

Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 15 January 2014.

Present:

Spencer Flower (Chairman)
Robert Gould (Vice-Chairman)
Toni Coombs, Peter Finney, Jill Haynes and Rebecca Knox.

John Wilson, Chairman of the County Council, attended under Standing Order 54(1).

Members attending


Ronald Coatsworth, County Council Member for Bride Valley (Minutes 13-15)
Janet Dover, County Council Member for Colehill and Stapehill (Minutes 13-15)
Peter Wharf, County Council Member for Egdon Heath (Minutes 10-12)

Officers Attending: Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Mike Harries (Interim Director for Environment), Catherine Driscoll (Director for Adult and Community Services), Paul Kent (Director for Corporate Resources), Jonathan Mair (Monitoring Officer), Sara Tough (Director for Children's Services), Fiona King (Public Relations Officer) and Lee Gallagher (Democratic Services Manager).

For certain items, as appropriate:

Sam Fox-Adams (Senior Policy and Performance Manager), John West (Business Change and Efficiency Manager), Matthew Piles (Senior Policy and Performance Manager) and Mike Winter (Head of Highways Management).

(Notes:(1) In accordance with Rule 16(b) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules the decisions set out in these minutes will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of five working days after the publication date. Publication Date: **21 January 2014.**

(2) The symbol () denotes that the item considered was a Key Decision and was included in the Forward Plan.

(3) These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Cabinet to be held on **3 February 2014.**)

Apologies for Absence

1. Apologies for absence were received Hilary Cox and David Phillips (Director of Public Health).

Code of Conduct

2. There were no declarations by members of any disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

Minutes

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2013 were confirmed and signed.

Matters ArisingMinute 553 – Forward Together

4.1 The Director for Corporate Resources clarified that the savings target of the County Council had slightly reduced following the report at the previous meeting and was now £47M instead of £48M over the next three years. This was due to changes to the grant position which had been offset by the incorporation of the council tax freeze grant into the financial baseline.

4.2 He also reported that the Council was still awaiting Government advice on the council tax increase threshold that would trigger a referendum, and confirmed that this was currently 2%, but could be reduced. However, the announcement may not be made until mid February 2014, which could be after the Council had agreed its council tax position for the forthcoming year. This posed a significant risk to the authority in respect of financial decision making and the future budget, but it was noted that sufficient time had been built into the budget setting process to allow the Council to reconsider before the deadline to inform precept authorities.

4.3 Members were concerned about the magnitude of the risk posed to the County Council and noted that the Leader of the Council would raise this issue at the Local Government Association shortly, and would also discuss the risk with the Chief Executive.

Public ParticipationPublic Speaking

5.1 There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

5.2 There were no public statements received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(2).

Petitions

6. There were no petitions received in accordance with the County Council's petition scheme at this meeting.

Cabinet Forward Plan

7.1 The Cabinet considered the Cabinet Forward Plan, which identified key decisions to be taken by the Cabinet and items planned to be considered in a private part of the meeting. The current plan was published on 17 December 2013 and included items on the agenda for this meeting. It was noted that the next Forward Plan included items to be considered on or following the Cabinet meetings on 3 and 26 February 2014 would be published on 28 January 2014.

7.2 A revised version of the Forward Plan was tabled at the meeting, which included a number of items that had been added following publication of the agenda on 7 January 2014. It was also noted that all future Cabinet dates had been added to the plan to encourage better advanced population of forthcoming Cabinet meetings.

Noted**Panels and Boards**

8.1 The minutes of the following Panels and Joint Committees were submitted:-

- (i) Health and Wellbeing Board – 27 November 2013
- (ii) Executive Advisory Panel on the Sustainable Purchasing of Adult Social Care – 29 November 2013

Cabinet – 15 January 2014

8.2 In relation to the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on 27 November 2013, the Leader of the Council reported that the structure of the Board would be reviewed by March 2014 as it was currently too large and needed to be more constructive to enable the Board to focus appropriately on health and wellbeing matters. It was also noted that the size and working arrangements for boards across the Country had encountered similar difficulties.

8.3 In relation to the minutes of the Executive Advisory Panel on the Sustainable Purchasing of Adult Social Care on 29 November 2013, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care confirmed that the next meeting of the Panel had been postponed as work was required to obtain information from an external accountancy company. The next meeting would be arranged as soon as the information had been received.

Resolved

9. That the minutes be received.

Forward Together

10.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources which provided an update on the development of the Forward Together programme which included the governance structure for the programme, areas for review, action plan from the recent LGA Peer Review, format of the 2014/15 Corporate Plan, financial savings, and methodology for scoping services.

10.2 The Leader of the Council introduced the report and drew attention to the report having been updated following consideration by the Cabinet on 18 December 2013 which now included proposals to achieve 90% of the £47M savings target. He drew attention to the difficult challenges ahead, but to look at the savings through developing services as a more positive option than having to top slice budgets.

10.3 Cabinet Members expressed their faith in officers to bring about the change required to meet the financial challenge over the next three years through the comprehensive Forward Together Programme, and that the efforts made were on behalf of the whole Council and not restrained to any one particular directorate. Changes in the Adult and Community Services Directorate in relation to the Pathways to Independence programme were highlighted as a good example of transformational change.

10.4 It was confirmed that a more illustrative view of the changes would be provided in due course to fully appreciate the linkages across directorates, and links with the voluntary sector and communities.

10.5 It was noted that communications across the Council were being looked at across all services, and that lots of work was being done to help shape the change in order to better communicate the often complex and sensitive issues facing service development.

10.6 The Cabinet supported the radical move forward, noting that this was going to be the most difficult and challenging work that the Council had ever undertaken, but that this would also be considered as a positive and exciting new phase of transformation. However, it was recognised that changes to services would not be final and could be subsequently improved and developed further to ensure that they were continually fit for purpose, especially in relation to continual legislative changes and Government directives. It was noted that the risk element of the programme reflected this point.

10.7 A suggestion was made that although the Council was looking to other authorities and organisations for ways to improve and work in a better way, there were

equally services that the Council provided which could be shared with other authorities to generate income.

10.8 The County Council Member for Egdon Heath raised awareness of the need for members to actively be involved in the programme and for their suggestions for savings to be considered and responded to accordingly. He also felt that members needed to be involved in the formulation of service changes as a result of their suggestions. The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive confirmed that all suggestions would be captured but there was a need to prioritise them and it was not always practical to address all in detail.

10.9 The County Council Member for Egdon Heath also asked that the funding allocated to the Transformation Fund should not be limited to £2M. The Director for Corporate Resources confirmed that the Transformation Fund was not limited to £2M and it was hoped that savings would be reinvested into the Fund to ensure flexibility. This would encourage and support the pace of investment in service change at the right time.

10.10 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care explained that she was due to communicate with all members of the Council to invite them to meet with her to discuss matters affecting her portfolio, or to explain issues facing the directorate. All cabinet members agreed that the feedback on this approach would be monitored and that this could be rolled out across all portfolios as a supportive communication tool for members.

Resolved

11.1 That the recommendations (i) to (v) of the Cabinet report of 18 December 2013 be agreed.

11.2 That the financial savings from the principal projects be agreed.

11.3 That the spending plans to deliver services within defined reduced budget levels be brought forward for agreement by the Cabinet as the details of reshaped and structured services are identified by Directors, within the principles of Forward Together: Greater Independence; Smarter Services; and Empowered people.

Reason for Decisions

12. To ensure the Forward Together programme was fully implemented to secure both the organisational benefits and financial savings necessary to deliver a balanced budget up to and beyond 2016/17.

B3157 Chickerell to Bridport (Coast Road) Road Safety Scheme – Centre Line Markings

13.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Environment in relation to the road safety scheme on the B3157 Chickerell to Bridport (Coast Road).

13.2 The Cabinet Member for Public Health, as the former Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, introduced the report and explained that between late 2008 and 2010 a series of measures were implemented on the B3157 Coast Road to improve safety and reduce road casualties in line with the principles set out in the County Council's Rural Roads protocol. He noted that there were many local views expressed in relation to the reinstatement of the white lines on the road, and that there was no clear evidence one way or another as to the merit or otherwise of not having the markings. As the issue related very much to the public perception of the safety associated with the reinstatement of the lines he recommended that the reinstatement should be approved in line with option three detailed within the report.

13.3 It was noted that Mr Henry Ford, Member of the Chesil Bank Parish Council, attended the meeting and expressed his support for local residents' concerns, and the reinstatement of the white lines.

13.4 The County Council Member for Bride Valley addressed the meeting as a local member for the B3157 in support of the views of people living on the road and local Councils where the majority felt that the reinstatement of the lines was necessary. He was concerned that according to the collision figures there had been an increase of 20% over the 4 years of the scheme. He insisted that the issue of safety was due to the road and having to drive in regular fog and mist, rather than driver behaviour.

13.5 The Cabinet also received written statements from the County Council Members for Chickerell and Chesil Bank, and Bridport as local members for the B3157. The statement from the County Council Member for Bridport was read out by the County Council Member for Colehill and Stapehill. The Leader of the Council acknowledged both statements and highlighted that this issue had been raised by the County Council Member for Chickerell and Chesil Bank a number of years ago and that the overwhelming support for the reinstatement of the lines had meant that a pragmatic decision should be made to listen to the communities affected which was based on public perception.

13.6 The Chairman of the County Council confirmed that he had experienced foggy conditions on the road and that following the white lines was helpful, but that there were sections of the road which did not have lines. He felt that this was confusing for drivers and not helpful in adverse weather, and therefore asked that the Cabinet support the reinstatement of the lines.

13.7 Cabinet members expressed their support for the reinstatement and the need to take a pragmatic approach to this issue based on the views of local people. The Interim Director for Environment confirmed that monitoring would continue on the road.

Resolved

14. That the road centre lines in the stretches of road between hazard markings along the length of the Coast Road in advance of a Stage 4 Road Safety Audit be reinstated.

Reason for Decision

15. To respond to local community concerns and feedback on the scheme including significant local support for the reinstatement of the road centre lines.

Questions from Members of the Council

16. No questions were asked by members under Standing Order 20.

Meeting Duration: 10.00am – 10.50am