

Cabinet

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2024 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 Dominic Muns, Cllr Ashley O'Neill and Cllr Tamara Reay

Also Present:

Cllr Robert MacNaughton, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Suzanne Wickham, Cllr Christopher Williams, Cllr Richard Budden, Cllr Tony Jackson and Cllr Ian Thorn

92 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Nick Holder.

93 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2024 were presented for consideration.

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes as a true and correct record.

94 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

95 **Leader's Announcements**

There were no Leader's announcements.

96 **Public Participation and Questions from Councillors**

Eight general questions had been received for the meeting, which were provided in the published agenda supplement together with written responses.

Supplementary questions were received from:

- Andrew Nicolson asked a number of questions on behalf of Margaret Willmot in relation to the cancellation of the National Highways Scheme for the A303 Stonehenge and how this would impact the local area, in

particular improvements to the infrastructure for cycling, walking and improvements to local bus and rail services. He also commented on the Rail Strategy report being prepared by the LEP.

The Leader and Cllr Reay (Cabinet Member for Transport and Assets) explained that the Council continues to make a very strong case to the Government for infrastructure improvements along the A303 and alongside this the Council would investigate alternative funding streams for the schemes that had been worked up for the A303. The Council would continue working with rail operators following the cancellation of the rail schemes for Devizes and Corsham, making the case for necessary improvements. It was noted that the Rail Strategy Report would be published in due course.

- Cllr Ian Thorn noted that expressions of interest in relation to government proposals for devolution of power would need to be submitted by 30 September 2024. He indicated that it would have been helpful to have discussions on the matter at this meeting. The Leader explained that the Council continued to hold discussions with neighbouring councils and an update on the expression of interest would be provided for Cabinet at their next meeting on 8 October 2024. In the meantime the Leader was willing to discuss the issue further with Councillors.
- Cllr Ian Thorn asked further about the robustness of the draft Local Plan and revised NPPF housing targets and the ability to deliver the number of new homes. Cllr Botterill (Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning) explained that plans submitted for examination within one month of the publication of the revised NPPF allows the plans to be examined under the previous version of the NPPF. Any higher housing targets would need to be addressed through the preparation of a subsequent local plan.
- Andrew Nicolson asked an additional question on climate about the council's ability to access data on methane emissions. Cllr Muns (Cabinet Member for Waste and Environment) explained that the council continues to work with partners across different industries in the collection of data. This data will be built into future delivery plans and strategies.
- Andrew Nicolson asked an additional question about LTP4 and how climate issues have been incorporated in the Plan, the drafting of the rail strategy, and connectivity study between the M4 and Dorset. Cllr Reay (Cabinet Member for Transport and Assets) explained that the LTP4 is being considered by Cabinet on 8 October 2024 and there would be opportunity to ask additional questions at that time; there had been stakeholders involvement in the preparation of the Rail Strategy preparation, and Wiltshire Climate Alliance would be included in this; and further clarification was required about the current position of the M4 - Dorset Connectivity study.

Financial Year 2024/25 - Quarter One Revenue Budget Monitoring

Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management, and Strategic Planning, presented a report which provided details of the revenue budget monitoring forecast for the first quarter of the financial year 2024/25. This was based on the position at the end of June 2024, and also provided an update on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and budget gap for future years.

Cllr Botterill explained that Wiltshire's revenue budget position compared favourably with neighbouring and comparator authorities, with a current net overspend of £8.3m, a variance which could be managed within the current financial year. It was noted that cost control measures would be taken, and action implemented to address this position and there were no proposals to fund the position from reserves.

Cabinet noted the update, and the proposals contained within the report, including a transfer to a new reserve account and a number of transfers from earmarked reserves. The Leader reminded Cabinet that the Council had regularly delivered a balanced budget and confirmed that appropriate steps were being taken to deal with current overspends.

Cllr Chris Williams, Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee reported that the Management Committee considered the report on 12 September 2024 with debate focussing on forecast overspend in adult social care, representing the largest part of the overall overspend. Concern was expressed at the forecast, although the management actions to address the overspend were noted. In view of this issue the Chair of the Management Committee asked the Chairs of Financial Planning Task Group and Health Select Committee to monitor the financial and service implications over the coming months. In addition, the Management Committee would continue to receive revenue budget updates.

Cllr Pip Ridout, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group, reported that the Task Group considered the report on 13 September 2024. Cllr Ridout endorsed the comments of the Management Committee and reported that the Task Group had asked numerous questions about issues raised in the report, these included questions about Adult Social Care, dedicated schools grant, SEND pupils, underspends and overspend in Planning budgets and many other areas of interest.

Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, commented on current overspends and how these reflected challenges nationally. Cllr Botterill and the S151 officer provided assurances that variances would be carefully managed within the current financial year to ensure mitigation actions deliver the required results. Immediate action would be taken to address issues for the overspend and on a longer-term basis to manage the demand for services and its funding.

Resolved:

Cabinet approved

- a. **The transfer of £2.237m to a new High Needs Sustainability Activity reserve.**

Cabinet noted

- b. **the current revenue budget is forecast to overspend by £8.284m by the end of the financial year.**
- c. **the current forecast savings delivery performance for the year.**
- d. **the forecast overspend on the HRA of £1.042m and the impact on the HRA reserve.**
- e. **The forecast overspend against Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budgets of £9.893m and the impact on the cumulative DSG deficit.**
- f. **The transfer from earmarked reserves;**
 - i. **£0.079m from the Adults Programmes reserve to fund temporary roles and LD budget pressures.**
 - ii. **£0.018m from the leisure reserve to fund virtual studios**
 - iii. **£0.026m from leisure reserve to fund pool pods**
 - iv. **£0.007m for Enforcement Activity from the Business Plan Priority reserve**
 - v. **£0.051m drawdown to fund flexible pastoral support for care experienced young people in Families and Children's**
 - vi. **£0.086m drawdown from the Supporting Families reserve to fund planned Families and Children expenditure**
 - vii. **£1.328m drawdown to fund flexible pastoral support in schools in Education & Skills**
 - viii. **£0.123m drawdown from the School Improvement reserve to offset savings in Education and Skills**
 - ix. **£0.231m drawdown from the Health & Safety reserve to fund investment in personal safety and other Health and Safety requirements in Assets**
 - x. **£0.204m from the iBCF reserve to fund schemes in 2024/25 in line with the approved plan**

Reasons for Proposals

To inform effective decision making and ensure sound financial management as part of the Councils overall control environment.

To inform Cabinet on the forecast revenue financial position of the Council for the financial year 2024/25 as at quarter one (30 June 2024), including delivery of approved savings for the year.

Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management, and Strategic Planning, presented a report which provided details of the 2024/25 Capital Programme position as at end of June 2024 – Quarter 1.

Cabinet noted the update provided about significant schemes planned for delivery and those that have been reprofiled to future years.

Cllr Chris Williams, Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny management Committee reported that the Management Committee considered the report on 12 September 2024 which was noted. The further detailed scrutiny would be undertaken by the Financial Planning Task Group as detailed below. The Management Committee welcomed the offer from officers to provide a briefing note for all members on the management of phosphates on land and how the council recoups the costs of this from developers.

Cllr Pip Ridout, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group, reported that the Task Group considered the report on 13 September 2024. The Task Group asked numerous questions about issues raised in the report, these included questions about assessing capital need, financial implications of borrowing and Stone Circle loans.

Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, noted that the Capital Programme had ambitious targets and commented on the development of the Capital Programme and how this could be improved to avoid delays with projects being recast to later years.

Resolved:

Cabinet approved:

- a) the allocation of £0.023m budget for Legal Case Management systems to be added to the ICT applications capital scheme budget line to be funded through revenue contributions;**
- b) the virement from Structural Maintenance and Bridges (£1m) and Highways Investment Plan (£1m) to support the reconstruction of the B4069 at Lyneham Banks;**
- c) the allocation of £3m of commuted sums to support the reconstruction of the B4069 at Lyneham Banks;**
- d) the allocation of £3m to support the construction of a new Integrated Care Centre in Trowbridge from Community Infrastructure Levy;**
- e) the virement of budget from the High Needs Provision Capital Allowance capital scheme line of £1.100m to Basic Need (£0.600m) and Schools Maintenance and Modernisation (£0.500m);**

Cabinet noted:

- f) **The additional budgets added to the programme of £22.218m under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**
- g) **the removal of £0.403m budget (£0.365m in line with 2024/25 grant award; £0.038m completed project budget) under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**
- h) **the budgets brought forward from future years into the 2024/25 programme totalling £8.055m under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**
- i) **the budgets reprogrammed from 2024/25 into future years totalling £65.750m under Chief Finance Officer delegated powers;**
- j) **Budget Movements between Schemes as detailed in Appendix A;**
- k) **the revised 2024/25 Capital Programme forecast as at quarter one of £225.721m;**
- l) **the capital spend as of 30 June 2024 of £24.877m;**

Reason for Proposals

To inform effective decision making and ensure sound financial management as part of the Councils overall control environment.

To inform Cabinet on the financial position of the Council on the 2024/25 capital programme as at quarter one (30 June 2024).

99 **Performance and Risk Report 2024-25 Quarter One**

Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council, presented a report providing an update on the progress against the stated missions in the Council's Business Plan using measures of performance available at the end of the first quarter of the financial year, and risks as available at the time of the report's production.

Cllr Chris Williams, Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, reported that the Management Committee considered the report on 12 September 2024 where questions and debate concentrated on issues such as the issuing of Education Health and Care Plans, repeat referrals to Children's Social Care, Section 42 outcomes, take-up of NHS health checks, the percentage of care leavers in Education, Employment or Training, Electric Vehicle charging points, Housing Register waiting times, and staff vacancies in the Antisocial Behaviour team.

Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, paid tribute to Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling in relation to the substantial increase in the number of visits to leisure centres. He also commented on the Education Gap for KS4 especially the differences between maintained schools and academies. Cllr Laura Mayes,

Deputy Leader, reminded members that the majority of secondary schools in Wiltshire were now academies with only 4 secondary schools being maintained by the council. She shared the frustrations in the education gap detailed in the report and reported that a special school scrutiny group was being set up to examine this further.

Cllr Richard Budden commented on the metrics for Road Safety and questioned whether the repair of potholes, resurfaced roads and speed watch related to this area of highway activity. He was concerned about the level of accidents in southwest Wiltshire and felt that this was a serious issue. The Leader stated that the Environment Select Committee had been encouraged to examine these metrics in more detail and explained that the metrics covered the county as a whole rather than individual locations.

Resolved:

Cabinet noted

- 1) Performance against the selected measures mapped to the Council's strategic priorities.**
- 2) Progress in transitioning to the new Risk Management Policy.**

Reason for Proposals

To provide Cabinet with a quarterly update on measures used to monitor progress against the 10 missions laid out in Wiltshire Council's Business Plan 2022-32, and progress transitioning to the new Risk Management Policy.

The meeting was adjourned between 11:40am and 11:45am.

100 **Update on the council's response to the Climate Emergency**

Cllr Dominic Muns Cabinet Member for Waste and Environment presented a report which provided an update on progress and actions taken in response to the climate emergency.

Cllr Muns explained that this was the ninth update received by Cabinet and the Council had made significant progress against the seven Climate Strategy themes, with an overview of performance and examples of delivery detailed in Appendix 1. He also reported on the detail of performance against climate-related key performance indicators as set out in appendix 2 of the report and confirmed that the Council was broadly on track to deliver on its goal to be carbon neutral by 2030, and thanked officers for their efforts.

Cllr Reay commented on the transport theme and in particular highlighted the success of Wiltshire Connect on-demand bus service in the Pewsey Vale, and thanked officers for their input.

Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group congratulated all involved in achieving considerable success for the seven delivery themes detailed in the Climate Strategy. He commented on the work being undertaken with partners and how engagement could be increased for instance with the NHS. He also commented on Stone Circle and how house building can be seen as a high carbon industry, communications on climate issues through schools, and the issue of fuel poverty. The Leader and Cllr Muns confirmed that the council is currently working with businesses, organisations and residents in the County on climate themes. Discussions with Stone Circle continue, and they are encouraged to use products that contribute towards the council's net zero position. Retrofitting of HRA properties continues. The Communications Team continues to publish good news articles about positive activities in relation to climate change, and residents who could claim the winter fuel allowance but have not previously made a claim are being encouraged to claim this important allowance.

Councillor Richard Budden drew attention to the annual performance report published by DEFRA for Lakeside EFW Ltd and estimated that on this basis Wiltshire's household waste incinerated at that plant, together with material processed by Hills and sent for incineration in Holland and Germany, results in the annual release of approximately 110,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide. He also drew attention to substantial additional costs that will result when waste incineration plants are brought within the UK Emissions Trading Scheme. He sought, and was given an assurance by Councillor Muns, that these emissions will be included in the new annual climate delivery action plan to be published later this year.

Members also commented on Scope 3 emissions and diversion from landfill at Household Recycling Centres. The Cabinet noted that a number of schemes and projects were reliant on government funding, and this could impact progress in some areas. Cllr Muns also confirmed that the Council would be willing to attend a local COP event.

Resolved:

That Cabinet notes the actions taken in response to the climate emergency following the last update in October 2023, including the council's annual Greenhouse Gas Report, the KPI scorecard, and the direction of travel for 2025.

Reason for Proposals

To provide Cabinet with an update on the progress made over the past year in response to the climate emergency and progress towards carbon neutrality. To highlight further activities that are being progressed and to outline the areas of focus going forward which will be set out in more detail in the new Climate Delivery Plan due for completion by the end of 2024.

Cllr Jane Davies, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion presented a report seeking approval to commit £9,668,776 of the Better Care Fund in 2024/25 to the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Community Healthcare Services Contract.

The Leader and Cllr Davies referred to an updated Executive Summary published with Supplementary Agenda 1 prior to the meeting, which now contained detail about the reasons for the decision being made and included the Cabinet Member being consulted on any decisions delegated to the Director of Commissioning. It was noted that Cabinet agreed the proposals in principle at its meeting in July 2024.

Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group commented on the terms of delivery of the programme of activity and noted that the ICB is the contractor of community health services, and the Council are a partner due to the significant financial contribution made.

Resolved:

Cabinet Approved:

- 1) **To commit Better Care Funding of £9,668,777 to the ICB Community Health Contract from 2025-2032 (with a potential for a further 2 years to 2034). See Table 1 Below.**
- 2) **To delegate authority to Director of Commissioning in consultation with the Director of Finance and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND, and Inclusion, to approve the revised S.75 agreement and the Collaborative Commissioning agreement that will cover the period of the Community Health Services contract.**
- 3) **To delegate authority to the Director of Commissioning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND, and Inclusion, to authorise all activities related to the procurement and to sign the contract for the ICB BSW Community Health Services on behalf of Wiltshire Council.**

Table 1

	Base Budget £	2024/25 Budget (Incl. Annual uplift) £
WH&C	10,453,157	10,594,274
Access to Care (Medvivo)	1,073,054	1,086,519
Total previously agreed to transfer to ICB Contract	11,526,211	11,680,793
Removal of HomeFirst	-2,291,088	-2,322,017
WH&C In Reach (new service)	310,000	310,000
Revised Total to ICB Contract	9,545,123	9,668,776

Reasons for the Proposal

To ensure that Community Health Services are provided across BSW, Cabinet is asked to approve the amended financial contribution to be committed from the BCF for the new Community Health Services contract from 1 April 2025, until 31 March 2032, with a possible further 2-year extension. The contribution of £9,668,776 includes the removal of the HomeFirst service as per above and the addition of £0.310m for the new Wiltshire Health & Care In Reach service.

102 **Family Group Conferences**

Cllr Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader of the Council, presented a report outlining proposals about how Family Group Conferences (FGC) should be delivered across Wiltshire.

The Deputy Leader explained that the FGC have been successfully used in Wiltshire for many years to provide family meetings as part of legal proceedings. The FGC offer families an opportunity to define achievable and sustainable solutions with the support of their extended networks. It was noted that children whose families were referred to FGC were significantly less likely to go into care. An in-house option had been considered; however, the risks outweighed the benefits.

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Chairman of the Children's Select Committee, reported that he and the Vice-Chair had received a briefing on the proposals on 13 September 2024. Cllr Hubbard reported that he was very much in favour of this service being commissioned externally and that it was an effective measure for the child as it was far better for them to remain with their family than be in care.

Resolved:

Cabinet agreed to:

- 1) Approve a budget of £900,000 over a possible five years, for the delivery of Family Group Conferences. The contract will be offered initially for three (3) years with a possible two-year (2) extension.**
- 2) Approve that Family Group Conferences is commissioned externally through an open procurement from 1 April 2025.**
- 3) Delegate authority to approve and award a new contract and any future extensions and all associated documents to the Director of Commissioning and the Corporate Director responsible for People in consultation with the Deputy Leader and the Cabinet Member responsible for Children's Services, Education and Skills.**

Reason for Proposals

To make Family Group Conferences (FGC) available to all families that would benefit from this approach.

According to results from a study conducted by Coram in June 2023 children whose families were referred for FGC are significantly less likely to go into care or to be taken to court for decisions about their care. This service not only forms an important intervention to support the well-being of children but also prevents the potential for costlier interventions later.

The FGC service offers cost effective family focussed support for families. The Coram Report recommends that 'Local authorities should continue the use of FGCs at pre-proceedings stage where services already exist and consider their introduction in other areas'.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care – Final report by Josh McAllister recommends that more should be done to involve family members and wider networks in the decision about children's care.

103 **SEND AP and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029**

Cllr Jane Davies, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion presented a report providing an update on progress and achievements of the 2020-2024 Strategy and to note and approve the SEND, Inclusion and Alternative Provision Strategy 2024-2029.

Cllr Davies explained that following the successful implementation of the 2020-2024 SEND and Inclusion Strategy, the Local Area has co-produced with parents, carers, children and young people to understand how the next Strategy should look. The report detailed the six priorities of the new Strategy to be underpinned by a clear implementation plan and oversight by the Local Area AEND and AP Board.

The Deputy Leader highlighted the importance of approving the new Strategy as its outcomes result in the appropriate support for the individual. Cllr Blair-Pilling referred to priority 6 about preparing young people for adulthood and experience timely transitions, indicating that everyone needed to be involved.

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Chair of the Children's Select Committee, reported that the Select Committee considered the Strategy on 5 September 2024 and felt that there was a degree of uncertainty about what improvements were needed that the strategy would address, that more detail was needed to clarify what the strategy aims to achieve with some defined deliverables, that the role for schools could be clearer and that the Committee would monitor the implementation plan at future Select Committee meetings. Cllr Hubbard also indicated that, in personally supporting the comments of others, another important task for the Council to address is the increasing number of Education Health Care Plans which could be due to the wrong perception of need. He reminded members that there is a role for every Councillor, including talking to their local schools about integrating SEND pupils into their schools as it promotes the best outcomes for the pupils.

Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the Strategy and thanked those involved in its preparation.

Resolved:

Cabinet Noted:

- 1) The key achievements of the 2020-2024 SEND and Inclusion Strategy**

Cabinet Approved:

- 2) The SEND, Inclusion and Alternative Provision Strategy 2024-2029**

Reason for Proposals

To support the work of the Wiltshire's Local Area Partnership in the implementation of the strategy

104 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 1.00 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Stuart Figini of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718221, e-mail committee@wiltshire.gov.uk

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