



Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester,
Dorset, DT1 1XJ on Wednesday, 1 February 2017.

Present:

Robert Gould	Leader of the Council (Chairman)
Peter Finney	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Highways
Robin Cook	Cabinet Member for Organisational Development and Transformation
Deborah Croney	Cabinet Member for Learning, Skills and Children's Safeguarding
Jill Haynes	Cabinet Member for Adult Health, Care and Independence
Rebecca Knox	Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Communities

Members Attending:

Hilary Cox, as Vice-Chairman of the County Council
Paul Kimber, County Councillor for Portland Tophill

Officers Attending:

Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Richard Bates (Chief Financial Officer), Helen Coombes (Interim Director for Adult and Community Services), Mike Harries (Director for Environment and the Economy), Jonathan Mair (Monitoring Officer), Sara Tough (Director for Children's Services), Michael Carhart-Harris (Senior Communications Officer) and Lee Gallagher (Democratic Services Manager).

For certain items, as appropriate:

John Alexander (Senior Assurance Manager - Performance), Andrew Martin (Service Director - Highways), Jim McManus (Chief Accountant) and Matthew Piles (Service Director - Economy).

- (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: **Tuesday, 7 February 2017.**
- (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, 8 March 2017.**
- (3) **RECOMMENDED** in this type denotes that a decision of County Council is required.)

Apologies for Absence

18 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Andrew Cattaway, Cllr Colin Jamieson and David Phillips (Director of Public Health).

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 18 January 2017 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 statements 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 a report on Concessionary Travel would be addressed outside of the meeting and an item would be reinstated on to the Forward Plan on an appropriate date.

Noted

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Budget 2017/18 to 2019/20

- 23 The Cabinet considered a report by the Leader of the Council on the development of the budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) throughout the year regarding Council Tax and Social Care Precepts, expenditure allocation and savings measures.

Cllr Robert Gould introduced the report in detail, and explained the elements comprising the budget and development of the MTFP, which included the challenges facing the Council in coming years and included continued pressure on Adult Social Care, Looked After Children and Special Educational Needs Transport. It was confirmed that the contingency budget would need to increase from £2.3m to £2.9m due to the scale of risks detailed within the report, and due to the need to work at the lower end of reserves and balances. It was noted that the Forward Together Programme would continue to drive savings required in 2017/18 of £22.1m, with £49.4m required in total over the next three years.

Members discussed a range of budget areas, which included the recognition of inward investment from the DfE for reinvigorating social care which would lead to reducing budget pressures; the need for clarity regarding the future Business Rates Retention Scheme; the Council's approach to asylum seeking children; recognition of a 15% market increase in the cost of adult social care; the impact of inflation and procurement opportunities pending Brexit; the cost of Looked After Children and anticipated reductions due to a focus on early prevention; and the impact of more targeted Youth Services.

In relation to Local Government Reorganisation, it was understood that there was an estimated implementation cost of £25m, but the funding was not yet forthcoming from Government, and it was unclear if councils that were not willing to change would contribute to the reorganisation.

The Cabinet expressed the need to explain the position in relation to Adult Social Care to the public as the introduction of the Social Care Precept was not a solution and there was much more funding required to solve the funding problem as a national issue.

Members discussed the Forward Together Programme in terms of the challenges ahead, and it was noted that an audit report on the programme, including its governance, would be available in March 2017 which would include a number of learning points to strengthen the current arrangements. Reference was also made to

budget management performance following a training programme and tools being introduced for managers as a result of a financial control audit and plan. It was noted specifically that there had been no breaches of financial rules. It was felt that the Cabinet would need to be clearer about challenging and monitoring risks within the programme and budget management.

Resolved

That subject to confirmation of funding levels once the final settlement is received:

1. Consider the service issues and risks associated with the savings measures arising from the updated Forward Together programme, set out in Appendix 2 of the report, and agree these as the measures upon which any relevant consultation takes place (these are also the measures which the flexible use of capital receipts strategy will support).
2. Note the outcome of the Authority's review of reserves and balances and the risks associated with the use of reserves to balance the budget over the planning period and the impact this will have on the starting position for new Local Government structures in Dorset from 1 April 2019.
3. Confirm the Council Tax increase of 1.99% for 2017/18 and the assumption of 2% annual increase across the remainder of the planning period.
4. Confirm a Social Care Precept of 3% for both 2017/18 and 2018/19 and 0% for 2019/20.

RECOMMENDED

1. That the County Council be recommended to approve:
 - a) the revenue budget strategy for 2017/18 to 2019/20
 - b) the budget requirement and precept for 2017/18
 - c) the position on general balances and reserves
2. That the Chief Financial Officer 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 2017/18.
3. That the Budget Strategy Task and Finish Group continue in order to develop savings proposals to address budget gaps over the remainder of the MTFP period.
4. That the role of the Forward Together Programme is clarified to ensure managers are held to account for their budgets and ensure that specific, measurable actions are put in place to ensure budgets at risk are managed within the funding parameters agreed by Elected Members.

Reason for Decisions and Recommendations

To approve the Council Tax increase for 2017/18 and to enable work to continue on refining and managing the County Council's budget strategy for the remaining MTFP period.

Asset Management Capital Priorities

- 24 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Organisational Development and Transformation on the priorities for capital spending over the next three years, including Capital Bids for 2017/18 and the Capital Funding Policy. This report follows previous consideration by the Cabinet on 18 December 2016 where it was agreed to reassess the programme given the financial position of the Council, and the forthcoming budget announcement from Government, to focus on the highest and immediate priorities.

Members praised a number of capital related approaches to build credibility and secure external funding from Government and other sources including the use of a Highways Asset Management Plan to secure a Pothole Action Fund and from the National Productivity Investment Fund to improve local road networks. Compliments were also expressed in relation to the receipt of £150k for the Living and Learning Programme through the Councils' One Public Estate bid.

In relation to the One Public Estate, it was recognised that there was continued work on Dorset-wide public asset management. Members also acknowledged the consideration by the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Growth Board regarding progress and delivery of a strategic approach asset management, including housing. It was agreed that a report would be submitted to Cabinet in due course in relation to Joint Asset Management.

Cllr Paul Kimber addressed the Cabinet to raise concern about air quality and steps to improve traffic congestion. It was confirmed that the highways improvement programme used specific criteria including congestion, but there was no separate programme to address air quality, and that this was a responsibility of district and borough councils. It was also noted that issues relating to micro particles and air quality did not relate solely to traffic and congestion, and that there was investment by Public Health into monitoring equipment to better understand the complexities of air quality including mapping. Members were encouraged to continue to promote Dorset's natural environment and to promote healthy and active lifestyles.

RECOMMENDED

That the County Council be recommended to approve the bids to be included in the capital programme 2017/18 to 2019/20.

Reason for Recommendation

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.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2017-18

25 The Cabinet considered a report by the Leader of the Council regarding the planning of capital expenditure and the funding of that expenditure, in accordance with the CIPFA Prudential Code, in addition to the publication and monitoring of Prudential Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy.

RECOMMENDED

That the County Council be recommended to approve:

1. The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2017/18 to 2019/20.
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 2017/18 to 2019/20. The successful implementation of the code would assist in the Council's objective of developing 'public services fit for the future'.

Corporate Plan: Outcomes focused monitoring report

26 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Organisational Development and Transformation regarding the Corporate Plan based on an outcomes focused approach as a new approach to performance reporting, and was reflected in the new Overview and Scrutiny Committees which were also based on the Council's corporate aims. Members noted that training would be held on 8 and 9

February 2017 regarding outcomes based accountability.

The new reporting format was welcomed by members. Suggestions made at the meeting related to the need to focus on a smaller number of performance indicators as the top priorities facing the Council, to have as much up to date information as possible in the report including those that link with Dorset Police and the Community Safety Partnership, and to ensure that benchmarking was relevant to Dorset. It was noted that suggestions regarding the format were welcomed outside of the meeting through liaison with the Senior Assurance Manager, and work was underway to refine the number of indicators by the Planning and Learning Group during 2017.

The Cabinet requested that performance information should be aligned with the Council's budget and that efforts should be progressed to make this possible.

Consideration was given to the reporting of indicators where the Council was not the responsible body, and it was felt that there was a need to know the responsible body and how the outcome was being addressed.

Reflections of the new approach of Overview and Scrutiny Committees was highlighted, as the recent round of meetings in January 2017 had considered performance information in detail and particular outcomes were being selected and scrutinised. Scrutiny would include consideration of performance data alongside financial information and relevant experience.

Resolved

1. That the evidence of Dorset's position with regard to the outcome indicators in Appendix 1 of the report be noted.
2. That the progression in the available evidence in support of the agreed outcomes in the corporate plan be noted.
3. That members liaise with the Senior Assurance Manager regarding the refinement of performance indicators and future reports.

Reason for Decisions

The 2016-17 Corporate Plan provided an overarching strategic framework for monitoring progress towards good outcomes for Dorset. The outcome indicators summarised in the report provided enhanced evidence to the Cabinet, the Audit and Governance Committee and the three Overview and Scrutiny committees so that progress against the corporate plan could be monitored effectively.

Consideration of the Proposals to implement a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA)

- 27 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Learning, Skills and Children's Safeguarding on the creation of a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) in partnership with Bournemouth Borough Council and the Borough of Poole from July 2017.

Further to commitment being given by the Cabinet in February 2016, members welcomed the progress to establish an RAA, including the participation of Families for Children (a Voluntary Adoption Agency). The RAA would manage adoption services, those deemed suitable for adoption, target recruitment and prospect adopters, and provide special guardianship. It would also remain as an aim to form the agency as a Local Authority Trading Company in due course.

The Head of Care and Protection, and officers involved in the development of the RAA were congratulated for their hard work.

Resolved

1. That the establishment of a Regional Adoption Agency (the proposed Regional Adoption Agency) would combine the adoption services of Bournemouth Borough

Council, Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole, working in partnership with Families for Children, a voluntary adoption agency) be approved.

2. That the Business Case for the Pan Dorset model of a Local Authority Single Hosted (LASH) model for delivery of adoption services be approved.
3. That the hosting arrangement be approved, for Bournemouth Borough Council to host the adoption agency on the behalf of the three local authorities.
4. That the proposed name for the new RAA: *Aspire Adoption*, be approved.
5. That delegated authority be granted to the Director for Children's Services, after consultation with the portfolio Holder for Children's Safeguarding, to make minor amendments to the business case following further discussions with Bournemouth Borough Council and the Borough of Poole.
6. That delegated authority be granted to the Director for Children's Services, after consultation with the portfolio holder for Children's Safeguarding to agree appropriate governance arrangements for Aspire Adoption.
7. That delegated authority be granted to Bournemouth Borough Council under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, the County Council's Adoption and Children Act 2002 function relating to adoption services, to discharge on behalf of the County Council and as host of the Regional Adoption Agency.

Reasons for Decisions

1. Councils have a statutory duty to provide adoption services to all those affected by adoption living in their area. Services to meet those responsibilities are required to meet legislative requirements and Minimum Standards for Adoption Services and are inspected regularly by Ofsted to ensure they do so.
2. The move towards a proposed Regional Adoption Agency would not discharge the Council of its statutory responsibilities but would affect far reaching changes in how those functions were organised and managed. While Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole all continued to provide high performing adoption services, central government expected that Regional Adoption Agencies would be better able to target the recruitment of prospective adopters, speed up the matching and placement of children, improve adoption support services and may create efficiency savings.
3. The Education and Adoption Act which came into force in April 2016 provided the Secretary of State with the power to order local authority adoption agencies to combine services if they do not voluntarily do so.

Changes to Dorset's Concessionary Travel Scheme

28 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Highways regarding Dorset's Concessionary Travel Scheme.

In relation to a petition received from residents of Shroton, it was agreed that the details would be forwarded to Cllr Deborah Croney so that she could explore if there were any opportunities for a community transport scheme.

It was highlighted that in addition to open school routes, there was potential to use the fleet supporting Adult and Community Services, and that it would be helpful to progress the opportunity. It was noted that this was a current workstream of the Holistic Transport Board and would consider Special Educational Needs transport alongside these vehicles, in addition to working with the NHS and Clinical Commissioning Group.

The opportunities regarding post 16 education were also highlighted, as the approach proposed would enable more options for young people to access their choice of school or college for further education.

The Cabinet was informed that a newsletter would be published for all members soon regarding the work of the Holistic Transport Board, contract arrangements, community transport and toolkit.

Resolved

That the cessation of Dorset's concessionary travel enhancement, ending free travel before 9.30am when there is no service until after 10.30am be approved, to be implemented from August 2017 to coincide with the start of new public transport contracts.

Reasons for Decision

1. To better align Dorset County Council's concessionary travel scheme with the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme.
2. To encourage service providers to open more schools routes to the public when the new contract model for passenger transport was implemented in September 2017. Helping to ensure that, as far as possible, people would be part of inclusive communities and not feel lonely or isolated.
3. To provide financial savings that would allow Dorset County Council to allocate resources effectively. Helping to ensure that local taxpayers got the best value for money.

Notification of a scheme exceeding £500,000 - A30 resurfacing, Stour Hill to Somerset County Boundary

- 29 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Highways on the A30 resurfacing from Stour Hill to the Somerset County Boundary.

Resolved

That the scheme be approved to proceed on 5 March 2017 as programmed.

Reason for Decision

Failure to address this now could see further deterioration of the road surface that might incur revenue liabilities in the form of reactive repairs and third party claims.

Funding strategy for supporting Dorset's communities through its voluntary and community sector (VCS) and its parish and town councils (PTCs) from April 2017

- 30 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Communities regarding the continued involvement of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and parish and town councils in the delivery of the County Council's corporate objectives.

Cllr Rebecca Knox drew attention to the support provided by the Council and the work to improve outcomes through grants and allocation of funding. The level of staff volunteering at the County Council was also highlighted, including the award from Dorset Community Action as 'Best Voluntary Organisation' in 2016. The new Strategy would be kept under review and developed over time.

In terms of performance monitoring of outcomes as a result of allocation of grants, it was noted that there were contractual obligations as part of the arrangement which included measurement against Council priorities, and strict criteria. Bringing the service back into the Council also provided closer transactional visibility.

Members discussed the allocation of funds to partner organisations, and it was noted that although the amounts decreased over a two year period, it remained constant for Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils at a level of £25k. The funding would be used to enable engagement through transformation and devolution work with town and parish councils which was vital in the coming years, albeit that this could be reviewed in due course.

Resolved

1. To ensure Dorset's most vulnerable residents have access to information, advice and guidance and to organisations that can provide the support required. This will be

achieved through a funding allocation for year one of £103,500 and year two £98,353 to organisations that provide the appropriate information and guidance to residents. This will be delivered by the provision of a 2 year strategic grant.

2. To support volunteering and the volunteering infrastructure across Dorset to maximise the impact to Dorset's most vulnerable communities through a funding allocation for year one of £54,000 and year 2 £51,300 to a support organisation that promotes volunteering, matches tasks to organisations and will continue to promote the Council's volunteering scheme in line with the corporate outcomes. This will be delivered by the provision of a 2 year strategic grant.

3. To continue to build the capacity of the Voluntary and Community Sector and Parish and Town Councils through support, advice and training to organisations so that the sector can participate in service delivery to meet the objectives of residents and the Council, to be achieved through a funding allocation of £90,000 for year one and £85,500 for year 2 for support to Organisations and funding allocation of £25,000 per annum to help build the capacity of Town and Parish Councils. This will be delivered by the provision of a 2 year strategic grant.

4. To continue but limit the provision of the Dorset Innovation Fund to one round of applications per year to enable funding for smaller innovative projects targeted at Dorset's most vulnerable communities and lever new money into the County which supports the councils ambition of reducing demand for its services through connecting people to the right support early. This will be achieved through a funding allocation of £85,000 to provide direct grants and some match funding often required by other grant providers as a condition of grant awards.

5. To agree that all grant agreements across the County Council will be recorded using the Council's contract and grant management system.

Reason for Decisions

Dorset's voluntary and community sector and its parish and town councils remained vital to support, enable and improve the quality of life of Dorset's communities and residents. The outcomes of the recommendations would assist the County Council to deliver the priorities as outlined in the Corporate Plan.

Dynamic Purchasing System - Passenger Transport

- 31 The Cabinet considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Highways regarding the contract arrangement for the current Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), used for procurement of passenger transport services in Dorset, which was due to expire on 30 April 2017. Assurance that the contract would be futureproofed and flexible was provided, particularly given any potential reorganisation of Local Government in Dorset.

Resolved

That the implementation of a new Dynamic Purchasing System from 1 May 2017 onwards, on terms to be agreed by the Service Director Economy after consultation with the portfolio holder, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

1. To meet the authority's statutory duty in respect of Special Educational Needs and Children in Care travel and to supplement any gaps in the Council's statutory provision of Home to School transport.
2. To contribute to the authority's corporate priorities of providing travel assistance for users, whilst facilitating independence and promoting economic growth.

Recommendations from Committees

- 32 The Cabinet considered the following recommendation.

Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 25 January 2017**33** Recommendation 6 - Notice of Motion: Clause 21 of the Bus Bill/ Bus Subsidies Working Group

The Cabinet received a minute from the Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 January 2017, and noted that although Clause 21 had been removed by the Lords, it was possible that the Commons could reinstate it. Members supported the recommendation and the Leader of the Council agreed to add his name to the letter.

Resolved

That the approach taken by the Committee and their broad support for the principle of the motion be endorsed, and that the Leader of the Council would add his name to the letter being written by the Chairman of the Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee, portfolio holder and Director for Environment and the Economy.

Questions from County Councillors

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

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 12.00 pm