, delegated authority to the Director of Economic and Community Infrastructure, Commissioning, in consultation with the County Solicitor, to negotiate and agree such changes as are necessary to renew the funding agreement between SCC and the SWHT for a period of five years from 1 November 2019.**
- 4. Agreed 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.**

209 **Planning and Delivery of Early Years and School Places in Somerset** – agenda item 10

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Cllr Frances Nicholson, introduced the report highlighting the importance of establishing where school places are required.

The Service Manager – Schools Commissioning, Elizabeth Smith, added to the points raised by Cllr Nicholson, noting, the policy was last reviewed in March 2015; that over one third of schools are now independent of the Local Authority; new provision and free schools; the inclusion of school capacity within funding agreements; ‘all-through’ schools; and the importance of CIL contributions covering the cost of associated school place requirements.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invited views from other members present. Points raised included: working with the District Councils regarding Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions; rural schools; school parking and drop-off provision; and the parental responsibility to transport children to school.

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

- 1) approved the updated Policies and Principles of Early Years and School Place Planning as set out in section 2 of this report.**
- 2) authorised the Head of Education Partnerships in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Members for Children and Families and Education and Transformation to publish the School Place Infrastructure Growth Plan and Early Years County Wide Sufficiency Report on an annual basis.**
- 3) endorsed the recently published DfE guidance on securing developer contributions for education which confirms that contributions must cover the full cost of providing the new school places that are required as a result of new housing developments.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

210 **Any other business** – agenda item 11

There were no items raised.

(The meeting ended at 12.10pm)

CHAIR