

## THE CABINET

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the meeting room, Taunton Library, on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 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 F Purbrick

Junior Cabinet members:

None

**Other Members present:** Cllr H Davies, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr J Lock

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr G Frascini, Cllr M Pullin, Cllr J Woodman

234 **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

235 **Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019** - agenda item 3

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

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

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill, noted that no public questions had been submitted.

237 **Corporate Performance Report** – agenda item 5

The Director of Corporate Affairs, Simon Clifford and the Corporate Performance Officer, James Hadley introduced the report, highlighting: information was pending for some areas including delayed transfers of care; and that areas of concern included Connecting Devon and Somerset Phase 2.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from other members present. Points raised included: the on-going work to reduce delayed transfers of care; the impact of zero hours contracts on the care industry; on-going work at the Tone Way in Taunton and the potential to ease traffic restrictions; residential household waste recycling targets; Connecting Devon and Somerset Funding streams; and moving towards a satisfactory conclusion with Giga Clear.

The Director of Adult Social Care and the Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for ECI responded to the points raised, noting: work with care providers and zero hours contracted staff was on-going; working with Sainsburys and the Hankridge Farm retail park to manage traffic movements; and the Recycle More project.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill, noted his support for the new report style, and highlighted that areas of concern were being robustly monitored. Cllr Fothergill proceeded to highlight the recommendations as detailed in the report.

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

- 1. Considered and commented on the information contained within this report.**
- 2. Considered the proposed management actions already in place are 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

238 **2019/20 Revenue Budget Monitoring – Quarter 2 (Month 6) Report** - agenda item 6

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott introduced the report, noting: the report covered the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the financial year; the forecast balanced budget position; that financial risk remained in some areas including those affected by seasonal demand; the importance of long term financial resilience; reserves; that 98.9% of MTFP savings had been delivered or were on-track to be delivered; that management actions were in place for the 1% of savings at risk of non-delivery; and the spirit of continual

improvement.

The Interim Finance Director, Sheila Collins, added to the points raised by Cllr Chilcott, noting: the £6m of unallocated contingency; and the improved position for debts over 90 days old.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from other members present. Points raised included: funding allocated for climate change emergency work; the LED Street light replacement programme; and the importance of fully considering climate change work.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott noted that £25k had been allocated to climate change emergency work.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill noted his delight at the balanced budget position, and proceeded to highlight the recommendations as detailed in the officer report.

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

- 1. Noted the forecast balanced budget position for the end of 2019/20**
- 2. Noted that £6.127m of the corporate contingency remains unallocated**
- 3. Noted the delivery of £17.884m savings by Quarter 2 and the forecast delivery of £21.316m by the year end**
- 4. Noted the improving financial resilience of the Council, with the level of reserves now being projected as £56.347m by the year end (comprising £36.657m of Earmarked Reserves and £19.690m of General Fund).**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

239 **2019/20 Capital Budget Monitoring – Quarter 2 (Month 6) Report – agenda item 7**

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott introduced the report, noting: the total value of the capital programme was £788m; the small underspend as a result of well managed finances; the new report format; and that future reports would include contributions not yet received, with associated risk ratings.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from other members present. Points raised included: borrowing approval timescales and expiry; the ability of the S151 officer to take out borrowing if required; and the Housing Infrastructure Fund bid.

The Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for ECI informed members that the Council's Housing Infrastructure Fund bid was still under consideration.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill highlighted the recommendations as detailed in the officer report.

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

- 1. Noted the forecasted budget position for the currently approved 5-year programme with a forecast favourable variance of £1.735m;**
- 2. Approved the request to vire £0.040m of grant funding from the Smart Ticketing project to the New Fleet Management System project, as detailed in Section 5 of this report.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

240 **Treasury Management 2019/20 mid-year Report – agenda item 7**

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott introduced the report, noting: the CIPFA Code of Practice; appropriate assurance; the substantial assurance audit outcome; the 1.1% return on investments which include LEP and external bodies monies; and that there had been no new borrowing this financial year.

The Interim Finance Director, Sheila Collins, highlighted: the long-term benefits of delaying borrowing; and the increase in PWLB loan interest rates.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from other members present. Points raised included: the continued return of monies invested in Iceland, and the potential to invest this money in climate change emergency work; the Council's investments; and the potential to loan to other Local Authorities.

The Service Manager – Investments, Anton Sweet, highlighted that local

authority counterparts should be seen as one, but noted potential reticence to lend to Council's who have been subject to negative media coverage.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill highlighted the recommendations as detailed in the officer report.

**Following consideration of the officer report and discussion the Cabinet endorsed the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2019-20 and recommended it is received and endorsed by Full Council at the next sitting of Full Council.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

241 **Heart of the South West Joint Committee – Governance Arrangements and Budgetary Position** – agenda item 9

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill, introduced the report, noting that he would raise the climate change agenda at the next Committee meeting.

The Councils Monitoring Officer, Scott Woolridge added to Cllr Fothergill's introduction, noting: refocusing the work of the committee; strategy and policy development; updating the governance arrangements as highlighted in Appendix A to the report; the administering authority role held by Somerset County Council since March 2018; that the administering authority role included both a financial element and support in kind; increases in financial contributions; and that Somerset County Councils financial contribution would increase to £21k.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from other members present. Points raised included: congratulating Cllr David Fothergill for chairing the Committee meetings; and opportunities for further central government funding.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill noted the excellent work of the Councils officers and thanked Julian Gale and Scott Wooldridge for their efforts.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill highlighted the recommendations as detailed in the officer report.

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

**(a) as a constituent member, approved the amendments (highlighted in italics) to the Heart of the South West Joint Committee's list of functions in the Arrangements document – Appendix A attached;**  
**(b) noted the updated budget position for 2019/20 and that the County Council will continue as the Administering Authority for the Joint Committee;**  
**(c) made provision of £21,000 as a contribution to the administration and work programme of the Committee in 2020/21 financial year subject to all other Constituent Members making a financial contribution based on the methodology agreed in previous years.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

242 **Any other business** – agenda item 10

There was no other business.

(The meeting ended at 12.03am)

**CHAIR**