

Minutes

Cabinet

Date: 13 November 2017

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

Time: 10.35 am to 11.51 am

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr M Tett (in the Chair).

Mr M Appleyard, Mr N Brown, Mr W Chapple OBE, Mr J Chilver, Lin Hazell, Mr M Shaw and Mr W Whyte

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr D Watson and Mr M Hussain

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms N Beagle, Mr R Ambrose, Ms S Ashmead and Ms R Shimmin

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following interests were declared in relation to the Acquisition of Land and Progression for the South East Aylesbury Link Road Project.

Mr J Chilver, Mr W Whyte, Mr B Chapple all declared a non-pecuniary interest in Items 11 and 13 as Members of Aylesbury Vale District Council.

Mr Chapple also declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Trustee of William Harding Trust and therefore advised that he would leave the room when the item was discussed.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2017 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

4 HOT TOPICS

Cabinet Member for Transportation; It was noted the “Donate a gift” initiative had launched on Friday 09 November. This encouraged residents to donate items to be gifted to children in care within Buckinghamshire at Christmas time. This had proved successful over previous years and all were encouraged to take part again this year.

Cabinet Member for Children’s Services; It was advised that the Ofsted inspection had begun Monday 06 November and would run for four weeks. A report would then be provided to the County Council on the findings.

Cabinet Member for Resources; It was advised that the County Council had been recognised for its digital working initiative and won a Technology and Digital award by the Local Government Information Unit (LGUI) national body. .

The Leader; Noted that he had presented at the National Highways UK Conference earlier in the month around the plans for the Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire Heartland region, which was well received amongst attendees.

5 QUESTION TIME

Mr Majid Hussain, County Councillor attended to raise the following questions on the Early Help Review;

Could residents be assured that Cabinet Members would provide a factually based report, and what would the timetable for implementation look like.

Mr Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children’s services confirmed that the Early Help Review report would be presented to Cabinet on Monday 08 January, along with all consultation feedback and evidence on how this would have informed the final model.

How many support workers would be in each team and what will be their caseload?

Mr Whyte advised that this could not be confirmed at this stage and the model was being designed. It was noted that there would be a make-up of hubs which would be part of the operational design. Comments provided throughout the consultation would be taken into account.

How many children were currently supported by the existing early help teams.

Mr Whyte confirmed that actual figures for those children currently being supported by the early help team could be provided outside of the meeting.

6 FORWARD PLAN FOR CABINET AND CABINET MEMBERS

RESOLVED

Cabinet NOTED the report.

7 CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

Mr Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, highlighted that the revised policy for care leavers had been approved.

RESOLVED

Cabinet NOTED the report.

8 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME & INQUIRY WORK PROGRAMME

Mr Whyte asked for confirmation that the Chair of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board had been invited to the meeting of the Childrens Social Care and Learning Select Committee.

RESOVLED

Cabinet NOTED the report.

9 CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE

Mr M Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills introduced the report. During discussion key points were highlighted as follows:

- Buckinghamshire was an area with a high level of exclusions, which had risen substantially over recent years. It was noted that the rising trend had been seen across the Country.
- The County Council were working to reduce the number of Education, Health and Care plans being required. Currently there were an estimated 900 out 2500 which were to be converted from the previous "statement" to the new Education, Health and Care plans. It was noted this would be completed by end of April 2018.
- A Government consultation was currently underway to determine how funding would be provided to schools over the next few years to address need. It had been proposed that a National Funding Formula be introduced where all children across the Country would receive the same funding formula to assess needs. It was noted there would be extra factors included for those in the south of the country and nearer to London which could raise the funding. The consultation was due to close Sunday 19 Nov. It was expected further details would be provided by the Government in January 2018.
- The County Council's key objective was to identify families who needed help at an earlier stage in the process in order to tackle the problem of exclusions and high needs early on.

- A number of actions being devised by the County Council looked to balance the issue between funding and need by 2021/2022, this commitment had been provided to Head Teachers by the County Council.

Education

- It was noted Buckinghamshire was set to gain c.£10m to address the funding balance.
- Were the Government to decide to move towards the National Funding Formula, Buckinghamshire would also need to move towards a fair funding formula in the run up to the date of implementation.
- Allocation of the funding would then be agreed by the Schools Forum.
- There were a number of areas of work being explored. This would include moving statements to Health plans, which was important as this would look at the whole person and not just their education.
- Schools remained a statutory responsibility for the County Council, despite no longer being maintained by the Authority. It was noted that the County Council had no power to demand performance information from any school.
- 89% of children attended good or outstanding schools within Buckinghamshire.

Safeguarding and Social Care

- There had been £2m invested in local placements which had helped to reduce the number of children being placed outside of the County.
- An update on the Early Help Review would be provided at the Cabinet meeting in January 2018.
- The agency staffing ratio had improved dramatically following successful recruitment of 17 newly qualified social workers.
- It was noted the re-referral rate would be explored to understand reasons for referral and to bring figures in line with the regional average.
- The Corporate Parenting Panel had reconvened in June with Member involvement and other stakeholder engagement had been great.
- It was noted that a paragraph providing an update on the Corporate Parenting Panel would be updated to the report following the meeting.

RESOLVED

Cabinet NOTED the report.

10 Q2 2017/18 FINANCE MONITORING REPORT

Mr J Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report. During discussion key points were highlighted as follows:

Revenue Budget

- The year-end position at end of Q2 was an underspend c.£3m
- Projected portfolio overspends were identified;
 - Health and Wellbeing of £1.4m
 - Children's Services of £0.8m

- Projected overspends were offset by a forecast underspend in corporate costs of £5m

Capital Budget

- The Capital budget showed predicted slippage c.£13.7m, of which £3.6m related to the underspend on the Orchard house project
- There was a total of £9.5m unreleased capital budget across the Authority
- The notable areas of underspend/ slippage were identified;
 - Education and Skills of £4.6m
 - Resources of £5.8m

Portfolio Updates

Health & Wellbeing; Lin Hazell, Cabinet Member provided an update noting that overspends were attributed to;

- Increase in demand
- Increase in prices
- Failing to deliver on anticipated savings within the new operating model, although there was still time to address this during the remaining part of the year

Childrens' Services; Mr Whyte Cabinet Member provided an update noting that overspends were attributed to;

- Historic budget challenges
- Complexity of issues surrounding keeping children safe
- Over spend on staffing when caseloads are high, agency staff are still required at times
- The changes that were being made with improved local placements should improve outcomes in due course
- It was noted that unfortunately due to the number of children being referred to the Authority some costs were unavoidable

Education and Skills; Mr Appleyard, Cabinet Member provided an update noting that overspends were attributed to;

- Due to the nature of the area some slippage would always be present
- Difficulties with planning issues

Resources; Mr Chilver, Cabinet Member provided an update noting that overspends were attributed to;

- Spending pressures on property
- The Orchard house project was no longer going ahead, which accounted for £3.6m slippage. This would be reallocated to elsewhere within the capital programme
- £1.7m related to the proposed additional lift at New County Offices. An occupancy survey was currently taking place which would inform a final decision

It was noted that each portfolio needed to be clear on what was driving the challenges, how much related to demand, budget failings, process and savings delivery to understand and be able to identify areas that require focus.

RESOLVED

Cabinet NOTED the report.

**11 ACQUISITION OF LAND AND PROGRESSION FOR THE SOUTH EAST
AYLESBURY LINK ROAD PROJECT**

At this point Mr Chapple left the meeting.

Mr M Shaw, Cabinet Member for Transport introduced the item. During discussion key points were highlighted as follows:

- Project was essential and in public interest as HS2 works would put significant strain on the existing transport links
- The report outlined how the County Council would be able to purchase land to build the link roads to improve traffic in and around Aylesbury
- This would include a series of link roads that would enable residents to move around the town, providing significant relief for existing roads as well as improving the air quality in central Aylesbury.

RESOLVED

Cabinet AGREED the recommendations.

**13 ACQUISITION OF LAND AND PROGRESSION FOR THE SOUTH EAST
AYLESBURY LINK ROAD PROJECT**

Confidential discussion was not required.

14 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Special Cabinet Meeting 17 November 2017

Next Scheduled Cabinet meeting 11 December 2017.

**MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**