

Cabinet

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 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 Dr Brian Mathew, Cllr Dominic Muns, Cllr Bill Parks, Cllr Tamara Reay, Cllr Ian Thorn and Cllr Graham Wright

17 **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

18 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2023 was presented.

Resolved:

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2023.

19 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

20 **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader announced that due to some date changes within the respective report, Item 8 (Procurement of Cleaning Contracts) would be deferred and brought to the Cabinet meeting on 2 May 2023. This was to ensure that officers and Cabinet Members would have a clear understanding of the implications of the date changes.

21 **Public Participation and Questions from Councillors**

General questions were submitted from the following members of public:

- Lucie Castleman – Trowbridge Local Plan

· Dr Jimmy Walker - Transport

Cllr Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing explained that the questions had received written responses which were published on the Council's website prior to the meeting in agenda supplement 2, which can be accessed [here](#).

The Leader also referred to questions which had been submitted by Margaret Willmot but had not been included within agenda supplement 2. The responses to these questions would be included within the next set Cabinet questions.

22 **LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Action Plan**

Cllr Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing, presented a report detailing a draft Action Plan that had been developed reflecting the feedback and recommendations following Full Council's receipt of the final report from the highly successful Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2022.

The Leader noted that a lot of the elements included within the Action Plan had been expected and that there was now the task of assessing the proposals to suggest solutions and ways forward, an example of the Local Plan was cited and making sure that this addressed the needs of Wiltshire holistically. Place Boards were also referenced as working well within Salisbury, Chippenham, and Melksham. The Leader stated that a challenging recommendation would be for Wiltshire Council to speak positively about itself on a national level, with the Leader having already spoken last week at the UK100. It was suggested that other areas highlighted within the recommendations might take more time, with the Council waiting for up-to-date evidence from the latest Census to address local deprivation through the work of Area Boards. The Leader stated that much of the work was already in process and would be presented to the LGA in 12 months' time during a follow up visit to see how progress was being made.

Cllr Nick Botterill stated that he was a big supporter of the content of the Peer Challenge and that there was the potential for further value to be added through the Action Plan and that the recommendations needed to be built into the Council's plans.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee noted that the Leader had attended the most recent Committee meeting and had articulated the Action Plan well. The only issue identified by the Committee was that it should be in plainer English to enable more people to understand it. Additionally, Cllr Wright acknowledged the positive feedback attributed to Overview and Scrutiny.

Cllr Ian Thorn congratulated those involved with the Peer Challenge. Cllr Thorn referred to the Local Plan, which the panel had seen as a significant and a pivotal vehicle for the Council's visions for delivery, with clarity sought on how this would happen in practice with there being legal constraints. Another area

identified by Cllr Thorn was whether Area Boards could have a transformation opportunity in relation to partnerships and providing a central role for key partners to deliver outcomes.

In relation to Area Boards, the Leader noted that all large unitary Councils had been created at the same time and therefore none had had the chance to refresh this area. Additionally, that each Area Board varies and should be given its own ability to progress with each area having different issues.

Cllr Nick Botterill, stated regarding local planning, that policies were the tools that could be used to embed a strategy and that not much could be done on site selection, but a lot of work could take place on policy development. Additionally, Cllr Clewer stated that Members would be involved as soon as possible in relation to policies, however site selection would have to be handled through a formal consultation process.

Cllr Ian Thorn questioned whether the document could be used strategically to help deliver health infrastructure, with it noted that one of the biggest challenges in development is the lack of dentists and healthcare. Cllr Thorn suggested that the Local Plan could be a pivotal strategic document in addressing health inequalities that come with major developments. Additionally, regarding Area Boards, Cllr Thorn noted that Cornwall Council had a dynamic that allowed partners to be indicative voting members.

The Leader responded that there was a new body responsible for Doctors, the Integrated Care System (ICS) and that this body would also be taking on dentistry and pharmacies. The Leader suggested that the correct strategy to use would be the Integrated Care Strategy, however this would take time to evolve and would be a key tool to collectively shape health inequality due to the number of partners and organisations involved.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

- **Approve the draft action plan.**
- **Agree to a follow up visit in Autumn 2023 to help the Council assess the impact of the peer challenge and demonstrate the progress it has made against the areas of improvement and development identified.**

Reason for decision:

Corporate Peer Challenges (CPCs) are a form of sector-led improvement arranged by the Local Government Association (LGA).

Responding to their feedback, via an action plan and agreeing to host a follow up visit to further reflect on learnings and actions, is the agreed approach undertaken by all councils.

23 **Retender of Good Lives Alliance Framework**

Cllr Jane Davies, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion presented a report providing an outline of the services commissioned by Wiltshire Council, how this offer would be developed and a proposed procurement route to achieve this, with the aim of supporting and stabilising the market.

Cllr Davies outlined that Cabinet was asked to approve the approach to recommissioning Wiltshire's Framework for purchasing which currently included residential and nursing care, transitional step up/step down services supported living services as live services, to approve the proposed procurement approach to achieve this. Additionally, it was stated that Wiltshire Council had the option to include other spot purchased services within the new framework e.g., unregulated outreach support, extra care, Individual Service Funds, respite and short breaks, parent enabling, day and evening opportunities.

Cllr Davies also stated that the Framework would be in place for up to 3 years with an option to extend for 2 years and would enable providers to join at any time (as long as specific criteria are met).

Cllr Laura Mayes questioned how easy it would be to add services to the Framework if they were wanted by individuals and weren't currently offered, to which Cllr Davies stated that the Framework was open and flexible so that providers could be added.

Cllr Laura Mayes referred to the Supporting Young People on their Journey to Adulthood Report 2022, which had been written by the Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living (WCIL) with emphasis placed on individuals being able to make their own choices. This was supported by Cllr Davies who noted that coproduction had been at the heart of the Framework paper.

Cllr Caroline Thomas questioned where there was a mechanism in place for feedback to be provided and then available to others who might be making decisions about services. It was clarified by Andy Brown (Section 151 Officer) that the Council looks to include feedback on any contracts and that this would be included as part of the overall contract monitoring process. Additionally, Cllr Davies noted that stakeholder feedback was encouraged through an internal feedback system.

Cllr Gordon King, Vice-Chair of Health Select Committee noted that the Committee had received a comprehensive briefing on the Good Lives Alliance and that this was a good and comprehensive assessment of the Alliance programme and Framework. Cllr King noted that there were aspects of the report that the Health Select Committee liked, including but not limited to, the quality assurance framework, the annual review of packages and the allocation of commissioners and personalisation of care. The Committee was unanimously satisfied that the Framework could be supported.

Cllr Dr Brian Mathew stated that the Framework reminded him of the motion moved in 2018 to scale up the Shared Lives initiative, which was a programme to help give clients a better life in terms of living as well as helping carers by providing income. Cllr Mathew updated that he had had the opportunity to meet with the Shared Lives team at their Christmas gathering and that it would be positive to raise the profile of the Shared Lives initiative as it would be of benefit to many residents of Wiltshire. Cllr Davies responded that the Council is actively recruiting for providers and is constantly trying to promote the service, which now has a new offer including support from hospital.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

- **That the approval of a new price model is delegated to the Corporate Director for Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion.**
- **Procurement and award of a new framework from 4 September 2023.**
- **That the decision to award contracts against the framework is delegated to the Corporate Director for Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Inclusion.**

Reason for decision:

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update to Cabinet on the Wiltshire Council procurement process for Whole Life Commissioning services and sets out the approach to be taken.

Procuring an open framework under the light touch regime will ensure that all providers are vetted and evaluated to ensure they adhere to legal and quality standards and financial parameters. Successful providers will join the open framework, which will be clearly publicised to customers, carers, and practitioners. People assessed under the Care Act as requiring care and support services will then be placed with the most appropriate service, using a combination of customer choice, geography, availability, etc – with the most cost-effective option that meets need.

24 **Procurement of Cleaning Contracts**

As announced earlier in the meeting by the Leader, this item would not be discussed and would be brought to the Cabinet meeting on 2 May 2023.

25 **Market Sustainability Plan**

Cllr Jane Davies Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND, Transition and Inclusion presented a report providing an overview of the Council's Market Sustainability Plan (MSP) for the 18+ domiciliary care and 65+ care home

market which forms part of the local authorities' conditions for receiving the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Grant.

Cllr Gordon King, Vice-Chair of Health Select Committee confirmed the paper had been considered by the Committee on 28 February 2023. Cllr King stated that the paper was largely formulaic, however it was an area that needed funding with a need to ensure that the market was as sustainable as possible. It was stated that the Health Select Committee welcomed the Market Sustainability Plan.

Cllr Richard Clewer agreed that the paper was entirely formulaic and that it would be interesting to look back on in a year's time.

Cllr Ian Thorn stated that this was a systemic problem across the entire country and that a way to resolve such an issue might be on a national level rather than local authorities receiving small grants. Cllr Thorn suggested that a potential way of resolving the issue might be to increase the pay for workers to attract more people into the market or to look to create more competition through providing more suppliers.

Cllr Clewer noted that the market is divided into three areas nationally, which were each dealing with problems differently, with rural areas south of Birmingham in a difficult position regarding care, metropolitan areas which had problems relating to housing and then the north, which was coping comparatively better. Cllr Clewer stated that there would be a risk if areas were to start competing and that the Economic Strategy was coming soon which would highlight critical areas.

Cllr Davies agreed that Wiltshire would always face challenges due to being a rural county and that it would be difficult to find care workers and manage care due to the mileage between locations.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

Cabinet noted the contents of the Wiltshire Council Market Sustainability Plan and approves the proposed areas of spend for the funding allocated.

Reason for decision:

The Market Sustainability Plan is required as part of the DHSC requirements for funding.

26 **Household Support Fund 2023-2024**

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management, and Operational Assets presented a report that outlined that Wiltshire Council had been allocated £5,457,313 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The Fund was being provided to support

households, who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs to help them with significantly rising living costs for the financial year 2023-24. Cllr Blair-Pilling outlined that previous Household Improvement Funds had been allocated and distributed over separate 6-month periods since 2021. The greatest allocations in the previous fund rounds had focused on the provision of free school meals during school holidays and to low-income households where the resident/s were over 65 years. Cllr Blair-Pilling outlined the types of support that could be provided through the fund as well as how the Support Fund could be delivered.

The Leader stated that having been through earlier iterations of this process, the Council now understood how the Support Fund worked and had since produced a better system with a better programme to use the resources available and act flexibly.

Cllr Laura Mayes questioned how people would receive the support, to which it was clarified by Cllr Blair-Pilling that Wiltshire Council had been given an open option to how such support would be provided, with an awareness that different ways work for different people. Examples were cited such as providing cash, vouchers, bank transfers or items such as slow cookers.

Cllr Mayes also sought clarity on how the Council would identify those that would need the support, to which Cllr Blair-Pilling noted that an application-based system would be provided. Additionally, Kate Blackburn, Director Public Health, noted that data sources across the Council would be used to identify people, with a group set to come together to look at the data.

Cllr Ian Thorn referred to paragraph 17 of the report, which stated it would be mandatory for “Authorities to reference that the grant is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions or the UK Government” and suggested that this was inappropriate. In response to this point, Cllr Blair-Pilling suggested it would be equally inappropriate to suggest that the money had been provided in whole by Wiltshire Council.

Cllr Thorn raised an additional point in relation to accessibility and referred to residents who might struggle to engage through smart phones and the internet, with it stated that he was pleased that lessons had been learnt in attempting to reach these people who might not be online.

Cllr Thorn questioned how support would be provided to people whose principal communication would be telephone, to which Kate Blackburn noted that work would be conducted to identify people who were not currently supported, and that information would not just be provided on a website, with a multi-directorate group set to oversee the planning and delivery of the support.

A further point was raised by Cllr Thorn as to collectively what percentage of the audience has engaged and whether the Council has a sense of who the audience is, to which Cllr Blair-Pilling noted that it’s difficult to know of everyone as the world is a changing place and that there are many strands of work to the Council, serving different functions in different communities.

Cllr Thorn suggested that the fund would be a perfect opportunity for the 98 Members of the Council to amplify the project, to which the Leader suggested that Members proceed carefully, with it stated that often the Council does receive soft intelligence of proud residents however it doesn't make it any easier for them to accept the help offered.

Cllr Gavin Grant stated that he welcomed the Support Fund and posed questions how information could be fed into the system and better understand the voluntary and charity sector, with a lot of new informal groups having come together to work with existing ones to support communities during Covid and through the Warm Spaces Initiative. Cllr Grant also noted that there would be organisations currently providing funding through their own means which would partly overlap with the offer of the Support Fund. Cllr Blair-Pilling stated that though such queries could not be answered in detail, a plan must be provided by the deadline of 17 May, which could include the consideration of such charities.

Regarding charity and voluntary organisations, the Leader stressed that duplication was a severe risk that should be avoided and that work together should aim to provide different elements of support.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

That the Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the content of this report.**
- 2. Delegate the payment criteria of the grant to the Corporate Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer), Corporate Director for People and Director of Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management, and Operational Assets.**

Reason for decision:

To inform Members of the Household Support Fund allocation Wiltshire Council has been awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions.

27 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

28 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

It was,

Resolved:

It was agreed that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Item Number 17 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

Reason for taking item in private:

Paragraph 3 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

29 **Environment Act 2021**

Cllr Nick Holder, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change presented a report which updated Cabinet on the latest information received from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on the timing of mandatory separate weekly collections of food waste, the implications on the council's current waste contracts and options for Transitional Arrangements.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

That Cabinet approved the recommendations set out in the Part II report.

Reason for Decision:

To allow Wiltshire Council to comply with new statutory requirements arising from the Environment Act 2021, and to implement new mandatory separate weekly collections of food waste at the earliest opportunity, whilst balancing all reasonable legislative, contractual, financial, environmental, technical, and operational considerations.

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 11.35 am)

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