

## Cabinet

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### **MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2023 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.**

#### **Present:**

Cllr Richard Clewer (Chairman), Cllr Laura Mayes (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Phil Alford, Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Nick Botterill, Cllr Jane Davies, Cllr Nick Holder, Cllr Ashley O'Neill and Cllr Caroline Thomas

#### **Also Present:**

Cllr Gavin Grant, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Dominic Muns, Cllr Tamara Reay, Cllr Ian Thorn, Cllr Suzanne Wickham and Cllr Graham Wright

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#### 44 **Apologies**

There were no apologies.

#### 45 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 May 2023 were presented.

#### **Resolved:**

**To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 2 May 2023.**

#### 46 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 47 **Leader's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

#### 48 **Public Participation and Questions from Councillors**

General questions were submitted from the following members of public:

- Laurence Cable – LTN 1/20 Training
- Nick Parry – Local Plan and Future Chippenham
- Celia Beckett, Hilperton Area Action Group – Supporting the survival of rare bats

Written responses to the public questions can be found in the [agenda supplement](#). Celia Beckett asked a supplementary question, highlighting the importance of the Trowbridge canal for bats, and raising concerns that farmland which provided a home for insects that formed a vital part of the bats diet would be reduced when the Local Plan was introduced. In response Cllr Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning, stated that a lot of work went into Bat Mitigation Strategies and in Trowbridge a 7 figure sum had been spent on the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy. So people could be assured that bat management was fully covered. Both Cllr Botterill and the Leader highlighted that assumptions could not be made about the Local Plan.

In addition to the public questions, a number of questions were received from:

- Cllr Ian Thorn on potholes, the new health centre in Calne and the 'Evening with Richard Clewer' in Calne.

Written responses to the Member questions can be found in the [agenda supplement](#).

Cllr Ian Thorn asked supplementary questions regarding where the 'hot spots' were and when they would be fixed, and whether pothole budgets would be increased to deal with climate change affecting weather events which in turn affected road condition (such as an extremely hot summer followed by extreme cold snaps). In response, Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene, and Flooding stated that every area would benefit from the additional £3.6 million funding for potholes provided by government. Within each Area Board Community Area, the top five locations for pothole issues, or 'hot-spots' would be identified and repaired. It was hoped that repairs would be complete before winter, but contractor resource may be a limitation. Area Boards would be informed where their 'hot spots' were. The budget came from the Department for Transport (DfT) and they were looking at climate change and extreme conditions. It was highlighted that councillors and the Local Government Association had made this point clearly to government ministers and had requested consistency of funding.

Cllr Thorn also asked a supplementary question on the Calne Health Centre. He expressed disappointment regarding his interactions with the Integrated Care Board (ICB), which he felt had been poor, and requested that Wiltshire Council could help to find out what stage the project was at.

The Leader explained that the health centre was not under the responsibility of Wiltshire Council to deliver, but rather the Integrated Care System. However, as the Leader chaired the Integrated Care Board, he would try to find out what the position was.

## 49 **Treasury Management Outturn Report 2022/23**

Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning, presented a report which provided an annual treasury

management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2022/23.

Cllr Botterill stated that many local authority financial disasters started with problems in the operation of treasury management and there had been recent examples where that had happened. This often occurred due to a lack of questions being asked and many decision being taken without scrutiny and oversight. Within Wiltshire Council, the Financial Planning Task Group (FPTG) regularly scrutinised reports on the Council's financial position and had reviewed this report on 9 June.

Cllr Botterill explained the report covered the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, and that the Council has continued to finance capital expenditure through maximising the use of capital receipts, capital grants and internal borrowing. The report highlighted that overall, the Council under borrowed by £152.910m, avoiding the payment of external interest costs in the order of £3.7m.

Cllr Botterill highlighted that interest rates were having an impact but would probably start to fall within the next year. The Council was proactive in maximising returns for taxpayers. The Council had a strong balance sheet, good liquidity and under borrowing which helped the revenue situation. This in turn helped to ensure that the Council's budget was under control.

Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military-Civilian Integration, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Health and Wellbeing stated that the report gave confidence and that officers were handling treasury management professionally and seriously.

Cllr Gavin Grant, Vice Chairman of the FPTG, explained that the group had considered the report at length and were satisfied with the steps being taken and were broadly satisfied with the position. A focus during their discussions was the Overall Treasury Position, and gaps between original budget estimates and the actual spend, which in some areas was a lot less. The FPTG would continue to scrutinise treasury management during the year and ensure there was a more realistic capital position. Cllr Grant stated that the FPTG had confidence in the leadership of Andy Brown, Corporate Director Resources & Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer), as he and his team had transformed the position. Cllr Grant highlighted that the FPTG would benefit from training on the Housing Revenue Account.

Cllr Ian Thorn thanked the FPTG for their work.

Cllr Nick Botterill, seconded by the Leader, proposed the recommendations in the report.

**Resolved:**

**That Cabinet:**

**a) Note that the contents of this report are in line with the Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23; and to**

**b) Recommend to Full Council consideration of this report.**

*Reason for decision:*

*To give members an opportunity to consider the performance of the Council against the parameters set out in the approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23.*

## 50 **Family Hub Contract**

Cllr Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, and Skills, introduced the report on the Family Hub Contract.

A visual was shown to the meeting to help explain the proposals. A well attended Member briefing had also been held on Family Hubs and a lot of consultation had been undertaken with families.

There had been a move from central government, and within Wiltshire Council to change how services were provided. Previously, the Council had Childrens Centres which offered support to families from the ages 0-5. A mass of other support was available for families, but the aim was to bring that under one roof. In conjunction with the government push and the Council's own initiative the family offer was one that would offer support from ages 0-19 and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) up to the age of 25.

The team realised that there was an enormous amount of support out there, but there was often confusion as to where to go for help at the initial stage. Feedback highlighted that the majority (around 60%) of families would like to go online. After the initial online stage, a 'Navigator' would be present at hubs, signposting families to further support, this would be a commissioned service. The hope was that people would not then need to be referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Family Services always felt prevention was very important, giving families support when they needed it, so that issues could be resolved early.

Hubs would bring together a range of support services and would bring a more joined up, simplified approach. The hubs would be set up in community buildings across the county, the locations of which could be seen in the report.

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management, and Operational Assets was delighted with the approach.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, related comments from Cllr Jon Hubbard, Chairman of Children's Select Committee (CSC), on the proposals. Cllr Hubbard had stated that CSC had received a

great presentation on the proposals, and whilst it was an ambitious project it was a great step in the right direction. The CSC would follow the tendering and implementation process and would continue to follow up the project with interest.

Cllr Ian Thorn felt this was a welcome initiative. Cllr Thorn asked some questions regarding why the 'Navigator' was called that and how often a 'Navigator' would be present at libraries or hubs. He also highlighted concerns regarding the online offer as not everyone had digital access and also the disposal of estate buildings, such as former Children's Centres.

In response Cllr Mayes explained that it was envisaged that 'Navigators' would be present at hub locations about once a week. All staff at hubs would be trained to make every contact count, so that they could signpost to help when the 'Navigator' was not present. Regarding the online offer, most younger people accessed information digitally, but those without access would be supported and there would be physical locations that people could go to access help. The estate buildings would be repurposed.

Cllr Mayes, seconded by the Leader, proposed the recommendations as per the report.

**Resolved:**

**That Cabinet:**

- 1. Approve the commissioning of family hubs across Wiltshire from April 1st, 2024.**
- 2. Approve that all services are commissioned externally through an open procurement, with a 5-year contract awarded to the successful provider, with the option to extend for up to a further 2 years.**
- 3. Approve the Pathfinder project in Westbury and Warminster transferring into the new contract when it commences on 1st April 2024.**
- 4. To delegate authority to approve and award a new contract, and take all necessary steps associated to the Corporate Director Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, and Corporate Director of People in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills.**

*Reason for Decision:*

*To deliver a 0–19-year-old (up to 25 years for those with SEND) Family Hub Service across Wiltshire.*

*The Government has committed to championing family hubs, which are a way of bringing together existing family help services to improve access to services and connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family help.*

*Family hubs bring together services for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 for this young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), with a great Start for Life offer at their core. They can include hub buildings and virtual offers, but the following principles are key to the family hub model:*

- **More accessible**
  - *through clearly branded and communicated hub buildings, virtual offers, and outreach.*
- **Better connected**
  - *family hubs drive progress on joining up professionals, services, and providers (state, private, voluntary) – through co-location, data sharing, shared outcomes, and governance. Moving from services organised for under-fives to families with children of all ages reduces fragmentation (even though an emphasis on early years and the ‘Start for Life’ offer will remain).*
- **Relationship-centred**
  - *practice in a family hub builds on family strengths and looks to improve family relationships to address underlying issues.*

## 51 **Liquid Vehicle Fuel Contract**

Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene, and Flooding introduced the report.

Cllr Thomas highlighted that the report related to the provision of liquid fuel to depots and salt stores and that the current contract was due to expire on 31 March 2024. The new framework agreement would have the benefit of lower prices from economies of scale. The annual spend on liquid fuel was £1.2m and the tender period would be April 2024 to March 2028. This would allow the Council to change to alternative fuel types over the course of the contract in line with the emerging fleet strategy to move towards carbon neutrality.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, relayed comments from Cllr Jerry Kunkler, Chairman of the Environment Select Committee (ESC). Cllr Kunkler stated that the ESC had received a briefing on 7 June, where they touched upon contingencies during fuel shortages and how the contract fitted with the transition towards lower carbon fuels. The ESC felt that this was a sensible approach that enabled continuity of supply with flexibility and value for money.

Cllr Thomas, seconded by the Leader, proposed the recommendations as per the report.

**Resolved:**

**That Cabinet:**

- a) **Approve a mini-competition for liquid fuel through the YPO Framework for supply of fuels and associated products and services.**
- b) **Delegate authority to the Director of Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene and Flooding to deal with all ancillary matters pertaining to the competition and the award of the User Agreement with the Provider selected (most economically advantageous provider) and placing orders under the contract.**

*Reason for decision:*

*To comply with The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended).*

*To ensure the best value provision of liquid fuels is achieved.*

52 **Disposals Programme Update**

Cllr Phil Alford, Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets and Asset Transfer introduced the report.

Cllr Alford explained that the Council had a programme for disposal of sites that are surplus to requirements which generate capital receipts which contribute to the capital programme. A report comes to Cabinet every 6 months to update Cabinet on progress and identify sites for disposal.

The report presented a position in respect of completed and projected receipts and a request to declare two assets as surplus. Also the report requested to authorise the Director of Assets to dispose of the freehold and approve the sale. However, there was not currently a Director of Assets in post and so the decision would be made by the Corporate Director Resources, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets, Asset Transfer.

Cllr Alford highlighted key points from the report.

Projected Capital Receipts for the two years from 2021/22 to 2022/23 were initially set at £5.916m. The actual amounts received from sales, net of allowable costs for 2021/22 was £2.892m and £1.827m for 2022/23. A total of £4.719m.

Projected Capital Receipts for 2023/24 had been set at £3.8m reprofiled for 2024/25 at £2.25m and for 2025/26 the target is £1.25m. From 2026 onwards the target is projected at £1m.

The two sites for disposal were in Warminster and Chippenham and full details could be found in appendix 2 to the report.

Cllr Alford proposed the recommendations as detailed in the report, this was seconded by the Leader.

**Resolved:**

**That Cabinet:**

- a) **Note the position in respect of completed receipts for the financial year 2022/3.**
- b) **Note the projected position for the following financial years.**
- c) **Approve the sale of the freehold interest of the two assets in Appendix 2 to generate capital receipts in support of the Council's capital programme.**
- d) **Authorise the Director for Assets to dispose of the freehold interest in the assets, or in their absence the Corporate Director Resources, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets, Asset Transfer.**

*Reason for decision:*

*To note the year-end position in respect of capital receipts for the financial year 2022/23, note the projections for following financial years, and confirm the freehold interest in the 2 assets can be sold to generate capital receipts, after a review of the options to determine how the best overall interest of the Council can be achieved.*

### 53 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.00 am)

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