

Minutes

Cabinet

Date: 10 December 2018

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

Time: 10.30 am to 1.00 pm

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms R Bennett, Mr R Ambrose, Mrs S Ashmead, Ms R Shimmin, Ms G Quinton,
Mr T Vouyioukas and Mr M Dias

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Cabinet Member declared an interest in the Children's Service report as a Trustee of the Museum and his son also worked in Children's Services.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November were **AGREED** as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

4 HOT TOPICS

Cabinet's attention was brought to the following:

The Cabinet Member for Transportation highlighted that himself and Mr P Irwin had visited depots across the county to meet those carrying out gritter runs. Mr Shaw extended Cabinet's thanks for their work over the last year. Mr Shaw stated that the depot were fully stocked and reminded residents to contact the Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) contact centre if they required any stock for salt bins. Mr Shaw highlighted that the County Council covered 42% of the road network and that residents could also follow the gritters on the BCC website and twitter. Fact sheets on winter maintenance were also available to download on the BCC website.

Mr Shaw highlighted the Christmas present appeal for Looked After Children and the huge generosity of residents and staff. Mr Shaw paid credit to a number of local organisations that had donated a large number of presents and credit was given to Mr P Irwin who introduced the initiative 3 years ago.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services thanked Mr Shaw and Mr Irwin for their excellent work on the Christmas present appeal.

Mr Whyte highlighted that the Early Help consultation ended on 13 December and the Short Breaks consultation for adults and children would be running until 14 January 2019.

Mr Whyte highlighted the next adoption information event was to be held on 8 January in Aston Clinton and the fostering information event being held in High Wycombe on 16 January.

The Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health highlighted their successful bid to the Rothschild Foundation for £150k over three years to appoint a Cultural Strategy Coordinator which had been made jointly with the Museum Trust.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment stated that the Household Recycling Centre item would come to Cabinet on 7 January 2019. The delay from the December meeting was to allow more time to consider responses submitted as part of the consultation.

The Leader highlighted the recent meeting of Buckinghamshire's Association of Local Councils (BALC) which had a large attendance from local councils across the county. Key items discussed were devolution of existing services and Unitary. Mr Tett stated that he had written to all town and parish councils and had received positive feedback. Cabinet discussed the importance of improving links with town and parish councils and being a priority area as part of the unitary implementation.

Mr Tett highlighted the work ongoing for preparing for the winter months. Urgent road repairs would still be carried however non urgent works would wait until the better weather in order to ensure works lasted. Mr Tett stated that an additional £4m funding would be spent on 'plane and patch' scheme throughout the county and would begin in March 2019. As in previous years the money would be spent locally by Local Area Technicians (LATs).

5 QUESTION TIME

Mr S Lambert, County Councillor and Leader of the Opposition Group attended and raised concerns regarding the implementation of the unitary business case and in particular the narrative regarding setting up Area Board, devolution of services and local area working. Mr Lambert asked for assurances that the County Council were working with district colleagues to ensure real devolution and for parish and town councils to be treated as equal partners.

Mr M Tett, Leader, responded by stating that the Secretary of State had approved the business case as put forward by Buckinghamshire County Council. An integral part of the business case had been the remodelling of the governance of the county with countywide strategic leadership and the offer of devolution of services to those town and parish councils that had the desire to take on devolved services. Mr Tett stated that they wanted to keep planning matters local e.g. with separate planning boards with local Members making those local decisions. Mr Tett highlighted the Community Hubs which would allow residents to access information locally regarding services.

Mr Tett stated that the Government had not yet confirmed how the Implementation Executive would be constituted and it would be down to the Implementation Executive working in partnership across councils, to deliver the business case agreed with residents and central government.

Mr Lambert raised the valuable input from town councils in relation to the community hubs and devolution of services but also raised the concerns regarding contracts for services already in place and the potential of them to be brought to an end sooner than planned, when it was noted that other longer tenders were still in the process of going forward at partner councils that could bind the new authority into contracts and affect the savings in the business case.

Mr Tett responded by saying that the sooner the Implementation Executive was in place the better, as this would give a common understanding of how things would move forward, for example management of contracts. He also highlighted that the County Council was taking the view to put shorter contracts in place due to the move to a unitary authority.

Mr Lambert thanked Mr Tett for his response and highlighted that he welcomed the rates pooling proposal on page 115 of the draft budget and welcomed the Brexit report under item 9. Mr Lambert also commented on the progress in Children's Services and the credible plans that were in place.

6 FORWARD PLAN FOR CABINET AND CABINET MEMBERS

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.

7 CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.

8 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME & INQUIRY WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.

9 BREXIT PREPAREDNESS

Mr Tett introduced the item and Mr M Dias, Policy Officer attended the meeting to answer Member's questions on the Brexit presentation included in the meeting pack. The following points were highlighted.

- The County Council had not taken a political stance on Brexit as a policy
- The Brexit work carried out by the County Council was to ensure a good position for residents and businesses in Buckinghamshire.
- There was just over a 100 days until Brexit and there was still a lack of clarity on the impact
- One clear area was the EU Settlement Scheme and it was important for EU nationals in Buckinghamshire to feel reassured.
- The Council were working with social care providers to promote the EU Settlement Scheme first pilot.
- There was planning in partnership with Bucks Business First (BBF) to hold another Brexit Summit on 6 March 2019.

The report set out the following recommendations:

1. **BCC to work with social care providers to promote EU Settlement Scheme take-up by EU nationals working in the sector.**
2. **BCC to undertake all EU Settlement Scheme suggested actions (assuming positive follow up).**
3. **BCC to develop and deliver, in partnership with BBF, a second Brexit Summit as part of the Buckinghamshire Business Festival.**

Mr Tett raised the following points:

- The reliance on EU nationals within the Council's social care workforce and the NHS
- There had been confirmation that EU nationals would be able to vote in local elections.
- Adequate resource for the work was required within Trading Standards
- Monies relating to the European Regional Development funds and the government's pledge to replace all potentially lost monies and the need to know how that will be distributed.
- BBF had been working closely with local businesses and Mr Dias urged local business to link in with BBF if they had not already done so.

Members raised and discussed the following points:

- The number of council staff that were affected by the EU Settlement and Mr Dias stated that as of September, The Council employed 128 EEA and Swiss nationals and were in contact with the Home Office on how best to support those nationals. Not many of them would be able to take part in the pilot scheme however it would be promoted to staff before it started.
- The implications for procurement and Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) regulations and the opportunities to do things differently in the long term. Mr Dias confirmed that there would be a two year transition period and OJEU rules would still apply.
- Positive feedback on holding another Brexit Summit and suggested clear links to the Brexit page on the BCC homepage.
- The need to ensure all staff are trained in relation to the pilot scheme before it opened, in particular Library staff.

Cabinet thanked Mr Dias for his work.

RESOLVED: Cabinet AGREED the recommendations as set out above.

10 CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Mr Tett introduced the item and requested that the Strategy made a clear distinction between the £15m Capital Maintenance Programme which was the asset managed led resurfacing programme and the £1m reactive Plane and Patch Programme budget. Mr Chilver confirmed that this would be done before the strategy went to full Council for agreement.

Mr Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- It was a new strategy that brought together the Capital Investment Strategy, Investment Strategy and some elements of the Treasury Management Strategy.
- One key change was the section on commercial property investments and criteria to be followed when selecting suitable investments and any associated risks.
- The mitigation of risks by ensuring diversification across different geographically areas, different sectors, carrying out due diligence and 5% investment income into the properties.
- The aim to provide fit for purpose property assets contributing towards the Councils Strategic priorities and income.
- The governance arrangements for Capital decision making, which was now allocated across 3 boards; the Property Board, The Technology Board and the Transformation Board.
- There was also a section on the implications of the new unitary authority.

Mr R Ambrose, Director of Finance and Procurement attended the meeting to answer any questions from Cabinet. Mr Ambrose highlighted the following points:

- The strategy before Cabinet was a draft only for comments before going forward to full Council.
- The importance to understand commercial investments and due diligence.
- The strategy aligned with all other relevant policies and plans.

Members raised and discussed the following points:

- The transparency of all property acquisitions agreed by Cabinet and that they were not only to support local economy but generated income to contribute towards front line services.
- Ensuring investment properties have a secondary use to ensure money was being invested wisely.
- Investment in schools was highlighted and the fact that the Council had to provide a further 6.5k additional school places in the next 4-6 years with the Council required to fund a large proportion.
- Highlighted One Public Estates project and the support it gives to delivering services locally.
- Some small corrections were highlighted; page 56 'the locally determined risk appetite' to be reworded and paragraph 4 to read revenue AND capital.

ACTION: Mr Ambrose

- The importance of what the government sets out in the Structural Order in relation to investment strategies and plans across each of the five councils.

RESOLVED: With the Leaders caveat included, Cabinet RECOMMENDED the Capital and Investment Strategy to County Council.

11 DRAFT BUDGET 2019/20

Mr Tett introduced the Draft Budget item and drew Cabinet's attention to the following points:

- The draft budget set out a four year plan for the existing County Council.
- Portfolio teams had produced plans taking into account new pressures and opportunities for savings.
- Residents had been asked for their key priorities and, if approved, the draft budget would then go out to a formal public consultation.
- The Finance, Resources and Performance Select Committee would scrutinise the budget in January and could recommend changes.
- The budget would then come back to Cabinet in February with a final proposal going to Council in February for approval.
- The Council were still awaiting the government settlement so various assumptions had been made in order to prepare the budget.

- There were large budget pressures in Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children's Services. Due to recent lobbying a range of one off funding arrangements had been provided in order to have contingencies in place to mitigate any new pressures.
- £4.6m additional funding for potholes would be used this financial year and would free up additional money for next year.

Mr R Ambrose, Director of Finance and Procurement attended the meeting to answer any questions from Cabinet. Mr Ambrose highlighted the following points:

- The draft budget set out the revenue and capital budgets over the next four 4 years.
- Unitary will mean that from April 2021 budgets would need to be aggregated.
- Draft revenue budgets took into account any underlying pressures in the current financial year and expected demands going forward.
- Children's Social Care budget had an increase of £10.7m on last year's budget with an increase in ASC of £3.7m
- Funding 2019/20 was the final year of the four year settlement and the draft budget took this into account along with the governments positive announcement in eliminating negative revenue support grants.
- A Spending review would take place in spring 2019 and that would give an indication of government's funding over the next few years. There would be a Fair Funding review, changes to business rate retention going from 50% to 75% which would bring additional functions and the Council were also still awaiting a Green Paper on ASC funding. These unknowns presented a significant financial risk.
- The budget assumed a Council Tax increase of 2.99%.
- The draft Capital Programme included significant investment in primary and secondary school places, property maintenance and the roads programme.
- The outcomes of the budget consultation align with the draft budget particularly those around roads and support to vulnerable clients.
- Risk associated with the budget were set out in the report; demand and complexity of needs, Brexit, future funding, sustainability of providers and income streams.

Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- It was highlighted that a large part of the Education and Skills budget covered school transport, £15m of £22m. Special Needs and Early Help were both overspent and did not take into consideration year on year growth of £2m in special needs. These increases were to be covered by continuing to make savings. Mr Ambrose highlighted the risk within special educational need placements.
- There had been significant investment in vulnerable children and Adult Social Care and feedback from the recent budget consultation supported that.
- The Ofsted Improvement Plan remained a top priority.
- There had been a significant increase in the Looked After Children's placement budget and work to ensure more locally and appropriate placements including BCC owned children's homes.
- Resources had two areas of financial pressure; income targets not being achieved mainly due to selling services to schools and the impact of multi academy trusts and reactive property maintenance. Mr Chilver stated that they were confident they would

secure additional property income, enhanced income from agricultural estates and new income streams.

- Increased funding in Health and Wellbeing was welcomed and the service was still awaiting the Government Green Paper, the contents of which was still unknown and the implications it may have.
- It was highlighted that the budget was set before the recent unitary announcement so fundamentally it was a one year budget with the subsequent 3 years to be consolidated.
- There was still a big investment in roads and reactive maintenance to potholes.

Cabinet APPROVED the draft Revenue and Capital Budgets for wider consideration

12 CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE

Mr W Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the update report and made reference to the following:

- The report included updates from Children's Social Care and Education and Skills
- The ongoing Early Help consultation closed on 13 December.
- The sufficiency of places for Looked After Children was highlighted and the creation of 4 new residential homes within Buckinghamshire and focus on in house foster placements.
- The first Children's Short Breaks Strategy for the Council had been developed in partnership with Adult Services, the Clinical Commissioning Group and FACT Bucks (Bucks Parent Carer Forum) and was currently out for consultation until
- Significant work had been and continued to be undertaken as part of the Ofsted Improvement Plan and an Ofsted visit was planned for that week to look particularly at children subject to protection plans. The Improvement Plan had now evolved into phase 2.
- The Children in Need audit review and work looking at particular cases. Placement at home with parent arrangements had been reviewed and resolved.
- Ongoing focus on the Workforce Strategy and recruitment.

Mr T Vouyioukas, Executive Director for Children's Services also attended the meeting to answer any questions from Cabinet. Mr Vouyioukas highlighted the following points:

- Phase 2 of the Improvement Plan and the improvement in quality of standards and practice.
- Highlighted the Early Help consultation and the importance of getting it right.
- The Side by Side project working with local schools.

Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- There was a sense of pace within the improvement plan but ensuring work was still being carried out in a safe and secure way ensuring sustainable change.
- The high caseload of social workers and if the current recruitment supported this or if increase of target total workforce was needed.
- The importance of working with district colleagues on the Homelessness Strategy.

- The Ofsted Improvement Plan was still a top priority of the Council.
- Still concerns in the increase of Looked After Children and the time taken to introduce children into the service and complete health checks. Mr Whyte thanked Mr Brown for his work on the Corporate Parenting Panel and stated that they were improving health assessments for those entering the service and those that had been with them for some time.

Mr M Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills highlighted the following points in relation to his portfolio within the report:

- The importance of identifying areas where improvements could still be made.
- Buckinghamshire had a greater number of exclusions than the national average and work had been ongoing to introduce the Side by Side school led model of improvement to help support secondary schools that did not yet have a good or outstanding Ofsted rating. Support was given to these schools by the deployment of the best teachers and senior leaders from other secondary schools in the county and has been running since April 2018.
- GCSE results were similar to others across the country and 89% of pupils attend a school with a rating of good or outstanding with 91% of schools being rated good or above.
- Early years were high performing in terms of provision for early year's children.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.

13 ADULT SERVICES UPDATE

Lin Hazell, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing introduced the update report from Adult Services and highlighted the following:

- They were still awaiting the Governments Green Paper which would set out the future policy on funding.
- There was a clearer direction of travel across the service with a clear strategy for delivering the transformation programme
- Work on managing the demand on the service with a high number of service users coming into the service with more complex needs.

Ms G Quinton, Executive Director for Communities, Health and Adult Social Care also attended the meeting to answer any questions from Cabinet. Ms Quinton highlighted the following points:

- The additional funding within ASC was one off funding and more certainty was needed on future funding.
- Significant risks relating to the resilience of the local and national care market. Ms Quinton highlighted the recent issues with Allied HealthCare and the service was finding alternative care for clients looked after by them. Allied had been brought out and provisions had been made to transfer BCC clients.
- Adult Social Care winter plans were in place

- The Transformation programme rolled out from April 2018 would see savings of £5.2m in year; on target to deliver £4.8m so far. The savings would help offset additional pressures coming into the service.

Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- The integrated care system working in partnership with colleagues in the NHS.
- The importance of Public Health and the part it plays in keeping people healthier for longer and in their own homes.
- The part the community and voluntary sector play in helping people live independently for longer.
- The importance of making it easier for people and their families to access services and know what is available to them.
- The role of digital and technology solutions in particular the development of a new online portal for ASC information and developments in assisted living.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.

14 Q2 2018/19 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Cabinet received a summary report, scorecard and detailed measures for each of their portfolio areas and were asked to update on those areas that were being flagged as red.

Community Engagement and Public Health

- Customer service calls abandoned – more training and communication to the public was needed to ensure the right route was being used i.e. using Fix My Street to report problems such as potholes. The risk remained a focus.
- Percentage in receiving NHS health check – More communication was required and not seen as a priority by doctors due to other pressures.
- Successful alcohol completions – Would be monitored over the coming months. Service was seeing individuals with more complex needs.

Health and Wellbeing

- Average length of stay in residential nursing care – it would take some time to turn around, but improvements would be seen with the ongoing work within the service.
- Delayed transfers of care from hospital – initiatives were in place to manage the target down. It was also reviewed by the Health and Wellbeing Board and would continue to be a focus.
- Percentage contacts progressed to assessment in Adult Social Care – targets had been readjusted and could take 2-3 years to meet ambitious targets. Showing as red but progress had been made.
- Percentage of Adult Social Care clients receiving an annual review – high on the agenda with a bespoke review team having been set up.
- Percentage of people re-abled with an outcome of Independence – part of the Transformation Programme and progress was being made.

- Percentage of adults with learning disabilities in paid employment – showing slightly under target but ahead of both national and regional benchmarking. Improvements were ongoing.

Children's Services

- Six reds were highlighted within the report and Mr Whyte stated the importance of the Children's Service improvement plan and phase 2 being in place to continue to address those areas currently underperforming.
- There would be visible improvement over the coming quarter
- The improvement plan remained a top priority for the Council.

Education and Skills

- Permanent exclusion rate – higher than the national average but improvements had been made over the past year. Positive support to schools with the introduction of the Side by Side programme.
- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCs) – progress heading in the right direction with numbers expected to be closer to the national average in the coming year.

Resources

- Percentage of BCC Website pages that meet accessibility standards – webpages are designed with a reading age of 9 years old but this also referred to accessibility for those with sight problems. There had been some improvement and the team were working on further improvements. A national standard had been set by central government in September 2018.

Planning and Environment

- Percentage of waste collected for recycling, reuse, composting or anaerobic digestion from Household Sources – this was a green target and Mr Chapple thanked all officers for their hard work.
- Complimented on number of country park visitors.

Transportation

- Percentage of overall Capital footway programme delivered by year end – work would start in the later part of the year.
- Delivered all road surface schemes.
- Work would now commence on the footpath scheme.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the update report.

15 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

7 January 2019.

**MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

