

# Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,  
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 19 March 2014.

## Present:

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

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

## Members attending


Paul Kimber, County Council Member for Portland Tophill (Minutes 118-120)  
Peter Wharf, County Council Member for Egdon Heath (Minutes 127-129)  
David Walsh, County Council Member for Gillingham (Minutes 127-129)

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), Nicky Cleave (Assistant Director of Public Health), Sara Tough (Director for Children's Services), Fiona King (Public Relations Officer) and Lee Gallagher (Democratic Services Manager).

## For certain items, as appropriate:

John Alexander (Policy and Performance Manager), Tony Diaz (Senior Finance Manager), Sam Fox Adams (Senior Policy and Performance Manager), Paul Leivers (Head of Community Services) and Cyril Loveridge (Capital Programme Manager).

(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: **25 March 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 **9 April 2014**.

## **Apology for Absence**

109. An apology for absence was received from David Phillips (Director of Public Health).

## **Code of Conduct**

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

## **Minutes**

111. The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2014 were confirmed and signed, subject to the first sentence of minute 62.4 being amended to read 'division included Charminster, Bradford Peverell and Stinsford...'.

**Matters Arising**Minute 96.2 – Policy Development Panel on Verge Cutting/Highway Vegetation

112.1 The Leader of the Council confirmed that he had spoken with officers about the Panel and its aims and aspirations in respect of a review of Verge Cutting/Highway Vegetation. It was noted that it was critical to avoid a repeat of issues faced last year and wanted an increased focus on flexibility to meet the needs of communities in rural areas together with the associated costs of avoiding unacceptable lengths of grass. He indicated that this had been a positive move and would recognise links with communities and district councils across Dorset.

112.2 The Cabinet Member for Environment reinforced the need for members to support officers in delivering a flexible approach. The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Panel would attempt to build flexibility into the arrangements.

Minute 82.2 – Policy to Manage Skid Resistance on Dorset's Roads

112.3 The Interim Director for Environment informed the Cabinet that the current policy for skid resistance applied to road users including horse-riders, but new guidance was expected later in the year and this would be addressed in due course.

**Public Participation**Public Speaking

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

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

Petitions

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

**Cabinet Forward Plan**

115.1 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 18 February 2014 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 meeting on 9 April 2014 and was published on 11 March 2014.

115.2 The Cabinet Member for Education and Communications asked for an additional item to be added to the Forward Plan for 9 April 2014 in relation to the Council's response to the Government's Fairer Schools Funding Consultation. She also asked for items to be completed when added to the Plan and not to show 'tbc' for any of the columns in the table.

115.3 The Cabinet Member for Environment queried whether the item identified for 9 April 2014 in relation to the future of highways service delivery was needed as the Forward Together Programme Board would be considering this issue. The Chief Executive confirmed that this item related to work in progress at the moment, but would be referred to the Cabinet when a final decision was required.

**Noted**

## **Panels and Boards**

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

- (a) Executive Advisory Panel on Universal Services – 10 February 2014
- (b) Executive Advisory Panel on Member Development – 20 February 2014

116.2 In relation to the minutes of the Executive Advisory Panel on Universal Services, the Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Families highlighted the need to emphasise that Universal Services affected the whole of Children's Services which reinforced the need for the name of the Panel to be amended.

116.3 In relation to the minutes of the Executive Advisory Panel on Member Development, the Cabinet Member for Education and Communications reported that the Panel were generally happy with the induction arrangements following the County Council Elections in 2013. However, during the discussion a suggestion was made that a review of the current Overview Committees should be undertaken to reassess the meeting arrangements especially in relation to the frequency of meetings and how they fitted with the reporting of performance information. Members welcomed the suggestion, but it was noted that the Executive Advisory Panel on Member Development was not the appropriate body to undertake the review. It was therefore noted that the suggestion would be referred to the appropriate member body.

116.4 It was also reported that the Sharepoint ICT system would be introduced from October 2014 which would transform the way the Council worked and managed information.

## **Resolved**

117.1 That the minutes be received.

117.2 That the following recommendations from the Executive Advisory Panel on Universal Services and the Executive Advisory Panel on Member Development be agreed:-

### Recommendation 6 - Terms of Reference

6. *That the Cabinet be asked to adopt the Executive Advisory Panel's terms of reference with the inclusion of the amendment set out in 5.2 of the Panel's minutes.*

### Recommendation 5 - Review of the Member Induction Programme

5. *That the Cabinet be recommended to:*

- (a) *Support the promotion of training for members when courses of particular interest were being held, and to arrange courses of specific need if enough members were willing to take part, especially in relation to chairmanship, scrutiny, leadership and core skills.*
- (b) *Provide members with comprehensive information about the opportunities available to shadow officers.*
- (c) *Support a review of the Overview Committees of the Council, in line with the LGA workshop in March 2014, and for this issue to be referred to the appropriate member body for consideration.*
- (d) *Promote the use of shadowing arrangements through Member Review and Development Meetings.*

## **Draft Corporate Plan 2014-15**

118.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Leader of the County Council which presented the draft Dorset County Council Corporate Plan for 2014-15 to meet the aspirations of the Forward Together Programme through a public orientated statement of the County Council's vision, ambitions and priorities; and an internal action plan for how this would be delivered, with performance measures linked to specific cost centres.

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118.2 The Leader of the Council introduced the report and explained that the first draft of the Corporate Plan for 2014/15 would be considered as a final draft by the Cabinet on 9 April 2014. In the meantime he welcomed comments from members in relation to key areas, but also asked members to contact the Policy and Performance Manager in relation to any specific wording changes before the deadline of 25 March 2014. He also reported that some suggestions for changes had been received from the Leader of the Labour Group, which had been passed to the Policy and Performance Manager.

118.3 The Policy and Performance Manager clarified that the format of the Plan was still subject to change and that there were continuing efforts to reduce the Plan to a more concise and focused document on the significant key priorities for the Council. The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources echoed the importance of setting the direction of the Plan in a focused way.

118.4 The Cabinet Member for Education and Communications recognised that the draft version was a good start, but highlighted that the tenor of the Plan was to engage, consult and listen to communities. However, it did not reflect in detail how this engagement through Forward Together would be achieved in respect of the public, businesses, partnerships and communities.

118.5 The Cabinet Member for Environment suggested that a diagram be inserted in relation to references to Council Tax in order to provide an easily understood picture of what funding was available and how it was used. She also asked for more reference to be made in relation to health and wellbeing and that a healthy environment was the foundation for thriving communities and personal well-being, which in turn promoted active lifestyles.

118.6 The Chairman of the Council expressed his support for the theme of ageing well in Dorset, and that this had now been expanded in an innovative way. He also asked about the provision of the Plan when it had been finalised, to which officers clarified that the Plan would be provided on the website as 'digital by default'.

118.7 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Community was pleased to see industry included in the Plan and the recognition of their contribution to the local economy, but he highlighted the need to make specific mention of tourism and the important part it played in Dorset's economy.

118.8 The Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Families felt that it would be useful to expand on the key facts presented under health and wellbeing and safeguarding, and for this to include some more positive comments in the narrative in the report.

118.9 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care drew attention to the need for the Plan to recognise the number of carers in Dorset.

118.10 The Chief Executive explained that the Plan would be refined to incorporate comments and highlighted the change of vision and focus as a significant change for the Council. The Cabinet supported the vision for the Plan, and for the future of the Council.

118.11 She also explained that the Plan would only cover a one year period, to allow proper engagement with communities in order to develop a much longer term vision for the future. It was suggested by members that this be made very clear within the Plan.

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118.12 The Cabinet Member for Environment expressed her support for the new vision for the Council which provided more of an emphasis on working together and the responsibilities of both the Council and communities alike.

118.13 The County Council Member for Portland Tophill expressed his support for the recognition within the draft Plan in relation to the eradication of low wages and high priced housing across Dorset.

**Resolved**

119. That the comments and amendments to the Corporate Plan 2014-15, as suggested throughout the minute above, be incorporated into the final draft to be considered by the Cabinet on 9 April 2014.

**Reason for Decision**

120. To ensure members had ownership of the Corporate Plan for 2014-15.

**Corporate Performance Monitoring Report - Third Quarter 2013-14 (1 October – 31 December 2013)**

121.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources in relation to corporate performance monitoring for the third quarter of 2013-14. The report contained analyses of the Council's progress against its corporate aims and presented the Corporate Balanced Scorecard. Overall, performance indicators in the Budget and Corporate Plan had an average "green" (on target) rating. The percentage of indicators meeting or exceeding their targets was 62% with 67% of actions either on course or complete.

121.2 The Chief Executive introduced the report and explained that in addition to the performance information, benchmarking data had also been included to provide a comparison with authorities across the Country.

121.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care asked for clarification regarding the "red" status of CM3 in relation to response to civil emergencies. It was noted that recent weather conditions and floods, together with directorate reorganisations had held up the service in terms of a desktop review of emergency arrangements.

121.4 Members discussed whether the Council had set the target at the appropriate level as the arrangements to review directorates would affect the ability to complete a desktop review, and asked if it should be revisited. The Cabinet also took the opportunity to commend the way officers responded to recent emergencies.

121.5 The Director for Corporate Resources confirmed that the budget performance figures had improved since the publication of the report and that the year end forecast for 2013-14 presented an underspend of £998k which was a significant improvement on the figures in the report. Adult and Community Services had made an improvement to reduce the directorate overspend to £665k, whilst Children's Services had a number of small improvements.

121.6 However, due to recent storms and flooding, the Environment Directorate budget was now forecasting an overspend of approximately £500k. It was confirmed that a claim had been submitted to Government for £1.2M from the Belwin Fund, and that it was likely that the Council would recover £660k. A severe weather claim had also been received for £184k, but members were extremely disappointed as this did not compare adequately with the amount spent and subsequently asked officers to investigate why this was so low.

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121.7 The Cabinet Member for Environment was concerned that the performance for highway maintenance was two years out of date. She explained that the maintenance needed for Dorset's highways was in the region of £12M, but this was only to return to where the maintenance levels should be, not to a perfect situation.

121.8 The Leader of the Council expressed his optimism that further funding would be received in line with the Prime Minister's comments to fully support authorities affected by flooding. It was noted that £106M was being allocated by Government. Members also noted that Dorset had more homes affected by flooding than Somerset which had gained a high profile in the press.

**Resolved**

122.1 That the report be noted.

122.2 That officers investigate the level of funding received as a result of the severe weather claim detailed in the minute 121.6 above.

**Reason for Decisions**

123. To ensure members were aware of the County Council's performance against the plans set out within its Budget and Corporate Plan and to draw members' attention to any specific performance issues.

** Quarterly Asset Management Update**

124.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources regarding the quarterly update on the County Council's 'Asset Management Plan', which identified the reduction in the size of the property estate by 25% and the rationalisation of the remaining estate as two key strands of the Council's strategy to reduce the property maintenance backlog and to better manage the 'core' longer-term portfolio.

124.2 The Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources explained that progress was being made in working towards the reduction in the size of the property estate by 25% and that it was anticipated that this would be completed by the revised target date of 1 April 2016. The Cabinet was then informed of a range of asset management recommendations in detail.

124.3 In relation to Springfield Road, Verwood, members asked that the process for selling land following road improvements should be simplified so that the purchaser should not be liable to make a contribution towards the road scheme. It was agreed that the Council should also retain liabilities in relation to the scheme as this would not impact on the value of the land.

124.4 It was reported that as a result of the financial management of the Purbeck Schools Review it was now possible to commit to invest in a replacement Bere Regis Primary School. It was noted that this was achieved through rigorous management of Optimism Bias and tight project management and members congratulated officers and the Modernising Schools Programme Board on the achievement.

124.5 In relation to Christchurch Primary School, it was noted that it was now possible to move towards the provision of a new school as the result of basic need for pupil provision in the area and the project should be delivered by September 2015, but there was a risk that it could be later. There was a risk that there would continue to be pinch points regarding pupil numbers, but an alternative plan would be in place as an interim measure if this happened.

124.6 The Cabinet recognised the ongoing challenge in relation to the growth in basic need, especially regarding primary school places, and this would be the primary focus

of the Modernising Schools Project Board. This would be addressed through the governance of the Board which required changes as detailed within the report, subject to a minor amendment to reflect the correct title of the Cabinet Member for Education and Communications within the new terms of reference.

124.7 The Cabinet Member for Environment explained that she had met with the local member regarding the Stoney Lane Bridge improvements in Burton, Christchurch and it was anticipated that works would now be planned for June 2014 as a result of flooding in the area and to coincide with Network Rail planned works and work to improve highway drainage.

124.8 The Cabinet was informed of projects through ICT management where there were concerns. The Director for Corporate Resources highlighted an issue regarding funding for a number of systems which utilised third party storage and cloud facilities, and had therefore been treated as revenue projects. Work would be done regarding the financing of the projects, but this could present a risk in terms of financial auditing. This matter would be reported back to the Cabinet in due course if required.

124.9 Members were supportive of the work being done to move forwards on assets and work styles, which was essential to all services and required funding to deliver changes for the future. The Cabinet commended the work as a significant positive move to support change and as a key enabler for Forward Together and the baseline property review.

### **Resolved**

125.1 That the declaration of surplus and disposing of land at North Dorset Business park upon terms to be agreed by the Interim Director for Environment (para 2.2.1 of the Cabinet Members' report) be approved.

125.2 That the disposal of Crossroads Day Centre, The Elms and 10 Gloucester Road on terms to be agreed by the Interim Director for Environment (para 2.2.2 of the report) be approved.

125.3 That the disposal of 27 Alexandra Road, Weymouth on terms to be agreed by the Interim Director for Environment (para 2.2.2 of the report) be approved.

125.4 That the disposal of 17 Springfield Road, Verwood on terms to be agreed by the Interim Director for Environment (para 2.2.3 of the report) be approved.

125.5 That the disposal of South Buckland Farm, Nottingham on terms to be agreed by the interim Director for Environment (para 2.2.4 of the report) be approved.

125.6 That 'Commit to Invest' (Capital Project Delivery Protocol Gateway 3) in Bere Regis Primary School (para 2.2.5 of the report) be approved.

125.7 That 'Commit to Invest' (Project Delivery Protocol Gateway 3) in Christchurch Primary School (para 2.2.6 of the report) be approved.

125.8 That governance of the Schools Basic Need Programme by the Modernising Schools Project Board as set out in the report (para 2.2.7 of the report) be approved.

125.9 That the adoption of a Corporate Landlord Model approach to asset management (para 2.2.10 of the report) be approved.

125.10 That an advance in funding of £40k to Swanage Railway from the Environment Directorate APT budget to fund design and preparatory works for the Wytch Farm access road level crossing, the funding to be reimbursed upon receipt of a £500k grant from BP (para 3.2.1 of the report) be approved.

125.11 That the overall revised estimates and cash flows for projects as summarised and detailed in appendices 1 and 2 (para 7.2 of the report) be approved.

125.12 That progress in the following areas be noted:

- Asset management performance (para 2.1 of the report)
- Corfe Hills schools consultation (para 2.2.8 of the report)
- Construction tender inflation (para 2.2.9 of the report)
- The delivery of Highways Asset Management (Section 3 of the report)

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- The delivery of ICT Asset Management (Section 4 of the report)
- The delivery of Fleet Asset Management (Section 5 of the report)
- The delivery of Waste Asset Management (Section 6 of the report)

Reason for Decisions

126. A well-managed Council should ensure that the best use was made of its assets in terms of optimising service benefit, minimising financial impact and maximising financial return.

**Commemorating the First World War, and Supporting Dorset's Armed Forces Communities**

127.1 The Cabinet considered a joint report by the Leader of the County Council and the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Community on the County Council's proposed approach to the Commemoration of World War One and an update on Dorset's Military-Civilian Integration Project.

127.2 The County Councillor for Gillingham, as the Member Champion for Military/Civilian Integration, addressed the Cabinet to inform members of the planned commemoration activity, especially in relation to the potential increased role of the Royal British Legion as custodians of remembrance. A Commemoration Steering Group would meet later that day to discuss this role.

127.3 He explained that commemoration plans had been worked on by Blandford and Bovington Camps over the past two years. However, the work required co-ordination of a number of themes which required focus. It was therefore proposed that a website with no direct budget implications would help to achieve this role.

127.4 It was noted that the Tank Museum was also planning a number of events to recognise 100 years of the tank, but this was spread over a five year programme and should be included in the co-ordination of commemoration. Events would also be held by the Museum to recognise the role of horses in war and the change to tank use.

127.5 The Member Champion took the opportunity to promote the good work done in relation to military integration across the County, which included Bovington Camp being the first in the world to sign up to the 'time to change mental health' programme to raise mental health issues, and also the very good work on a passport scheme for children moving between schools so that there was greater consistency of information being managed in relation to pupils. It was suggested that positive press coverage of these developments would be welcomed to recognise the role of Dorset.

127.6 The County Councillor for Egdon Heath, as the local member for Bovington, addressed the Cabinet and drew attention to the work of the Tank Museum over the past six months and highlighted the opportunity to bid for funding available through the Heritage Lottery Fund to support projects in relation to commemoration. He supported the development of a website that provided guidance and co-ordination.

127.7 The Chairman of the Council welcomed the report and mentioned a number of activities being organised in terms of his role as Chairman of the Council and as Chairman of the Joint Archives Advisory Board. This included a special service in Sherborne Abbey on 27 July 2014 to recognise the date that Winston Churchill ordered navy from Portland Harbour. He also mentioned work by the Local Government Association including commemorative flag stones with the names of soldiers who received the Victoria Cross on the 100 year anniversary of the death of the individual soldier.



**Resolved**

128.1 That the proposed approach for the commemoration of World War One be endorsed.

128.2 That the progress on Dorset's Military-Civilian Integration Project be noted.

**Reason for Decisions**

129. To help build strong and healthy communities for all.

**Questions from Members of the Council**

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

Meeting Duration: 10.00am – 11.25am