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CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 20 JUNE 2023

Present: Cllrs Spencer Flower (Chairman), Gary Suttle (Vice-Chairman), Laura Beddow, Ray Bryan, Simon Gibson, Jill Haynes, Andrew Parry and Jane Somper

Apologies: Cllrs Byron Quayle and David Walsh

Cabinet Leads in attendance: Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Graham Carr-Jones, Cllr Andrew Kerby and Cllr Mark Roberts

Also present: Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Piers Brown, Cllr Simon Christopher, Cllr Les Fry, Cllr David Gray, Cllr Brian Heatley, Cllr Sherry Jespersen, Cllr Paul Kimber, Cllr Jon Orrell, Cllr Mike Parkes and Cllr Bill Trite

Also present remotely: Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke and Cllr Barry Goringe

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Sean Cremer (Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Vivienne Broadhurst (Executive Director - People Adults), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place), Andrew Billany (Corporate Director for Housing), David Bonner (Service Manager for Business Intelligence and Performance), Gemma Clinton (Head of Commercial Waste and Strategy), Nina Coakley (Programme Manager), Paul Dempsey (Corporate Director - Care & Protection), Jennifer Lewis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement), Claire Shiels (Corporate Director - Commissioning, Quality & Partnerships) and David Webb (Manager - Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service)

Officers present remotely (for all or part of the meeting):

Anna Eastgate (Corporate Director - Place Services)

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest to report.

3. **Public Participation**

There were no public questions or statements received.

4. **Questions from Councillors**

There were two questions received from Councillor Kimber and Councillor Orrell; these along with the responses are set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

5. **Forward Plan**

The draft Cabinet Forward Plan for July was received and noted.

6. **Council Plan Annual Report 2022/23**

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation presented a report on the progress towards delivery of the Council Plan. The Dorset Council Plan was an articulation of the priorities of the council, and it reflected resident priorities with a commitment to delivering high quality services. Following a refreshment of the plan in October 2022, a delivery plan was evolving over time to ensure a responsive approach to local and national policy and need.

In response to questions around the delivery of affordable homes, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation confirmed that a report on the Housing Strategy would be considered by members at a future meeting of Cabinet.

It was proposed by Cllr J Haynes seconded by Cllr L Beddow.

Decision

That the annual progress against the refreshed Council Plan for the period October 2022 to March 2023 be noted.

Reason for the Decision

To ensure progress towards delivery of the Council Plan was monitored.

7. **Draft Outturn report 2022/23**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial & Capital Strategy presented a report with information about the Council's draft, unaudited financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2023 and the financial position at that date.

In response to questions about the decline in the earmarked reserves, the Portfolio Holder reminded Cabinet that the council remained underfunded. The Executive Director, Corporate Development advised that risks within the 2022/23 budget would continue to be carefully monitored and managed. Cabinet should take comfort in that the general reserve element was planned to increase as the organisation grows.

Responding to questions about the shortfall in car parking revenue, the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment highlighted that council had reduced the charges proposed, post budget setting, therefore the shortfall remained in the

budget. There had also been several issues around the implementation of the new car park ticket machines and inherited equipment. The new machines provided daily data for the car parking team and will enable the council to create a path going forward for future charges.

In respect of the debt management for the council, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial & Capital Strategy confirmed that this matter was being addressed, however during the Covid period the county courts had been closed and this had created a significant backlog. The Executive Director confirmed that officers were looking to find a more efficient way forward.

Responding to questions around council tax and a government report based around “unleashing potential”, the Portfolio Holder agreed, to give the Councillor asking the question, a written response after the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr G Suttle and seconded by Cllr S Gibson

Decision

- (a) That the draft revenue and capital outturn and the financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2023, be noted.
- (b) That the use of un-ringfenced reserves to support the overspend position in addition to increasing the general fund balance in line with the financial strategy document, be approved.
- (c) That an increase of 2.0m to the working capital loan facility available to Dorset Centre of Excellence Limited, be approved and
- (d) That authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer to agree the terms of the loan, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Finance.

Reason for the Decision

Although this report does not seek formal approval from Cabinet for the reported outturn, the financial performance for the year and the financial position at 31 March 2023 are important aspects of financial management as they mark the start of the next medium-term financial plan update (MTFP) and budget strategy development for 2024/25.

In addition to reporting outturn, with the financial performance for the year materially complete, it is important for Cabinet to review the risks the organisation now faces and to consider areas where it wishes to make strategic investments and/or to repurpose and prioritise its reserves to facilitate these aims.

8. Transformation Annual Report 2022/23

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation set out the Transformation Annual Report 2022/23 and confirmed that the council had launched a significant acceleration of the customer transformation programme. This would drive and further align transformation activity across the council.

It was proposed by Cllr J Haynes seconded by Cllr A Parry

Decision

- (a) That the Transformation Plan annual report be approved
- (b) That the planned shift in year three of the Transformation Plan to integrate ambitious customer transformation/Our Future Council plans from 2024 to 2030 be noted.

Reason for the Decision

Fundamental change to systems enabling improved outcomes across demand-led services can take time, and as such, a long-term transformation programme is required as we build incremental change to drive outcomes and realise financial stability.

9. Aspire Adoption Annual Report for Dorset Council

In the absence of the portfolio holder, Cllr A Parry presented the Aspire Adoption Annual report. The report provided a summary of the comprehensive self-evaluation of the Aspire Regional Adoption Agency.

The Corporate Director for Care and Protection outlined the specifics of the report and key activity details were also shared with members. He reported that there had been a few changes within Aspire, including the permanent appointment of Mr Allan Charlton to the post of Service Manager.

In response to a question, the Service Manager for Aspire advised that there had been a decrease in enquiries for adoption nationally, potentially due to the “cost of living crisis” although this was now beginning to recover.

It was proposed by Cllr A Parry seconded by Cllr J Haynes

Decision

That the Aspire Annual Report and Statement of Purpose be approved.

Reason for the decision

That Cabinet was satisfied that Aspire Statement of Purpose accurately describes the activities that the agency discharges on behalf of Dorset Council and the Annual Report satisfies the report that these activities were discharged to a high standard in the reporting year.

10. Youth Justice Service Inspection

In the absence of the portfolio holder, Cllr A Parry presented the outcome of the Youth Justice Inspection, reporting that the overall rating of the service was good.

It was proposed by Cllr A Parry seconded by Cllr J Haynes

Decision

- (a) That the findings of the inspection report, including the “recommendations”, “strengths”, and “areas for improvement” identified by the inspectors be noted.
- (b) It was further noted that an action plan was in place, with suitable monitoring, to address the inspection report’s recommendations.

Reasons for the decision

To ensure the committee has oversight of the inspection report and was assured that an action plan is in place to address the report’s Recommendations.

11. Youth Justice Plan 2023/224

In the absence of the portfolio Holder, Cllr A Parry presented the Youth Justice Plan for 2023/24.

In response to a question from the Chairman of the People and Health Overview Committee, it was confirmed that the Portfolio Holder would be happy to discuss the report with the councillor concerned outside of the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr A Parry seconded by Cllr J Haynes

Recommendation to Full Council

That the Youth Justice Plan 2023/24 be approved.

Reason for the decision

Youth Justice Services are required to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which should be approved by the Local Authority for that Youth Justice Service. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service works across both Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council. Approval is therefore sought from both Dorset Council and from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.

12. Dorset Council Plan Priorities Update: Working with the Integrated Care System

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing presented an information report on Key Cabinet Commitment 7, the Integrated Care System. The commitment sought to ensure that the Council got a better deal out of its partnerships arrangements through the Integrated Care System.

The Portfolio Holder also indicated that there were a number of PowerPoints slides attached to the report for councillors to read in more detail.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder advised that due to the steps being put into place, including appropriate care home or at home care, there was no need for Dorset to discharge people from hospital into local hotels.

In respect to further questions, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that as part of the wider strategy, communication and optimisation were continually being addressed.

Cabinet noted the information set out in the report and PowerPoint slides attached to the agenda.

13. **Portfolio Holder /Lead Member(s) Update including any Policy referrals to report**

There were no updates to report.

14. **Urgent items**

There was one urgent item to be received under exempt business. An update in respect of **Day Opportunities: Next Steps (min 17)**

15. **Exempt Business**

It was proposed by Cllr J Haynes seconded by Cllr G Suttle

Decision

That the press and the public be excluded for the following 2 item(s) in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraphs 3 and 4 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

16. **Use of Compulsory Purchase Powers for land adjacent to Sunrise Business Park, Blandford**

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services presented the exempt report and set out the recommendations.

It was proposed by Cllr L Beddow seconded by Cllr A Parry

Decision

That the 7 recommendations set out in the exempt report to Cabinet of 20 June 2023 be approved.

17. **Day Opportunities: Next Steps (Urgent item)**

Following People and Health Overview Committee on 22 May 2023 and its recommendations to Cabinet, the Portfolio Holder of Adult Social Care, Health, and Housing gave an update on the current position and next steps in respect of "Day Opportunities".

Decision

- (a) That the report and recommendations of People & Health Overview Committee be noted.
- (b) That following a wider piece of work of the Directorate, a further paper be presented to Cabinet at a later date.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.43 am

Chairman

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Cabinet – 20 June 2023

Questions from Councillors

1. Question for Cllr J Orrell

The new parking charges have hit coastal towns harder than prosperous market towns. This is unfair. The coastal towns have a 6 week busy period in the summer but also contain the wards with the highest deprivation. Residents will struggle with paying in advance for season tickets. Has there been an equalities impact assessment? Can the short stay £78 permit be broken down to monthly tickets? Why do tourists visiting Abbeys, Minsters or Castles get cheaper parking than hard working families on the beach? Would a unified fee structure across the whole of Dorset demonstrate economic justice and fairness?

2. Question for Cllr P Kimber

Cycling and walking targets 'to be missed'

A National Audit Office report has found that the Government is likely to miss targets to increase walking and cycling, in a bid to reduce emissions and reach net zero by 2050, despite investing heavily in the sector. LGA transport spokesperson Cllr Linda Taylor said councils have been at the forefront of active travel schemes but added “they can only continue to do this with long-term certainty for vital local projects that help to cut congestion and make our air cleaner” and called on government to urgently restore much-needed £200 million funding to councils’ budgets for these projects. Cllr Taylor said: “This will allow councils to plan a pipeline of active travel infrastructure investments, engage more effectively with local communities and invest in necessary skills and capacity for their own staff.”

I would like to request are we in Dorset behind in our Cycling and walking targets, as suggested by the national Audit office, and are we planning effectively with local communities.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

The Government’s targets for walking and cycling are laid out in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2. In the period up to 2025 they relate to

- Percentage increases of short journeys in towns and cities by walking and cycling
- Overall increases in walking and cycling trips and
- Percentage increase in children walking to school.

Beyond 2025, further objectives reflect commitments originally set out in [Gear change](#), the [Transport decarbonisation plan](#) and the [Net zero strategy](#) to:

- increase the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities and
- deliver a world-class cycling and walking network in England by 2040

The Government's objectives are focused on achieving modal shift in urban areas, and it should be remembered that almost half of Dorset Council's population live in rural locations. While Dorset Council works towards the Government's targets, it should be noted that these are national targets, and the authority does not have the means to measure precisely against these identical objectives.

Dorset Council's transport objectives are set out in the Third Local Transport Plan, currently under review. This did not specify detailed targets for growth in walking or cycling, but instead, alongside the objectives, set goals and performance indicators.

These performance indicators align somewhat with the Government's objectives above and include:

- Single occupant car trips
- Pupils travelling to school by car and
- Growth in cycling trips

The baseline and percentage change against the baseline for these indicators was set out in the Review of the Third Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan (2011-2026), discussed at the most recent Place & Resources Scrutiny Committee: [Review of the Third Bournemouth Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan 2011-2026.pdf \(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](#). Overall, figures for all three performance indicators showed positive change since the baseline 2008-2010 average although it should be noted that the most recent years data (2021) will have been impacted by Covid related disruption to travel patterns.

Planning with local communities involves a range of activities, from engagement around specific schemes, to the production of long-term plans for walking and cycling infrastructure. Dorset Council is currently in the process of producing plans for the urban parts of the county and will be conducting a public consultation on the identified network and priority routes in the near future.

Dorset Council remains committed to making it safer and easier for Dorset's residents, businesses and visitors to make more sustainable travel choices, with walking, cycling and other active travel at the heart of transport decision-making.