

# THE CABINET

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the meeting room, Taunton Library, on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July 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

Cllr J Woodman

Junior Cabinet members:

Cllr G Fraschini

**Other Members present:** Cllr H Davies, Cllr M Keating, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr J Lock, Cllr T Lock, Cllr L Redman, Cllr A Wedderkopp

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr M Pullin

### 211 **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

### 212 **Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019** - agenda item 3

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

### 213 **Public Question Time (PQT)** – agenda item 4

The Leader of the Council, Cllr David Fothergill, noted that questions had been submitted by Nigel Behan, regarding the MTFP approach report and that these would be considered under the relevant agenda item.

### 214 **Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements** – agenda

item 5

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Cllr Frances Nicholson introduced the report noting: the importance of keeping children safe; the importance of relevant parties working together; and the Sir Alan Woods report. Cllr Nicholson further highlighted that the role of the scrutiny function would develop over time.

The Director of Children's Services, Julian Wooster added to the points raised by Cllr Nicholson, noting: this was a transitional year; the commitment to appoint an independent scrutineer; and the importance of regional working.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and make a number of comments, points raised included: the importance of the arrangements; liaison with the Health and Wellbeing Board; the importance of keeping children safe; funding levels; the importance of considering the 'voice of the child'; scrutiny arrangements at partner organisations; and the geographical boundaries of the work.

In response to the points raised the Director of Children's Services confirmed there would be no increase in funding during the initial transitional year; and highlighted the consultation undertaken regarding the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

At the Leader of the Council's invitation, the Chair of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee, Cllr Leigh Redman addressed the Cabinet, and raised the following points: the limited detail currently available; and the importance of acting as an advocate for young people. Cllr Redman further questioned how the new arrangements would offer improvements to current practice.

The Director of Children's Services, Julian Wooster noted: that the Government felt that previous arrangements were not effective; the use of the Children and Young Peoples Plan as the delivery tool; and that children's views are essential.

The Council's Chief Executive, Patrick Flaherty noted: there would be Scrutiny involvement during Autumn 2019 at which point further information would be available; and that the new arrangements ensured accountability to senior officers.

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

- 1. The proposal to implement new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements alongside changes to the Children's Trust arrangements at Executive (Tier 1) and Partnership (Tier 2) level.**
- 2. The publication of the new safeguarding arrangements in June 2019 on behalf of the County Council, CCG and Avon and Somerset Constabulary by 29 June, as delegated to the Director of Children's Services in March 2019.**
- 3. Sign-off on the published arrangements by the County Council Chief Executive.**
- 4. That the Director of Children Services and the Head of Legal services undertake further discussions with local and regional 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.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

## 215 **Treasury Management Outturn Report** - agenda item 6

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott, introduced the report noting: the completion of the Outturn Report is a CIPFA requirement; the report details the treasury position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019; that borrowing had been envisaged, but had not been required to date; the £5m repayment of a LOBO loan; that total lending had decreased by £10.5m; the Council's average cash balance was £36.5m; and that investments had generated £2.1m which equates to a 0.83% return.

The Principal Investment Officer, Alan Sanford, added to the points raised by Cllr Chilcott, noting: LOBO loans are usually repaid at maturity; and that the early repayment of the loan will save £176k in interest payments.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invited views from other members present. Points raised included: the CCLA property fund returns; the Council's other LOBO loan commitments; the importance of understanding and quantifying the risks of investments; and cash management and risks associated with managing finances on behalf of other organisations.

The Principal Investment Officer, Alan Sanford responded noting: the Council has £125m of outstanding LOBO loans; and that the Council manages money on behalf of the Police, but this is clearly separated from the Council's own finances; and the resource implications of managing the

finances of other organisations.

The Leader of the Council thanked Alan Sanford for his work.

**Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion the Cabinet approved this report and recommended that it is submitted to Full Council on 17th July 2019.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

216 **MTFP Approach 2020 to 2023 – agenda item 7**

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott introduced the report and highlighted: the Council's continuing journey toward financial sustainability; the dramatic budget 'turn-around'; forecasting resources for the next four years; the Capital Investment Programme; the comprehensive spending review, and associated funding uncertainty; mapping budget scenarios; and the scheduled MTFP Member briefings.

The Cabinet heard from Nigel Behan who raised a number of questions regarding: potential investments; investments in renewable energy and environmental schemes; and the local Audit framework.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott responded to the questions raised, noting: the Council is currently developing an investment strategy; that the County and District Councils are considering environmental schemes and working on a strategy for the County; and that the Council welcomes the work regarding the local Audit framework.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report, points raised included: uncertainty regarding future funding; the Council's improved financial position; and ensuring the risks of any investments are fully considered.

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

**1. Approved the high-level budget setting timetable and the approach for updating the Medium Term Financial Plan, incorporating the 2020/21 revenue budget proposals and the capital programme.**

**2. Noted the progress with a number of key strategies since the Full Council budget meeting in February 2019.**

### **3. Noted the Council's responses to technical consultations on the future of Local Government Funding submitted in Spring 2019.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

#### **217 Month 2 Revenue Budget Monitoring – agenda item 8**

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Mandy Chilcott introduced the report and highlighted: this was the first budget monitoring report of the financial year; the forecast balanced position at year end; areas of challenge included Children's Services and Dillington House but that management actions were in place; the virement of £498k for home to school transport provision; the early repayment of the BMIS negative reserve; and the significant improvement in savings delivery, which currently stands at 99%.

The Interim Finance Director, Sheila Collins, added to the points raised by Cllr Chilcott noting the increased contribution to contingency to mitigate against service variations.

The Cabinet proceeded to debate the report and invite views from other members present, points raised included: the Dillington House budget overspend; the use of contingency to fund home to school transport; the cost of the quadrennial County Council elections; funding for the recent developments at Dillington House; and Dillington House lease break clauses.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation, Cllr Faye Purbrick highlighted the Dillington House budget management actions and on-going efforts regarding finances. The Director of Children's Services, Julian Wooster further highlighted Dillington House was now being utilised for some teacher training.

The Chief Executive, Patrick Flaherty, responded to the points raised regarding the cost of the County Councils own elections, noting: the cost was spread over 4 years; the Council must follow Electoral Commission rules; and costs are shared where multiple elections can be held on the same day.

The Strategic Finance Manager, Elizabeth Watkin highlighted that there would be financial implications if the Dillington House lease were surrendered under a break clause.

The Leader of the Council Cllr David Fothergill thanked officers for their work.

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

**1. The contribution of £3.390m to the Corporate Priorities Reserve as detailed in section 1.4 and 2.6 of the report which further supports the council's long term financial resilience.**

**2. The transfer of £0.498m of Corporate Contingency to support the pressure in Home to School Transport as detailed in section 2.2 of the report.**

**The Cabinet further noted the projected balanced outturn position for the 2019/20 financial year.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

218 **Any other business** – agenda item 9

There were no items raised.

(The meeting ended at 11.04am)

**CHAIR**