

# Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,  
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 16 December 2015.

## Present:

Robert Gould (Chairman)

Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Peter Finney, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson and Rebecca Knox.

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

## Members Attending

Michael Bevan, County Councillor for Sherborne Rural

Deborah Croney, County Councillor for Hambledon (Minutes 443-445)

Janet Dover, County Councillor for Colehill and Stapehill

Spencer Flower, County Councillor for Verwood and Three Legged Cross

Paul Kimber, County Councillor for Portland Tophill

Daryl Turner, County Councillor for Marshwood Vale


Officers Attending: Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Richard Bates (Chief Financial Officer), Nicky Cleave (Assistant Director of Public Health), Catherine Driscoll (Director for Adult and Community Services), Patrick Ellis (Assistant Chief Executive), Mike Harries (Director for Environment and the Economy), Jonathan Mair (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Sara Tough (Director for Children's Services) and Lee Gallagher (Democratic Services Manager).

## For certain items, as appropriate

Jim McManus (Chief Accountant), Patrick Myers (Head of Corporate Development) and

Paul Leivers (Head of Community Services).

(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: **22 December 2015**.

(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 **13 January 2016**.

(4) **RECOMMENDED** in this type denotes that the approval of the County Council is required.)

## **Apologies for Absence**

423. No apologies for absence were received.

## **Code of Conduct**

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

424.2 It was reported that advice had been provided at another local authority in respect of members who served on multiple councils when considering options for the future of local authorities in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. The Monitoring Officer clarified that there

was no requirement to declare membership of and receipt of allowances from other authorities as disclosable pecuniary interests under the Localism Act, and that as of 16 December 2015 there were no Cabinet members who had another authority included in their register entry.

### **Minutes**

425. The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2015 were confirmed and signed.

### **Public Participation**

#### Public Speaking

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

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

#### Petitions

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

### **Noted**

### **Cabinet Forward Plan**

428. The Cabinet considered the Draft 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 on or following the Cabinet meeting on 13 January 2016. The draft plan was published on 15 December 2015.

### **Resolved**

429. That the Forward Plan be noted.

### **Panels and Boards**

430.1 The minutes and recommendation of the following meetings were submitted:

- (a) Executive Advisory Panel on Forward Together for Children's Services – 5 November 2015
- (b) Health and Wellbeing Board – 11 November 2015

430.2 In relation to the meeting of the Executive Advisory Panel on Forward Together for Children's Services, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People provided a detailed summary of the arrangements regarding the consultation on the future youth offer and explained that more information would be available from 17 December 2015 on the Council's website. It was recognised that the communities of 19 of 22 youth centres had expressed an interest in running their own centre, and that any future provision would be based on local needs and the circumstances of each business case. A consultation response letter from Councillor Ezzard regarding Wareham Youth Club was also acknowledged at the meeting.

430.3 Councillors Kimber and Bevan addressed the Cabinet to express their views regarding the consultation, which included the business cases made by communities and the feasibility of communities being able to fund future arrangements. It was also noted that a report would be considered by Cabinet on 13 January 2016.

### **Resolved**

431. That the minutes be received.

### **Forward Together Update**

432.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Development on the progress being made through the Forward Together programme across the Council, including the Property Strategy for Service Outlets, Forward Together 2020 Workstreams, and Outcomes Based Accountability.

#### **Resolved**

433. That the progress of the Forward Together Programme be endorsed.

### **The County Council's Budget**

434. The Cabinet considered the following reports in relation to the County Council's budget:

#### **Medium Term Financial Plan Update**

435.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Leader of the Council on the local and national issues that impacted on the Council's finances, including setting the budget for 2016/17 and the future Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). A member briefing was also held on 8 December 2015 for all members of the Council.

435.2 The Leader of the Council confirmed that the current budget position forecasted an overspend of £400k by the end of the financial year, which had significantly improved as a result of lots of work within directorates. Effort was underway to address future structural deficits, transform services, and use measures to address critical services in Adults and Children's social care. He then summarised the budget implications in the MTFP including the future removal of Revenue Support Grant, impact of the Business Rate Retention Scheme, Council Tax increase including an additional 2% as an authority responsible for social care, and the future use of reserves.

435.3 It was reported that a further update would be provided at the Cabinet meeting on 13 January 2016, to report on any developments arising from the detail of the Government's finance settlement scheduled to be received on 17 December 2015.

435.4 A summary of the impact of the national living wage was provided following a question, which would see an increase to £7.20 in 2016/17 and to £9 by 2020. It was noted that the impact for the next financial year would be manageable, but in future years it would become a significant challenge. The issue would continue to be considered by the Staffing Committee.

435.5 It was suggested that the budget report and savings be shared with all Overview Committees to provide a holistic view of the budget, and the savings areas that applied across the whole of the Council such as early prevention.

435.6 The Chief Financial Officer explained that a Government consultation may be undertaken on changes to the finance system and funding formula, including social care responsibilities. It was noted that the Council would wish to respond due to its potential future level of dependency on Council Tax and business rates.

#### **Resolved**

436.1 That the forecast overspend for 2015/16 and continuing action to tackle this in the current year be supported.

436.2 That the positive progress being made against savings targets for Forward Together projects be noted.

436.3 That the service issues and risks associated with the savings measures set out in Appendix 2 of the Leader's report, before proceeding to consultation with Overview Committees and others in January 2016, be supported.

436.4 That the proposed strategy for the additional funding available to the County Council through the Social Care Precept be noted.

436.5 That the proposed council tax strategy for the MTFP period be noted.

436.6 That the proposed financial planning assumptions set out in Appendix 3 of the Leader's report, to be used across the planning period be noted.

436.7 That the revisions to the Council's calculation method for MRP and the positive impact this has had on the budget strategy be noted

436.8 That the assumptions about the likely levels of funding available to the Authority over the next three years, as set out in the MTFP summary, be noted.

#### Reason for Decisions

437. To enable work to continue on refining and managing the County Council's budget plan for 2016/17 and the three years of the MTFP period, and beyond.

#### Asset Management Capital Priorities

438.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Development on the Capital Bids for 2016/17 and the Capital Funding Policy.

438.2 The Cabinet Member for Corporate Development summarised the capital financing position, which would invest over £9m and include a contingency of £848k. However, this was subject to change depending on the detail of the Government's finance settlement scheduled to be received on 17 December 2015. He thanked officers and the Asset Management Group for their hard work in developing the capital priorities.

438.3 The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People drew attention to the level of finance to address schools basic need, which would require additional funding in future years. Although she recognised the financial situation, it was suggested that if any additional funding was made available in the Basic Need Grant that it be passported to the Modernising Schools Programme.

#### **RECOMMENDED**

439.1 That the County Council be recommended to approve the bids to be included in the Capital Programme 2016/17 to 2018/19, subject to any changes arising from the financial settlement on 17 December 2015; and,

439.2 To note the revisions to the Council's calculation method for MRP and the impact this has had on our budget strategy.

#### Reason for Recommendations

440. The available resources after taking account of committed projects were insufficient to meet all the new bids in their entirety. It was therefore necessary for the Cabinet to confirm priorities for inclusion in the capital programme.

### **Exploring Options for the Future of Local Government in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole**

441.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Leader of the Council regarding the options being explored for the future structure of local government in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole and the case for change in the best interests of residents and businesses in the long term.

441.2 The Leader of the Council introduced the report and explained that the remit of the report extended beyond the structures of local authorities across pan-Dorset, and needed to build on work underway in relation to public sector reform and devolution. He highlighted the strong partnership base that could provide a foundation for the future model for pan-Dorset Councils as long as the outcome provided democratic accountability and enhanced democratic representation at all levels including town and parish councils. He explained that an additional

option was included within the report, which was not included in the standard report considered by all pan-Dorset authorities.

441.3 Councillor Croney addressed the Cabinet as the Leader of North Dorset District Council, a district representative on the Local Enterprise Partnership and as a County Councillor. She drew attention to the need to concentrate on service delivery instead of the final structure, explain clearly the linkages with other partnership arrangements such as combined authority and devolution which were separate, and to widen the discussions to enhance any existing partnerships.

441.4 A number of members expressed their support for the comments made, and made further comments to support a robust consultation which needed to take place with residents (and a referendum was also suggested), and detailed engagement with all members. The Cabinet recognised that appropriate consultation would take place but this would be a consideration in due course as the review was only just starting, and also confirmed that a cross party Board of six members would be created to consider the impacts for the Council. However, member engagement was sighted as being imperative to the future consideration of options, and it would be necessary for all members to lead on engagement within their communities.

441.5 The Cabinet discussed the report and the options in detail and highlighted that no matter what the outcome was of the review the primary objective was to ensure that public services were provided in the best way possible for the residents of pan-Dorset using economic drivers and a sound evidence base. The Cabinet welcomed the review and the ambition for change and innovation to provide a viable solution for the whole of the County. Option 4 was subsequently reworded to focus on service delivery instead of 'unitary council'.

441.6 It was noted that following a request by 10 members of the Council the issue would be discussed at a meeting of the County Council on 10 March 2016 to provide all members with the opportunity to debate the options.

### **Resolved**

442.1 That the commissioning of Local Partnerships, supported by the Local Government Association (LGA), in conjunction with all principal councils in Dorset, to examine the financial implications of the options outlined in this report for the future of local government in the sub-region be authorised.

442.2 That the development of a case for change in conjunction with all principal councils in Dorset, recognising the need to be pro-active in developing new solutions with the opportunity of devolution and the prospect of continuing austerity be authorised. In doing so all Councils will seek to work in accordance with the shared principles outlined at Appendix 1 of the Leader's report.

442.3 That a further report presenting an assessment of the options outlined in Appendix 2 of the report, and the case for a preferred option, be agreed.

442.4 That the examination of other viable alternative options which benefit residents and communities in providing services for the future across the full County area be authorised.

### **Reason for Decisions**

443. The Government was pursuing policies on devolution, economic growth and austerity. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government were encouraging local authorities nationally to come forward with proposals to meet the challenges in a spirit of ambition and innovation.

## **Cultural Strategy 2016-2021**

444.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care on the Cultural Strategy for Dorset which focussed on the health, wellbeing and economic growth in a single strategy.

444.2 The Chairman of the Council reported on the launch of the Dorset Arts Development Company, as the first public service mutual company created by the Council, and the positive future it faced. Councillor Kimber, as a Labour and Cooperative member of the Council, asked to be kept informed of the progress of the company as he was an advocate of the cooperative business model.

### **RECOMMENDED**

445. That the County Council be recommended to give support to and approve the Dorset Cultural Strategy 2016 – 2021.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

446. The proposed cultural strategy promoted collaborative working. This would contribute to the Council's vision of working together for a strong and successful Dorset and two main areas of focus: enabling economic growth and promoting health, wellbeing and safeguarding.

## **Support Services Transformation**

447.1 The Cabinet considered a joint report by the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Development on the strategic outline case in respect of the transformation of support services at the County Council.

447.2 The Cabinet Member for Corporate Development presented revised recommendations which reflected the need for further work to be completed on the refined options before any public consultation and decision by the Cabinet. The decision would therefore be taken after 24 February 2016. However, it was clarified that the current and existing transformation of services would continue through the further development of the strategic outline case, together with addressing any urgent specific issues raised within the analysis work undertaken to date.

447.3 A number of members addressed the Cabinet to express their support for the current provision of support services and explained their experiences of outsourcing and the need to retain flexible services. It was noted that although an option to outsource all services together had been discounted, outsourcing of individual services was still possible where it would enhance the service and make budgetary savings, whilst retaining flexibility.

447.4 It was suggested that a holistic approach be taken when assessing support services for the future to prevent where possible the duplication of support across all directorates. There was also recognition that there were often support services being provided by other local authorities that could generate economies of scale, and for consideration to be given to the provision of services where there was a justifiable customer base rather than an aspirational delivery of service.

447.5 The Cabinet acknowledged that although more work was required on refining the specific options before a decision, it was necessary to instruct works to prepare for a final decision. This would minimise the time needed to mobilise the solution and to implement any changes quicker. Cabinet supported the need to undertake the preparatory work.

### **Resolved**

448.1 That option 4, an outsource of all of the support services, be rejected as this is unlikely to be sufficiently flexible in the future (paragraph 8.2 of the Leader and Cabinet Member's report).

448.2 That the strategic outline case to evaluate the following two options be further developed (paragraphs 8.3 – 8.4 of the report):

- i) a combination of option 1 (developing the in-house service) and 2 exploring the options to join a shared service
- ii) option 3, incremental partnering,

448.3 That existing staff resources and budget from the Assistant Chief Executive's area be committed to the evaluation of the 2 options, development of a scope for the combination of options 1 and 2 and the pre-procurement work needed for option 3, so that the Council is ready to implement option 3 if that is the decision of Cabinet in February 2016 (section 9 of the report).

#### Reason for Decisions

449. To allow the Council to evaluate further the 2 most promising options from the strategic outline case and ensure that the Council was in a position to implement whichever of the 2 options the Cabinet selects in February 2016.

### **Recommendations from Committees**

450. The Cabinet considered the following recommendations of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 November 2015:

#### Recommendation 246 -Pan-Dorset Community Safety Partnership Arrangements

##### **Resolved**

451. That the proposed new community safety partnership arrangements, including the terms of reference for both the Dorset Community Safety Partnership and the pan-Dorset Community Safety and Criminal Justice Board be agreed.

##### Reason for Decision

452. To ensure the future success of partnership work to sustain safe communities in all areas of Dorset.

#### Recommendation 249 - Bidding Procedure to Manage External Funding Activity

##### **Resolved**

453. That an external bidding strategy based on Corporate Priorities and the Corporate Plan be developed.

##### Reason for Decision

454. The development of appropriate and effective resources, systems and strategies for managing external funding bidding activity would help the authority to deliver the priority outcomes for the communities we serve.

### **Questions from Members of the Council**

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

Meeting Duration: 10:00am – 12:05pm