

Cabinet

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT ONLINE MEETING.

Present:

Cllr Philip Whitehead (Chairman), Cllr Richard Clewer (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Pauline Church, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cllr Bridget Wayman and Cllr Simon Jacobs

Also Present:

Cllr Phil Alford, Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Clare Cape, Cllr Jane Davies, Cllr Gavin Grant, Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr Carole King, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Jerry Kunkler, Cllr Steve Oldrieve, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Ian Thorn, Cllr Jo Trigg, Cllr Christopher Williams and Cllr Robert Yuill

97 **Apologies**

There were no apologies.

98 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 August 2020 were presented.

Resolved:

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 18 August 2020.

99 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

100 **Leader's announcements**

There were no Leader announcements.

101 **Public participation and Questions from Councillors**

Questions of a general nature were received from members of the public as detailed below:

- Andrew Nicolson (UK Cycling) about the Bradford on Avon Social Distancing Highways Scheme. Mr Nicolson asked two supplementary questions about the response received to question 3 and whether the traffic signals at the town centre bridge would be reinstated during half term and Christmas holidays.
- Kim Stuckey about the Council Local Plan.
- Chris Caswill about a number of issues including the Audit Committee and Chippenham HIF Bid.

The Chairman confirmed that the questions had received written responses which had been published on the Council's website prior to the meeting. The supplementary questions asked by Mr Nicolson received a verbal response during the meeting.

The Chairman also reported that late questions about the pedestrian barriers across the bridge in Bradford on Avon and the highway scheme in Bradford on Avon were received from Louise Weissel and Simon Hetzel. The Chairman confirmed that these questions would receive a written response after the meeting.

Questions were also asked by the following Councillors:

- Cllr Ian Thorn about member invitations to Cabinet meetings, Chippenham HIF Bid and the Westbury incinerator.
- Cllr Clare Cape about the Chippenham HIF Bid
- Cllr Steve Oldrieve about a meeting with Cllr Clewer, update on swimming pool provision in Trowbridge and a recent Panorama TV broadcast.

102 **COVID-19 Update**

The Leader presented the report which provided an update on Wiltshire Council's plans and activities to promote recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, building on previous reports to Cabinet between May to August 2020.

The Leader referred to the level of outbreaks in Wiltshire, the reopening of libraries and leisure centres and other venues, how the Council continues to work with neighbours, reopening of schools and recovery of the economy.

Terence Herbert, Chief Executive, advised that the Council was working in a systems approach to recovery, sharing learning with partners and other authorities to deliver this work successfully in a rapidly changing environment. Other key updates included details about the work of the Recovery Coordinating Group and a reminder of the main themes, support for business and allocation of grants to over 8,000 businesses, schools returning from the first week in September and the guidance provided by the Council, the ongoing support provided to care homes, and employees returning to the workplace.

Cllr Alan Hill, Vice-Chair of the Wiltshire COVID-19 Response Task Group indicated that the Task Group had not met since the last Cabinet meeting, and it was anticipated that Select Committees would return to their activities during November 2020, with a limited amount of support provided by Scrutiny Officers, who were currently supporting the recovery process.

Comments arising from the discussions included:

- The closure of businesses during the last 5 months, the impact on unemployment figures and the support provided by the Council via hubs, who would be offering guidance and advice to those experiencing unemployment, maybe for the first time.
- The criteria for the Emergency Active Travel fund, would include the use of existing bus routes to encourage people to walk or cycle in preference to the use of public transport during the Covid-19 period.
- The positive response of parents in relation to the preparations undertaken for schools returning from 1 September 2020.
- The adoption by the Council of Government guidance on home to school transport for children to wear face masks was only a recommendation and not enforceable.
- The number of businesses unable to access Government grants during the Covid-19 situation was difficult to determine, and the Council was working with a number of organisations to establish this. The Council would be re-opening access to the discretionary growth grant for small businesses who were previously outside the scope of the business grant fund scheme.
- The Council's support for residents who have received an eviction notice from their home in order to avoid homelessness.
- The DfE's new programme to establish the gap for access to technology for those children working at home due to infections at their school.
- The close working arrangements between Directors of Public Health in the south west during Covid-19 and daily information on infection rates for Wiltshire compared to other Councils in the south west.
- The assessment of risk and impact on parents of staggered pick up times for children from primary schools where parents had more than one child attending the school to make the pick up time as efficient as possible for all.
- The support systems in place to aid children 'catch-up' on school work missed due to the Covid-19 situation.
- The use of cycleway separators for new cycle lanes implemented across a number of locations in the county to increase the safety of cyclists as part of the Emergency Active Travel fund.
- The work of the third sector and charities and the impact on them of Covid-19.
- That family visits to Care Homes were key for the mental health of all parties.
- That the Kick Start Programme is a scheme that the Council were looking to be involved with especially as it would positively impact many young people in search of employment in Wiltshire and Swindon.

Resolved: To note

1. the current impact of COVID-19 in Wiltshire

2. changes in national policy

3. the work underway within the four Recovery Coordinating Group themes and on Organisation Recovery

Reason for Decision:

Implementation of the multi-agency Recovery Coordinating Group's Recovery Plan is successfully underway. Wiltshire Council continues to work closely with partners to deliver this in a rapidly changing environment.

103 Budget 2021/22 & Medium Term Financial Strategy

Cllr Pauline Church presented the proposed approach and context to the setting of the 2021/22 budget and the updating of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the key dates in setting the budget and the activity that will be undertaken in proposing a balanced budget.

Cllr Church referred to table 10 in the report and highlighted that the current MTFS base assumptions would need a complete review and be refined for their appropriateness in the current and anticipated circumstances. The Cabinet noted that the right balance must be struck in relation to General Fund reserves, as substantially building up reserves in a time of recovery would not be the right approach or timing for delivering essential services to Wiltshire communities, residents and businesses. It was therefore proposed that a reserve strategy be developed for the 2021/22 budget.

Cllr Alan Hill, Vice-Chair of Wiltshire Covid-19 Response Task Group, provided feedback from the Task Group and indicated that the Task Group had been involved in the process of the Council's current financial position.

In response to questions in relation to estimated Council Tax income for 2021/22 and the future level of reserves, Cllr Church and the Interim Corporate Director Resources (Section 151 Officer) confirmed that a review of assumptions would be undertaken to determine the level of Council Tax income for 2021/22. The level of future reserves would be based on an assessment of risk of Council operations and will be considered further over the coming months.

Resolved:

To note:

- 1. The intended approach and overarching framework for setting the 2021/22 budget, with further reports coming back to Cabinet as required.**
- 2. The key dates and timescales that are required to set a balanced budget.**

Reasons for decision:

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

To inform Cabinet on the intended process and context for setting the 2021/22 budget, even given the current levels of uncertainty, it begins the process and focus for setting plans and resources for providing the services and support that will be essential for delivering on Wiltshire's recovery from COVID-19.

104 **Short-Term Bed Restructure & Procurement**

Cllr Simon Jacobs, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection presented the report which described a model for restructuring short-term discharge beds that re-purposes existing intermediate care beds and secures additional capacity to sustain the hospital discharge to assess the model introduced in response to COVID-19. This is in line with the anticipated discharge guidance and will provide capacity for winter.

Cllr Jacobs explained that the model makes best use of existing capacity and procurement options to deliver a full service. The Wiltshire system pre-COVID had 64 intermediate care beds funded through the Better Care Fund. Health and care modelling have confirmed this capacity has to increase to 100 beds for intensive rehab and general discharge to assess plus five discrete beds for patients with delirium.

Cllr Chuck Berry, Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee reported that he and the Vice-Chair of the Health Select Committee had received a briefing on the subject matter on 3 September 2020 and they both welcomed the proposals.

Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrats confirmed his support for the proposals.

In response to questions Cllr Jacobs and officers explained that the proposed measures were an interim arrangement and that demand for beds would be met through the re-purposing of beds in specific areas of short fall.

Resolved:

- 1. To approve the procurement of 15 intensive rehab beds in the south or west of the County and 5 discrete beds for patients with delirium to deliver sufficient capacity for modelled demand, as further described in the body of this report.**
- 2. To delegate the authority for the entering into and execution of all necessary documents to the Director Joint Commissioning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care,**

including the award of the contract for services to the preferred provider/s when identified by the procurement process.

Reason for Proposal:

Modelling as part of the COVID recovery process shows that 100 short-term beds are required to meet demand due to reduced capacity in community hospitals and in acute hospitals due to social distancing and anticipated demand during winter. Most of this capacity can be met through re-purposing existing intermediate care (IC) beds and by varying block contract arrangements for residential home beds with the Orders of St John (OSJ). Nevertheless, there is still a shortfall of 15 intensive rehab beds in nursing homes that will need to be procured to meet the modelled demand.

105 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

106 **Exclusion of the Public**

To agree 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 Numbers 11 and 12 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 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.

107 **Interim position of Wiltshire Leisure Sites' Cafes and Creches**

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for ICT, Digitalisation, Operational Assets, Leisure and Libraries presented the report which progressed the decision to open Wiltshire leisure facilities in a staged way and made recommendations for an interim position for Wiltshire leisure sites cafes and creches for at least the next 12 months.

Cllr Blair-Pilling highlighted a number of options considered for the Cafes and Creches and explained the reasons for the recommended option.

Resolved:

- 1. To temporarily close Creche and Café facilities at Wiltshire in house leisure sites for 12 months, and to note the future financial viability of these services will be kept under review.**
- 2. To delegate to the Director for Communities and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for ICT, Digitalisation, Operational Assets, Leisure and Libraries, to take all necessary steps to implement this decision.**

Reason for Decision:

To ensure continuation of financially viable leisure provision in Wiltshire and to reduce the financial risk to the Council.

108 **Interim Management Arrangements for Wiltshire Contracted Leisure Sites**

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for ICT, Digitalisation, Operational Assets, Leisure and Libraries presented the report which proposed a way forward for the interim leisure centre management contract.

Resolved:

- 1. To undertake a re-procurement through the open procedure with risk sharing clauses.**
- 2. To note and endorse the following contract changes:**
 - i. Waive set management fee (currently £181k per annum) but include ability to profit share with open book accounting**
 - ii. 50/50 shared cost for COVID19 related closures agreed through open book accounting**
 - iii. Loss of Revenue for any maintenance closures, with a capped liability of 50% of costs to a maximum of £75,000 per annum (£150,000 for length of contract)**
 - iv. 50/50 shared cost for any facility closures, with a capped liability of £25,000 per facility**
 - v. Melksham Blue Pool stays in the contract for one year (2021/2022) and then removed from contract on 01 April 2022 to prepare for the Melksham Campus which will open summer/autumn 2022**
 - vi. Agree to pay the Loss of Revenue for Melksham Blue pool works when they take place in April/May 2021 at circa £80,000**
- 3. To delegate to the Director for Community and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for IT, Digitalisation, Operational Assets, Leisure and Libraries to take all necessary steps to implement this decision including the award of contract for the management of the sites on completion of the procurement exercise.**

Reason for Decision:

To ensure the continued provision of leisure services across Wiltshire's currently outsourced sites.

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.35 pm)

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