



Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park,
Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XJ on Thursday, 11 February 2016

Present:

Robert Gould (Chairman)

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

Members Attending

Janet Dover, County Councillor for Colehill and Stapehill

Fred Drane, County Councillor for Lychett

Paul Kimber, County Councillor for Portland Tophill

William Trite, County Councillor for Swanage

Peter Wharf, County Councillor for Egdon Heath

John Wilson, as Chairman of the Council under Standing Order 54

Officers Attending: Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Richard Bates (Chief Financial Officer), Nicky Cleave (Deputy 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 (Monitoring Officer), Sara Tough (Director for Children's Services) and Lee Gallagher (Democratic Services Manager).

For certain items, as appropriate

Patrick Myers (Head of Corporate Development), John Alexander (Performance and Policy Manager), Jim Mcmanus (Chief Accountant) and Mark Taylor (Head of Assurance, Risk and Audit).

- (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: **Wednesday, 17 February 2016**
- (2) 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 **Wednesday, 24 February 2016**.
- (3) **RECOMMENDED** in this type denotes that a decision of County Council is required.)

Apologies for Absence

18 No apologies for absence were received.

Code of Conduct

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

Minutes

20 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2016 were confirmed and signed.

Public Participation

21 Public Speaking

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

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

Petitions

There were no petitions received at the meeting in accordance with the County Council's Petition Scheme.

Cabinet Forward Plan

- 22 The Cabinet considered the draft Forward Plan, which identified key decisions to be taken by the Cabinet on or after the next meeting. It was noted that an additional report was required for the meeting on 24 February 2016 in relation to the Regional Adoption Agency arrangements with Bournemouth and Poole Councils.

Noted

Forward Together Update

- 23 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 Working with the Voluntary Sector, Payment to Purchase review, Co-Production, and Smarter Computing. This item was deferred from the Cabinet meeting held on 13 January 2016.

In relation to Working with the Voluntary Sector, a request was made to inform all members of the design of future arrangements.

Clarification was sought in respect of the need to amend the spending limit through the procurement frameworks for smarter computing devices. It was confirmed that the decision was necessary to ensure the right balance of spend under the Crown Commercial Services contract framework to get the best value for money to purchase the preferred devices for the rollout. It was critical to ensure that timescales were optimised. It was also clarified that the spend was created as a result of savings across the authority regarding flexible working and the purchase of devices enabled new ways of working to take place.

Resolved

1. That the progress of the Forward Together Programme be noted.
2. That the increased spending limit through the Crown Commercial Services Technology Products Framework for mobile devices be approved.
3. That the increased spend limit (not a request for additional funding and this increased spend on mobile devices can be afforded within the smarter computing budget set by Cabinet) be noted.

Reason for Decisions

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.

The County Council's Budget

- 24 The Cabinet considered the following reports by the Leader of the Council.

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Budget 2016/17 to 2019/20

- 24a The Cabinet considered a report by the Leader of the Council as the final update on the major national and local issues facing the County Council and how they affected the 2016/17 budget and financial planning for the next three years. The Government settlement was received on 8 February 2016 and a supplementary update on the budget position was circulated to members of the Council in advance of the meeting.

The Leader of the Council outlined the content and implications of the budget report in detail drawing attention to the steps taken to lobby MPs and the Secretary of State in the late budget settlement consultation. It was noted that the Council's budget situation had improved from a provisional addition of £7.5m overspend which had reduced due to transitional relief to £3.3m in 2016/17 in addition to the existing savings programme, but still presented a very challenging on-going budget pressure for the next three years of the (Medium Term Financial Plan) MTFP.

A range of impacts were summarised regarding the Council Tax strategy to increase by 3.99% (including an additional ring-fenced 2% for adult social care); the Revenue Support Grant reduction over the life of the MTFP; the savings programme; capital balances; transition funding; and the formation of a cross party Budget Strategy Task and Finish Group (not Budget Working Group as proposed in the report). Particular attention was drawn to the removal of members' divisional budgets as a significant additional saving, albeit a valued initiative over the past two years funded from contingency, which was considered by Group Leaders at their meeting on 5 February 2016. It was further noted that continued help and support for the voluntary and community sector was being developed through a community fund and advice arrangement in line with the Council's corporate aims.

An update was provided on further developments since publication of the report which included a 7.5% reduction in public health funding in 2016/17 and a further 2.5% in 2017/18. It was also noted that information regarding the schools' basic need allocation was still awaited.

Cllr Janet Dover, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group expressed concern regarding the formation of the Task and Finish Group and agreed to discuss the arrangements with the Leader outside of the meeting. She was also concerned regarding the revised financial pressure on the Council that the report did not contain enough detail to be able to properly assess the savings identified, particularly in relation to the future of youth service provision and subsidised bus services through the holistic transport programme phase 2. In response it was clarified that the detail regarding savings measures was considered by all Overview Committees and presented at member budget briefings. It was then explained that changes to the services mentioned related to transforming services to provide alternatives that better met the needs of those involved at a more sustainable cost.

Cllr Paul Kimber, Leader of the Labour Group, acknowledged the significant stress on budgets and highlighted the need to engage with local councils to work together on solutions, and to keep them informed of plans for the future. He then echoed the concerns expressed regarding rural transport and youth services, with particular reference to the Portland Youth Centre. Commitment was then expressed for involvement in the Task and Finish Group to be able to critically examine the budget. The Leader confirmed that local councils would be key to addressing the challenges and opportunities ahead, and reconfirmed the change of the provision of youth services to serve the most vulnerable young people.

The Cabinet acknowledged the efforts made by all departments to identify financial savings and the service redesign that provided a focus to improve the benefits for residents of Dorset through transformation.

Resolved

1. That the additional savings proposals detailed at paragraph 3.3 of the Leader's report be agreed.
2. That the service issues and risks associated with the savings measures in Appendix 2 of the report and the feedback from Overview Committees and other sources be noted.
3. That the impact on the Authority's reserves, balances and contingency budget

as a result of the strategy for balancing the 2016/17 budget be noted.

4. That the Council Tax increase of 3.99% (including 2% for the social care precept) for 2016/17 and 3.99% for planning purposes for the remainder of the MTFP period to 2019/20 be confirmed.

RECOMMENDED

1. That the County Council be recommended to approve:
 - a) the revenue budget strategy for 2016/17 to 2019/20;
 - b) the budget requirement and precept for 2016/17; and
 - c) the position on general balances and reserves;
2. That the Chief Financial Officer be required to present to the County Council a schedule setting out the Council Tax for each category of dwelling and the precepts on each of the Dorset Councils for 2016/17.
3. That a cross party Budget Strategy Task and Finish Group be established in order to develop savings proposals to address budget gaps over the remainder of the MTFP period.

Reasons for Recommendations

To approve the Council Tax increase for 2016/17 and to enable work to continue on refining and managing the County Council's budget strategy for 2016/17 and beyond.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2016-17

- 24b The Cabinet considered the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators in accordance with the CIPFA Prudential Code and CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

Members recognised the important need to ensure prudent planning, but changes had been made to review the way capital projects were funded by borrowing, to more closely align with lifetime of assets which would realise £2.6m in 2015/16 and £2.4m in 2016/17. A final update was also provided on the outcome of the recovery of funds from banks as a result of the Icelandic Banking Crisis which had now been completed.

The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that training on treasury management would be arranged in the next few months as an important role for elected members.

RECOMMENDED

That the County Council be recommended to approve:

1. The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2016/17 to 2018/19.
2. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement.
3. The Treasury Management Strategy.
4. The Investment Strategy.
5. Delegation to the Chief Financial Officer to determine the most appropriate means of funding the Capital Programme.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. The Prudential Code provided a framework under which the Council's capital finance decisions were carried out. It required the Council to demonstrate that its capital expenditure plans were affordable, external borrowing was within prudent and sustainable levels and treasury management decisions were taken in accordance with professional good practice. Adherence to the Prudential Code was mandatory as set out in the Local Government Act 2003.
2. The report recommended the indicators to be applied by the Council for the financial years 2016/17 to 2018/19. The successful implementation of the code would assist in the objective of developing 'public services fit for the future'.

Corporate Performance Monitoring Report

- 25 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Development on the monitoring of the Corporate Balanced Scorecard, including the Corporate Plan, for the second quarter of 2015/16. This item was deferred from the Cabinet meeting held on 13 January 2016.

The Policy and Performance Manager introduced the new reporting style to the Cabinet which would present highlights on performance against outcomes and arrangements to provide live data at meetings which would provide more opportunity to scrutinise issues of concern. The Cabinet welcomed the developments to improve performance monitoring and to use an Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) approach focussed on the impact on residents of Dorset. It was suggested that performance needed to be measured regarding early prevention for future reports and detail health impacts.

In relation to the representation of performance information by the press, a member expressed concern that the information presented needed to be clear in the layout to prevent misinterpretation.

A question was asked about the use of electronic systems to complement the reporting processes for Committees including the production of reports. It was confirmed that this was being addressed and an ICT system would modernise the processes currently in place.

Resolved

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the proposed revised approach entitled OBA Concept Report Scorecard be endorsed.

Reason for Decisions

To ensure members' awareness of the County Council's performance against the 2015-16 Corporate Plan and Corporate Balanced Scorecard.

Commercialisation and Income Generation Policy

- 26 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Development on the work of the Commercial Board, as part of the Forward Together Programme, to focus on a more commercial and business mind-set approach to include promotion of innovation and a culture of growth of entrepreneurial activity to realise commercial potential. This item was deferred from the Cabinet meeting held on 13 January 2016.

The Cabinet commended the report and thanked the Head of Internal Audit, Insurance & Risk Management for his efforts to produce a concise policy and strategy which provided a clear focus on the aims and objectives of the Council in respect of commercial activity and opportunities.

It was clarified that the development of a commercial approach and generation of income for the Council would be managed to avoid any negative impact on small businesses and business communities.

Resolved

That the Commercialisation and Income Generation Policy be approved and adopted.

Reason for Decision

To establish clear aims and objectives to encourage and support a more commercial approach across the Council.

Recommendations from Committees

27 The Cabinet considered the following recommendations from committees.

Recommendation 18 - Admissions Arrangements 2017-2018 and Transport Policy 2016-2017

27a **Resolved**

That the following be adopted:

1. Dorset County Council Admissions Arrangements including the Co-ordinated Scheme, the Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Dorset 2017-2018, the In-Year Fair Access Policy 2017-2018, the Admission of Armed Forces Community Children Policy and the Guidance on the Placement of a Pupil Outside His or Her Normal Age Group, the 6th Form Admissions Policy and the Nursery Admissions Policy.
2. The Home to School Transport Entitlement Policy for Children Attending Mainstream School 2016-2017 and the Dorset Post 16 Transport Support Policy for 2016-2017 which included a rise in the surplus seat price from £485 to £510 and a proposal for reaching full cost recovery. The full cost recovery be recommended to be progressed in accordance with option 'a' within the report, namely an increase in September 2016 to £510, to £640 in September 2017 and to £770 in September 2018.
3. The extension of the Post 16 charge to young people with SEN/D accessing Post 16 education.
4. Changes to the Pupil Admissions Number for Thomas Hardy School, reducing from 475 to 450.

Reasons for Decisions

1. To determine admissions arrangements in accordance with statutory requirements including the Schools Admissions Code December 2014.
2. To ensure compliance with the latest legislation and subsequent regulation/statutory guidance.

Recommendation 30 - Future of the School Library Service

27b It was noted that more consultation needed to be carried out before a decision would be made in relation to the future of the School Library Service.

Resolved

That the consideration of the future arrangements for the School Library Service be deferred.

Recommendation 14 - Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026: Passenger Transport Strategy

27c **Resolved**

That the Passenger Transport Strategy be approved.

Reason for Decision

Implementation of the Passenger Transport Strategy would impact on the continuance of transportation service and quality as savings were sought through the Forward Together Programme.

Recommendation 27 - Dorset County Council Environmental Performance and Greenhouse Emissions 2015

27d **Resolved**

That officers be authorised to pursue the opportunities to improve the County Council's overall environmental performance in Section 5 of the Head of Economy's report.

Reason for Decision

The recommendation supported the County Council's key objective of Enabling Economic Growth, set out in Corporate Plan 2014-15, by supporting an energy efficient, low carbon economy, tackling global environmental change and ensuring

good management of our property, environmental and historic assets.

Recommendation 30 - Partnership Bid for European Structural Investment Funds for 'Dorset Low Carbon Economy Programme'

27e **Resolved**

1. That the submission of a full bid to the ESIF programme be approved.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Environment, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to sign grant and partnership agreements for the purposes of the project.
3. That Dorset County Council taking on the role of lead partner and accountable body for this project be agreed.

Reason for Decisions

To deliver the County Council's Corporate Aims on enabling economic growth and to deliver the aim of an 'energy efficient, low carbon economy' in particular. Proactive pursuit of European funding also presented an opportunity to develop the capability and skills needed to better access and manage this potentially significant source of funding in future.

Recommendation 33 - Heritage Lottery Fund/Big Lottery Fund ' Parks for People' Bid

27f **Resolved**

1. That a Stage 1 bid be agreed and, in the event that this was successful, a Stage 2 bid be agreed to go forward to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the 'Durlston Pleasure Grounds' project.
2. That in the event of a successful bid, approval be given to delegate authority to the Head of Environment to agree the Terms of Grant, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment.

Reasons for Decisions

1. To support the Corporate Plan objectives on public health and wellbeing.
2. To support the Asset Management Plan objectives on improving the condition of, and reducing maintenance costs in, the retained estate.

Recommendation 37 - Superfast Broadband Provision for Hard to Reach Communities

27g Members recognised the significant impact made by improving access to Superfast Broadband, which had been considered in detail by a Policy Development Panel which had arisen from a petition regarding access difficulties in rural areas. It was noted that progress was still required regarding 'not-spots' in the remaining 3% of Dorset, and the initiative had begun to start looking into Ultrafast Broadband provision and other elements of digital infrastructure. Details of the timeframe for addressing 'not-spots' would be shared with members outside of the meeting.

Resolved

1. That a comprehensive analysis of Superfast Broadband "not-spots" across the County be carried out, detailing communities, clusters of properties and isolated properties.
2. That the Superfast Dorset team continue to work with the supplier to ensure solutions deliver value for money in order to maximise the potential underspend for reinvestment – it is understood that additional investment would be available for further delivery at the end of the current deployment period, i.e. into 2018.
3. That support be given to actively pursuing the benefits of a marketing action plan, with all of the strategic stakeholders for the development of a business case for revenue funding of activities that would drive greater take-up, from 19% to 50%.
4. That additional funding opportunities be pursued, including the part that the South West Ultrafast Fund would play in this.
5. That should additional funding be available, market engagement and open

procurement should be a requirement to maximise competition, drive value for money and innovative solutions. Any alternative solution must be demonstrably no more expensive in on-going user costs than mainstream commercial offerings and must have no greater restrictions on volume of use and on hospitality to future extension.

6. That Dorset's Digital Infrastructure Strategy be used to gain traction with the Dorset LEP and other stakeholders to provide a strategic base for actions in the medium term to develop a digital Dorset and maximise economic growth and prosperity.

Reason for Decisions

To enable members to have an oversight of this important programme which contributed to Dorset County Council's Corporate Plan focus on Economic Growth.

Recommendation 18 - Development of a Pooled Budget for ex NHS Campus Residents

27h **Resolved**

That the development of a pan-Dorset pooled budget for 26 ex-NHS campus residents from 1 April 2016 along with further work to design the terms of the underpinning Section 75 document be approved.

Reason for Decision

Alignment of the Council's approach with national and corporate strategy.

Recommendation 23 - Policy Development Panels

- 27i The Cabinet was briefed by Cllr Paul Kimber as the Vice Chairman of the Policy Development Panel on Trading Standards on the work of the Panel and the valuable role played by the service in supporting businesses across the County.

Resolved

That the recommendations of the Policy Development Panel as detailed in section 10 of the Director's report be agreed.

Reason for Decision

The Trading Standards Service had been reviewed and the contribution made by enabling economic growth by supporting a fair and safe trading and promoting wellbeing through services to consumers.

Recommendation 32 - Future of the School Library Service

- 27j This matter was decided upon in minute 27b above.

Recommendation 265/2015 and 4/2016 - Property Rationalisation

- 27k Cllr Wharf summarised the consideration of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in relation to property rationalisation and the work of the Dorset Development Partnership, highlighted lessons learned and encouraged improved member engagement regarding property options and disposals. The Cabinet agreed that local members were integral to the options regarding property rationalisation and often had valuable insights into options for the future, and emphasised the need to comply with the Protocol for Informing Local Members of Matters Affecting their Electoral Divisions.

Resolved

1. That the programme be noted as an excellent example of the Council, through innovation, actively challenging the "status quo", and sought to deliver both transformation and financial savings, in pursuit of improved outcomes for the residents and communities of Dorset.
2. That the financial targets that have been agreed for the programme be recognised as necessary, challenging and ambitious.
3. That the reduction in the non-schools estate in the shape of running costs, net

- floor area and capital receipts be noted.
4. That the Committee's comments regarding the focus on culture and behaviour and new ways of working; the importance of the 'One Council' programme; member awareness and engagement; enhanced performance monitoring; exploring a wider association with the Dorset Development Partnership; clear principles and direction of the Council; and feedback from members serving on the DDP Member Board be endorsed.
 5. That the commissioning of professional support, available through the Dorset Development Partnership, to supplement the Council's resources to maintain the required momentum be investigated.
 6. That proposed changes to the use of capital receipts to support revenue spending on transformation be examined.
 7. That the reality of speeding up the programme be noted as being very difficult due to the associated disposal processes and market factors.
 8. That the asset management register be reviewed on an annual basis.

Reason for Decisions

To support the property rationalisation programme and identify whether anything further could be done to achieve the target and reduce the risk of not achieving the identified savings.

Recommendation 14 - Tricuro - Lessons Learnt Review

- 271 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care highlighted that the review had identified lesson learned, but needed to also identify the need for recruitment to take an appropriate amount of time to appoint senior officers in order to appoint the right person. It was noted that the minutes would be updated accordingly.

Concern was expressed regarding the use of consultants and the possibility of issues caused by information not being made available in order to get the best value possible. The Cabinet Member reported that although there were issues raised in the lessons learned, on the whole the use of consultants had provided excellent advice and brokerage and it would not have been possible to complete the formation of the company without them.

Resolved

That the importance of lessons learned identified in the report be acknowledged and noted to avoid any recurrence.

Reason for Decision

To allow members to perform their consultative role as outlined in the 22 October and 17 December 2014 Cabinet reports, and the 10 June 2015 Audit and Scrutiny Committee report.

Questions from County Councillors

- 28 No questions were asked by members under Standing Order 20.

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 12.05 pm