

Minutes

Cabinet

Date: 10 February 2020

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

Time: 10.30 am to 11.35 am

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr M Tett (in the Chair).

Mr W Chapple OBE, Mr J Chilver, Mr M Shaw, Mr G Williams, Ms N Glover (In place of Mr W Whyte), Mr A Hussain (In place of Mrs A Cranmer) and Mrs W Mallen (In place of Ms L Hazell)

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr D Watson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr R Ambrose, Ms R Shimmin, Ms C Beevers, Mr E Barlow, Mr D Sutherland and Mr J Hollis

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ms Cranmer, Ms L Hazell and Mr Whyte. Deputy Cabinet Members in attendance were Ms Glover, Ms Mallen and Mr Hussain.

Apologies had also been received from Ms S Ashmead, Monitoring Officer, with Mr J Hollis, Deputy Monitoring Officer in attendance.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2020 were **AGREED** as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

4 HOT TOPICS

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transportation advised that over 150 emergency calls were received on 9 February 2020 in relation to blocked highways. Transport for Buckinghamshire (TFB) teams had worked throughout the day and night to respond to emergency calls and clear the roads. Thanks were given to the team for all their hard work during this time. Mr Shaw highlighted the work carried out to clear old and diseased trees in the last year, which meant that the majority of the calls were from private properties as opposed to County Council land. The teams would continue to work until the roads were cleared.

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health highlighted the guidance from Public Health in relation to the corona virus outbreak. To date there had been 40,561 cases worldwide, 910 deaths and four cases in the UK. In terms of the national picture, Public Health England had taken a lead, liaising with the World Health Organisation and NHS organisations. Public Health England would be updating their website daily at 2pm. [Public Health England Website](#)

Members of the public were encouraged to act appropriately and proportionately in regards to the treatment of Asian and Chinese citizens residing in the UK.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment highlighted that all four Country Parks were closed on 9 February 2020 and would remain closed whilst assessments were carried out. Updates regarding the ongoing closures were on the [Country Parks Website](#).

Generally visitors had been complying with the closure notices. As a result, there were no reported injuries from Storm Ciara, to staff or visitors. The current situation at the time of the meeting was that both Black Park and Langley Park had been surveyed. One section of Black Park Lakeside would be closed to the public for the foreseeable future due to a fallen tree and infrastructure damage. Diversions would be put in place and it was asked that members of the public to heed any diversions or advice from Rangers on site. At Langley Park, Jubilee Play Area would remain closed whilst fallen branches were removed and the trees assessed in the coming days. Once the two areas had been secured, the remaining areas of both Black Park and Langley Park would be reopened to the public. Denham Country Park and Thorney Country Park had yet to be assessed and would remain closed all morning. It was hoped that the parks would re-open that afternoon.

There had been a significant amount of media interest in the 42 skeletons found in Buckingham in December 2019. Major media outlets had picked up the story and Mr Chapple had completed a number of interviews. The service was awaiting carbon data to pinpoint the dates which would take several months. Once the information was known it would be shared publicly. There had been speculation that the skeletons were from the Saxon era.

The Aylesbury Garden Town Master Plan was currently out for consultation and was due to close on Friday 14 February 2020. Members of the public were encouraged to participate.

5 QUESTION TIME

The following question was submitted by Mr D Watson:

'The Q3 outturn forecasts, a year on year increase of £5.7 million in Health and Well Being and £6.6 million in Children's Services. The Q1 outturn was reviewed in detail by the finance select committee last September, when the committee was advised that both portfolios would be on budget without any need for drawdown from the centrally held contingency fund. The outturn at Q3 has however significantly deteriorated from the Q1 outturn by £2.4 million in Health and wellbeing and £4.6 million in Children's services. It would be very helpful for the Finance Performance Resources Select committee to receive a subsequent update as to what has given rise to both, the in-year increases from the Q1 outturn. Analysed in the same format which was used in September, to identify changes in demand, changes in unit costs, changes in agency staff costs and changes in all other costs. In the meantime given the 19/20's children's services latest projected spend of £80.3 million is the draft 20/21 budget for children's services of £74 million plus any centrally held contingency still sufficient for the year ahead.'

The Leader agreed to get a written response sent to Mr Watson following the meeting. The response would be appended to the minutes.

6 FORWARD PLAN FOR CABINET AND CABINET MEMBERS

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.

7 CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

There were no Cabinet Member decisions since the last meeting.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

The Leader highlighted that there had been a Climate Change motion put forward at full Council in September 2019. It was recognised that the carbon audit formed the starting point for decisions which would come into effect for the unitary council.

Mr Chapple provided an introduction and invited Mr D Sutherland, Head of Planning and Environment and Mr E Barlow, Head of Energy and Resources to present the report. Mr Chapple highlighted the following points:

- Cabinet members were aware of the importance of climate change to Buckinghamshire residents.
- The motion was tabled to full council in September 2019.

- The council had achieved a 53% reduction in its carbon emissions over the last 10 year period through a series of ongoing energy efficient improvements to operations. The council supported residents to recycle over 56% of their waste and the energy from waste plant produced electricity for 40,000 homes, allowing landfill waste to decrease to less than 1%.
- It was recognised that climate change was a complex issue that needed to be addressed across the whole council.

Mr Barlow and Mr Sutherland gave an overview of the report provided. The following points were raised in discussion with Cabinet:

- The Council were exploring options to form partnerships with farms and were in conversation with the National Farmers Union (NFU).
- A concern was raised over the biodiversity issue, the loss of hedge rows in the county and the use of pesticides. The issues would be readdressed.
- It was highlighted that Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB) were ordered by government to look at innovative working. Options currently being tested in Aylesbury included capturing kinetic energy and reusing it in the local area. In terms of biodiversity, TfB were working with Chiltern Rangers to look at wild flower seeding across the county. It was hoped that the new council would build on the initiative.
- It was advised that Ms Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Skills and Education was keen to involve schools with tree planting.
- Cabinet highlighted that the report felt positive. It was critical to continue to explore ways to make Buckinghamshire more sustainable.
- It was stated that water consumption was a significant issue in Buckinghamshire.
- Cabinet enquired as to the percentage of worldwide carbon emissions that the UK were responsible for. Mr Chapple advised the UK were producing 1% of the world's carbon emissions. 50% of the worldwide emissions were down to The USA, China and India.
- Cabinet would use the carbon audit to form the basis of their decision making.
- Cabinet enquired as to whether it was possible to lobby the Environment Agency to protect the quality of the streams and the rivers in the county, especially with the ongoing issues of sewage being pumped into them.
- As well as all the strategic ideas, residents needed to be mindful of their own behaviours. Members of the public were encouraged to compost as much of their garden waste as possible.
- It was advised that Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) were rolling out a programme to support community orchards.
- Mr Chapple advised he was putting a lot of emphasis on the new Buckinghamshire plan for the unitary council. There were local plans working through their processes but it was vital to have a single plan for the whole county.

It was advised although the new council did not yet exist, the Shadow Executive had placed a strong focus on climate change within the corporate plan.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report and AGREED the proposals for how to continue the work as part of the new Buckinghamshire Council.

9 Q3 19/20 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

Mr Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources, provided an introduction to the budget monitoring report and highlighted the following:

- The report provided the forecast for the end of quarter three. The overall revenue position showed a forecast year end overspend of £487,000, which comprised of an overspend against portfolio budgets of £4.9 million, of which £4 million related to the Children's Social Care budget.
- It was advised that remedial steps were being taken particularly in the recruitment of new social workers. However was unlikely to be reflected in the financial position until the following year.
- The remainder of overspend related to the Health and Well-Being portfolio, of around £800,000.
- It was noted the forecast position had improved since quarter two.
- In regard to the Capital programme, the report showed net forecast slippage of £5.8 million, representing 6.2% of the total capital budget which was well within the 10% target.
- In summary, it was stated that the service would carry a sound and stable financial position in to the new unitary authority with around £30 million of general fund reserves held by the authority at the end of March.

The following points were raised in discussion with Cabinet:

- Cabinet were disappointed to see the financial position had deteriorated since the last report; Cabinet acknowledged the over spend pressures.
- It was highlighted that although the capital programme was overspent, this was partly due to schemes being delivered earlier than expected.
- It was advised that every effort was being made to bring the revenue position back to a break even position.
- It was clear there was a significant overspend in Children's Services; it was highlighted that there tended to be a lack of understanding outside of the council the extensive cost of care packages; it was vital to ensure the health and safety of children in care. It was also highlighted that the overspend in Children's Services was a national issue.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the current forecast outturn for the financial year 2019/20.

10 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

09 March 2020.

**MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**Response to written question from Mr D Watson
Cabinet 10/02/2020**

Mr Ambrose provided Mr D Watson with the analysis of the Q3 forecast in the format requested.

For the 2020-21 Budget:

- We have rebased the placement budget to take into account the revised projections of numbers and an updated, and inflated, average unit cost. Unit costs are based on averages and therefore a small number of high cost placements can have a significant impact.
- There will continue to be risk against the placement budget but the rebasing, and continued success of the sufficiency strategy indicate that the savings targets can be achieved.
- Based on the activity this year it is expected that the planned savings in legal costs will be met.
- Part of the reduction in the 2020-21 budget is the removal of the one off investment for Early Help and The Vines in the current year, both of which are planned for.
- The final proposed budget for 2020-21 will include increased investment for the ASYE Academy and additional temporary social work capacity and, therefore, will be higher than the figure quoted in the e-mail below.
- An assessment of the risks for next year was included in the Budget Scrutiny papers.

