

Minutes

Cabinet

Date: 10 November 2014

Venue: Mezzanine Rooms 1 & 2, County Hall, Aylesbury

Time: 10.31 am to 1.01 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr M Tett (in the Chair).

Mr M Appleyard, Mrs P Birchley, Mrs L Clarke OBE, Mr P Hardy, Mr M Phillips and Ms R Vigor-Hedderly

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr W Bendyshe-Brown, Mrs A Davies, Mr R Stuchbury and Mr W Whyte

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr R Ambrose, Mrs S Ashmead, Mr T Boyd, Mr M Carr, Mrs A Davies, Mr D Johnston, Mrs K Jones, Mr D Moran, Ms S Turnbull, Ms K Wager and Mr C Williams

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared.

3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 October 2014 were agreed as a correct record.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



4 HOT TOPICS

The following hot topics were discussed:-

- The Leader reported that Angela Macpherson had resigned as the Cabinet Member for Children's Services (the Cabinet Member) the previous week. The Leader understood fully her reasons doing so and explained that he had tried to persuade her to stay. The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member all for her hard over the last 12 months and added that she had made a major contribution to the service. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education & Skills would be acting as Cabinet Member for Children's Services on a temporary basis.
- The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing thanked the Leader on behalf of all the residents of Buckinghamshire affected by HS2 for the outstanding job he did the previous week addressing the House of Lords at the Economic inquiry.
- The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing reported that she attended the Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Conference the previous week. The conference focussed on the importance of helping children having the best possible emotional stability from when they were born which will help them respond to all the challenges in later life and to benefit from their education.
- The Cabinet Member visited the new premises of Nottinghamshire Rehabilitation Services (NRS) in Rabans Lane who had just been re-awarded the contract for integrated community equipment services by BCC. In conjunction with the Care Act they have launched a new contract called Safe and Well. This new service supports disabled people who don't qualify for BCC services to remain independent. The facilities available include a digital facility to control all the functions in the house. This was a unique new service launched by BCC and NRS.
- The Leader reported that he had visited the Accident and Emergency Department at Stoke Mandeville hospital the previous week at the invitation of the Chief Executive to look at ways of working between Social Services and the National Health Service. They looked at Patient Pathways particularly for the elderly. The new Ambulatory service, once open will assist people back to health without the need for them to be admitted to hospital. The Leader considered this to be a really good example of joint working.
- The Cabinet Member for Transportation reported that a buy one get one free offer was currently being run to purchase grit. She encouraged members to speak with their local Parish councils, GPs, schools and shops in order to see if they can assist their communities. Anyone interested in buying grit was asked to contact Democratic Services.

5 QUESTION TIME

Robin Stuchbury asked if when planning ahead in order to avoid a repeat of the problems experienced by British Aerospace following the report in 1976 officers could ensure that early reporting takes place if issues were identified. He also noted that in Rotherham problems had not been reported and that no one had taken ownership of them. He asked if officers had seen the report to avoid falling into the trap.

The Leader replied that he had not seen the 1976 report referred to. He commented that the Rotherham issue was predominantly about child sexual exploitation and that Ofsted found BCC satisfactory in this area. He reminded members that Child Sex Exploitation had been identified as a key strategy by full County Council and that between £200 and £250k had been allocated to combat child sexual exploitation in Bucks. Amongst the areas Ofsted found BCC to be deficient was on the handling of the large number of Referrals. This was an area of focus to correct in future. The Leader was not complacent and was aware that there was much to be done but was not aware of anything raised by Ofsted that relates to child exploitation in Bucks. If local cases arose work will take place with the police to investigate

thoroughly and ensure that no children were at risk of child exploitation in the county. The Deputy Leader emphasised the importance of partners, including the police, the health service, schools and others who come into close contact with children and he noted that there had been a significant increase in the number of referrals in recent years. He noted that the authorities that were most successful in dealing with this had good communication links with their partners.

The Service Director – Child & Family Service agreed to look at the report referred to and he agreed that there was a need to report regularly to the Education, Skills & Children's Services Select Committee (the Select Committee). The Leader explained that he had received the report on Rotherham and passed this to the officers for review and to make any recommendations if relevant. Cabinet was committed to working with the Select Committee and members in implementing the Improvement Plan in Children's Services.

6 SCANNING AND PLANNING

Cabinet noted the Cabinet Forward Plan, Select Committees Work Programme, Rights of Way Committee Definitive Map Schedule and Progress on Planning Applications.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources reported that he had attended an informal meeting with the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee on Emergency Support.

7 CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

The report was noted.

The Cabinet Member for Transportation thanked the staff from Transport for Buckinghamshire for their work on highways repairs adding that although she rarely received complaints about the roads there was much to do and it was important not to be complacent.

8 ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND LOCALITY SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLIC TRANSPORT INQUIRY REPORT

Cabinet received the recommendations from the Environment, Transport and Locality Services Select Committee on Public Transport. Cabinet noted the following recommendations in the report and responded as follows:

The Chairman of the Environment, Transport and Locality Services Select Committee (the Chairman) introduced the report on the Public Transport Inquiry. The review took place during the Spring and Summer of 2014 on the use and support of public transport, changes to the budget and concessionary fares. The Chairman thanked all those who took part in the two day evidence gathering session including the Policy Officer, staff from TfB, Transport and User Groups, Business representatives, the Local Enterprise Partnership and NHS Bucks.

The Chairman explained that it had been a long time since a review had taken place.

Recommendation 2 - there was a need to reconsider the way BCC commissions and consider providers who may commission for services.

Recommendation 3 - it was suggested that there was a need to review subsidy services so that they were more focussed.

Recommendation 4 – suggests prioritising buses and the community sector that provides a local way of dealing with local needs. There was a lack of capacity in Risborough and Winslow and the service gave positive feedback.

Recommendation 5 Dial-a-ride operates on a s19 licence and it was necessary for members to operate whilst s22 allows to bid for timetabled routes and form routes they wish to.

Recommendation 6 suggests BCC being more hands on.

Recommendation 7 recommends that an Integrated Transport Unit was key in ensuring efficient procurement.

Recommendation 8 looks at total transport and was supported by transport and was supported by the Transport Industry for example in North Norfolk.

The Leader noted that there was an impressive list of witnesses, participants and evidence providers.

Members were invited to ask questions and the following points were raised:

- It was noted that there had been a reduction in the bus subsidy when the size of the older population was increasing. This was significant for the rural areas where the older population used the buses and the member asked if the availability of buses was being considered.
- The Chairman replied that there had not been a detailed review. This was a good example of why an Integrated Transport Unit was being recommended. In the Netherlands Integrated Transport was used with 50% being shared with social care vehicles.
- It was noted that dial-a-ride was trying to provide a service and were unable to do so whilst Aylesbury Vale appears to have identified a solution.
- The Chairman replied that dial-a-ride was very limited in how they can operate. They don't have the flexibility to grow clientele and following the Equalities Act more vehicles were accessed by more people. It was noted that the taxi token scheme works well in Aylesbury Vale.
- The Leader asked if consideration had been given to what other councils were doing.
- The Chairman replied that a desktop review had taken place of Norfolk County Council. Lincoln and Northampton Councils had also been considered.
- The Leader noted that everyone was struggling with similar matters with the current situation.
- The Chairman suggested that working people be encouraged to provide input into a working brief.
- The Leader recognised that the challenge was how to meet the needs of older people with those of younger.

The Cabinet Member for Transportation made the following responses to the recommendations:

- 1 She agreed in principle and noted that the Action date was 15 December and that this would stretch resources.
- 2 Recommendation 2 was agreed.
- 3 Recommendation 3 it will be necessary to consider how to work together and the move from s19 to s22 was supported.
- 4 The Chairman of the Select Committee suggested that consideration be given to not for profit organisations which have been providing a service.
- 5 The Cabinet Member cautioned the dates because it may not be possible to meet the dates due to resources.
- 6 The Leader added that BCC was very resource constrained due to fewer staff and resources.

Members were invited to ask questions and the following points were raised:

- Was dial-a-ride aware of the new futures project whereby it is possible for expert to apply to run a company?

- The Cabinet Member considered that this was a great opportunity and suggested that the focus should be on making a better service.
- A Member suggested that Birmingham dial-a-ride be explored which works successfully in the evenings.

Recommendation 1: We recommend that the Council undertakes a full assessment of the access and connectivity requirements of Buckinghamshire residents in order to understand the demands on passenger transport, establish a clear view of need in relation to different sections of the population, and identify gaps. This assessment should be used to inform the future provision of coordinated public transport across the County.

Cabinet Response: Partially Agreed

A full assessment is potentially a significant piece of work which needs to be built into the resource planning for the new TEE Business Unit to take forward in 15/16. It needs to fit into a bigger picture about why the movements of people and goods occur and what can be done to reduce and manage demands in different ways going forward, with a presumption that state intervention has to reduce as public budgets are limited. It would form part of evidence base for the reparation of the Local Transport Plan 4 which is just about to commence.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that, prior to commissioning, or re-commissioning public transport services, the Council undertakes an objective assessment of all service delivery options. This assessment should include community schemes, commercial services and other forms of demand-led transport.

Cabinet Response: Partially Agreed

There are current bus contract renewals will need to be completed to maintain services. However future procurement and commissioning will be structured/based on a deeper analysis from the above assessment. It is likely to include self-delivery options and not just roll forward the current subsidy model. Changes that might be considered could include using the subsidy as initial pump priming for community led provision rather than ongoing support.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that the Council develops a new transport subsidy strategy that focuses the limited available resources in a way that drives the delivery of coordinated public transport across the county and demonstrates clear value for money.

Cabinet Response: Agreed

This should grow from a deeper understanding of user needs and expectations and alternative community based/led provision, with the traditional subsidy offer restricted to a tighter set of criteria to be established.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that the Council encourages existing Dial-a-Ride schemes to evolve to suit changes in demand and to take advantage of the opportunities presented by newer, more flexible and sustainable operating models for community transport schemes.

Cabinet Response: Agreed

The response to Recommendations 1-4 will be built into the new TEE 15/16 Business Plan for action.

Recommendation 5: In order to address community transport's untapped potential, we recommend that the Transport, Economy & Environment Business Unit prioritises the improvement of community transport across the county in its forthcoming business plan. This should include leading the development of a joined up approach with partners to encourage more accessible, sustainable and responsive community transport schemes.

Cabinet Response: Agreed

This proposal will be considered in the broader policy and resource context outlined in the response to Recommendations 2-4.

Recommendation 6: To ensure limited resources are spent in a coordinated manner, we recommend that the Council's Transport, Economy & Environment Business Unit identifies a lead client side officer within the broader transport team with responsibility for encouraging the development of the community transport sector and strengthening the Council's control of externally contracted service delivery.

Cabinet Response: Agreed in principle subject to consultation

The TEE BU comes into formal being from 1st April 2015 and the structure currently being consulted on includes a specialist team working on an integrated Client and Public Transport service, subject to finalisation of current plans to re-insource the Public Transport team from the TfB contract and to transfer the Client Transport function from CYP to TEE. These plans if finalised would include a Head of Client & Public Transport post reporting to the Director Transport Services.

Recommendation 7: We recommend that an Integrated Transport Unit be created within the Transport Economy & Environment Business Unit to drive a joined up approach to the Council's investment in transport services, including public buses, client transport, home to school transport and community transport.

Cabinet Response: Agreed in principle subject to consultation

The TEE BU comes into formal being from 1st April 2015 and the structure currently being consulted on includes a specialist team working on an integrated Client and Public Transport service, subject to finalisation of current plans to re-insource the Public Transport team from the TfB contract and to transfer the Client Transport function from CYP to TEE. These plans if finalised would include a Range 12 Head of Client & Public Transport post reporting to the Director Transport Services.

Recommendation 8: We recommend that the Council explores opportunities to undertake a pilot project with the Department for Transport focused on innovative Total Transport options.

Cabinet Response: Agreed

This will be considered and an approach developed to maximise opportunity. Initial discussions have already commenced.

The Cabinet Member for Transportation agreed to provide an update to the Environment, Transport and Locality Services Select Committee in 6 months as well as the 12 month update in December 2015.

9 DRAFT IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES - MODIFICATIONS AND RESPONSES

Cabinet received the report of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services on the draft Improvement Plan for Children's Services.

The Leader reported that the recent Ofsted had been critical of the leadership and he commended the team who had worked to prepare a good robust plan.

The Cabinet Member for Education & Skills & Children's Services reported that a Task and Finish Group had been formed in January and was about to report when the Ofsted Inspection took place. BCC had invested £4.8m into the base budget released £1.64m from reserves and a further £1.733 was required. The Service Director Child & Family Service (the Service Director) reported that the Improvement Plan was based on 6 Workstreams, that work had begun on all of them and that regular updates will be provided to Cabinet. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources reported that he was satisfied that the Plan was credible. He noted that one of the key tasks had been the ability to recruit and retain experienced social workers.

David Simmons from Hillingdon Council had recently attended the Education & Skills recent Select Committee and he explained that investment must be sustained. The Cabinet Member asked if the investment being made will provide a sustainable Children's Services department for the future. The Service Director replied that the workforce was key and he explained that there was competition with neighbouring authorities to attract and retain staff. Cabinet were informed that measures had been put in place but this was in the early stages and that work was taking place with neighbouring authorities to stabilise the workforce. This would provide the basis for a sustaining a good quality service for the next 18 months to 2 years. It was considered that a strong plan was in place to respond to the demands of a very volatile service where demand can increase suddenly at very short notice for example in order to support asylum seekers. The Leader acknowledged that it was very difficult to predict demand and the nature of it and it was noted that much of the unexpected demand came from outside the county.

The work of the former Cabinet Member for Children's Services was acknowledged and it was noted that in Chesham work takes place with other agencies and it was suggested that this be considered. The Service Director replied that work had begun on working with partners.

The Leader reported that he had met neighbouring authorities and that they shared his concerns about the cost of agency staff. He welcomed the suggestion of collaborative working.

A Member asked if the seating arrangements for social workers in the offices in County Hall had been investigated. The Service Director replied that work had been undertaken with Property Services and that there was pressure on floors 2 and 3 in New County Offices. Due to the noise levels it was difficult to hold confidential conversations and work will continue to address this. In response to a question from the Leader about to what extent staff had been involved in the Plan the Service Director replied that there had been 2 consultation days and 2 half day sessions. It was noted that in Adult Social Care CIPFA had been used to compare with other local authorities and suggested that this may highlight areas to be reviewed. The Leader considered that the number and quality of social workers was a national issue and he suggested that the Government should address this.

The Service Director was confident that the points addressed by the Select Committee had been addressed and he proposed to report to them on a regular basis. The Leader believed that the Plan was a good living document. The Cabinet Member for Education & Skills &

Children's Services reported that he had witnessed the enthusiasm amongst staff, senior staff and Cabinet to move forward and achieve a good status as soon as possible. He explained that it was important to know that the good plans in place were sustainable.

RESOLVED

Cabinet:-

- 1. Agreed the Draft Children Services Improvement Plan of the Local Authority, noted the Improvement Plan of Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board Plan and agreed the County Council's contribution to it and to delegate the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, to make minor amendments to the Improvement Plan to finalise the document for submission to Ofsted.**
- 2. Recommended to Full Council the release of £1.64m (revised) from the General Fund Reserve required to fund the additional 2014/15 measures in the Improvement Plan.**

10 DEMOLITION OF THE REAR OF OLD COUNTY OFFICES

Cabinet received the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources on the proposal to demolish the rear section of Old County Offices to form a new temporary car park that will offset the number of parking spaces in the town centre lost due to the first phase of the regeneration of Waterside North.

The Leader explained that the proposal was to make better use of assets and link with AVDC to regenerate the town centre. The proposal was to provide car parking for approximately 98 vehicles and to enable AVDC to redevelop the existing car park and the boulevard during the summer.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources explained that the ability to vacate Old County offices had been a result of a reduction in the workforce and the BIG had considered that the car park will bring additional revenue.

RESOLVED

Cabinet approved the demolition of the rear section of Old County Offices to make way for a new temporary car park.

11 BALANCED PERFORMANCE SCORECARD AND JOINT BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 2

Cabinet received the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources reflecting the forecast outturn position in revenue and capital for the 2014/15 financial year highlighting the reasons for significant variations based on the second Quarter 2014/15.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources reported that pressures had been identified and Action Plans were in place to reverse the situation including a £717k forecast overspend in Children's Services and slippage of £2.656m in Health & Wellbeing.

- There was an additional unreleased slippage expenditure variance of £1,259k relating to the Marlow Flood Defence scheme which should now sit within the Planning & Environment Portfolio. The project will require a decision on the progression of the schemes in order to facilitate forecasting.

- The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources for his leadership on the recovery plans.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources recommended the transfer of £500k from contingency to support the overspend in Health and Wellbeing as detailed in the action plan.
- The Leader noted that 60% of the performance indicators were on track.
- The Cabinet Member for Community Services reported that the performance measures were in order to achieve improved outcomes for the victims of domestic violence. Domestic burglary was being monitored which had been reduced by 21% in 2014 and by a further 8% in the last quarter. There had been increased use of the digital online library service and the initial predictions may have been a little overoptimistic.
- New burdens in Health and Wellbeing included the Winterbourne resulting in a £800k bill for services after a number of service users have been moved from hospital settings without any transfer of resources.
- In Children's Services the management infrastructure had changed and it was necessary to make changes due to the shortage of social workers. In addition care had to be provided for unaccompanied children of asylum seekers. It was noted that assessments were not always being completed within 45 days and some performance issues were being addressed.
- Work was continuing to try to attract more people to adopt. The Service Director Child & Family Service reported that a more coherent campaign to adopt had begun and that more staff had been recruited and that best practise had been reviewed with other local authorities.
- In response to a question about if there was any correlation between the numbers of social workers leaving Bucks to work elsewhere it was noted that whilst there was an impact this did not skew the figures. It was not considered that there was anything internal that could account for the retention issues.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources explained that the red triangle was attributed to capital slippage which he had referred to earlier in the meeting. He commended Bucks Law Plus and the HR Teams who had worked well to generate external income.
- The Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment thanked the dedicated staff who had worked hard to produce an estimated £200k end of year underspend. She reported that it would be necessary to review the Gypsy and Traveller and the Waste programmes.
- It was noted that CO2 emissions were amber and that the target was a 10% reduction by 2017 however there had been an increase in emissions during the harsh winter of 2012/13.
- The target to increase household recycling rates was proving to be challenging and in September was above target. Actual performance needs to be assessed on 12 months full data. It was hoped that data would also be available on the percentage of flytipping investigations leading to a prosecution.
- The Cabinet Member for Transportation thanked the officers for introducing the new way of working which had resulted in significant savings and should reduce the overspend to £24k. Concern was expressed about issues with parking and pay and display and efforts were being made to make further savings.
- Approximately a third of reserves had been used although the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources explained that they were well above the 5% limit previously referred to.
- In response to a question Cabinet was informed that income had not been received from Freedom of Information requests.
- There had been an increase in the number of calls taking longer than 4 minutes to answer and the increase had been between May and July. Concern was expressed by the Leader who considered that Customer Service should be one of BCCs top priorities.

- The Leader also noted that there had been a significant increase in agency costs particularly in Children and Young People and he considered that there were serious problems in maintaining costs in Children and Young People.
- The Chief Executive replied that a significant number of agency staff had been hired to help through the transition and that agency staff were often dealing with frontline services.

RESOLVED

Cabinet:

1. **Commented on and discussed the overall issues raised in the Corporate Balanced Scorecard.**
2. **Noted the outturn position for revenue and capital budgets and discuss areas requiring attention, in particular the low spend to date in capital.**
3. **Approved the transfer of £500k from the contingency to support the overspend in Health & Wellbeing as detailed in their action plan (See Appendix 2 of the report).**
4. **Scrutinised performance data in the report, discussed the areas of significant underperformance and the actions necessary to address such underperformance.**

12 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

8 December 2014.

**MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**