



## Cabinet minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 11 July 2023 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 11.40 am.

### Members present

M Tett, A Macpherson, G Williams, S Broadbent, J Chilver, A Cranmer, C Harriss, A Hussain, P Strachan and M Winn

### Others in attendance

D Barnes, R Stuchbury, N Thomas, S Wilson, C Heap and J MacBean

### Agenda Item

#### 1 Apologies

There were no apologies.

#### 2 Minutes

**RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 June 2023 were agreed as a correct record.**

#### 3 Declarations of interest

Cllr M Winn declared a prejudicial interest as a Member of the AVE Board and left the room for item 12 and 16.

#### 4 Hot Topics

The following hot topics were reported:-

Cabinet Member for Transport

Since 1 April 2023 the service area had fixed 12,000 road defects and repaired 1200 street lights. There were 15 teams working at the weekends to fix roads.

Cabinet Member for Education and Children Services

Over 120 people gathered at the Waterside Theatre in Aylesbury on Wednesday evening (5 July) for the annual Buckinghamshire Adult Learning Awards. The awards were designed to celebrate the achievements of students taking part in adult learning courses in Buckinghamshire. They also recognised the work of trainees, assessors, tutors, learning support assistants, volunteers and staff. Members noted that there had been 9000 enrolments for courses this year. The Multiply Programme

was Government funded and was also part of the Shared Prosperity Fund which gave employment support for economically inactive Buckinghamshire residents providing basic skills training such as digital courses, English, Maths and English for speakers of other languages.

Leader

The Leader reported on the Government's announcement that Michael Gove was looking at proposals to turn Cambridge into Britain's Silicon Valley with as many as 250,000 new homes built over the next two decades and the prospect of a huge financial investment. The Council would be looking at what implications this would have for Buckinghamshire.

## 5 Question Time

**Question from Councillor Stuart Wilson to Councillor John Chilver, Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources**

**The Q1 Budget Monitoring Report reviewed by Cabinet today rightly notes the significant financial challenges of this Council against a backdrop of persistent high inflation and continued increase in demand and complexity of key services, notably in Adult and Children's Social Care. As an aside, and somewhat strangely, high energy costs are impacting certain portfolios but not delivering the benefits anticipated in Energy from Waste which raises some questions about energy procurement and trading. As such, this reports projects an adverse forecast of £8.3m for the 2023-24 year compared to £3.8m adverse in the same quarter last year. This reflects 2% of Portfolio Spend this year rather than 1% of Portfolio Spend last year. Savings are projected to deliver a shortfall of £6.6m in 2023-24 compared to a projection of £0.2m shortfall this time last year.**

**The Report asks Cabinet to note its contents and the risks and opportunities within it. It also asks Cabinet to approve the actions set out in the Report to address the pressures. I have been through the Report several times and I am unable to locate any specific opportunities or actions that have been scoped and costed to address the pressures. However, I do note the following comments in paragraph 1.4:**

**"Detailed Portfolio Action Plans are already in development to address the pressures, with a view to urgently bringing budgets back into line. These will consider the acceleration of savings plans from future years. In addition, a member led Strategic Property and Finance Review will be initiated to examine opportunities for additional savings, income, or capital receipt. The delivery of the action plans will be managed by the Portfolio Holders."**

**Sections 8, 9 and 10 of the Report deal with consultation, communication, engagement, next steps, and review which concludes there is no further public reporting action required until the Q2 Report in November, at which point the financial year is half-way through.**

**Given the severity of the Council's financial position versus Budget at Q1, can the**

**Cabinet Member please confirm that:**

- **the year-to-date (Q1) and year-to-go (Q2-4) trends versus Budget and prior year confirm the full year projection with a suitable data table shown by portfolio and corporate line;**
- **Cabinet Members are actually able to approve the actions set out in the Report to address the pressures if those Detailed Portfolio Action Plans are still in development;**
- **the acceleration of savings plans from future years is feasible given a projected miss on savings of £6.6m this year, given the existing pressure on statutory services in particular;**
- **the Detailed Portfolio Action Plans and details of the proposed member led Strategic Property & Financial Review will be presented to the Finance & Resources Select Committee on July 20<sup>th</sup> alongside the Q1 Report to demonstrate how they will urgently bring budgets back into line?**

**RESPONSE from Councillor Chilver on the following question which has been put:-**

**Given the severity of the Council's financial position versus Budget at Q1, can the Cabinet Member please confirm that:**

- **the year-to-date (Q1) and year-to-go (Q2-4) trends versus Budget and prior year confirm the full year projection with a suitable data table shown by portfolio and corporate line;**

The report presented to Cabinet includes a data table which shows the Council approved Budget, the forecast outturn and the variance from budget. The key information that drives financial performance is the level of activity (volume/number of clients) and price for that activity. The actuals for Q1 are not included in the report as this information does not provide any further insight for Members. The Council does not do monthly or quarterly accruals, this means that unmatched accruals from year-end distorts the financial position in particular in Q1. In estimating the forecast outturn position, budget holders and finance staff consider all activity and price movement 'year-to-date', which in key demand areas builds in the prior year activity levels, and the full year impact of that activity, plus how the trend in activity impacts on the rest of the year.

A deep dive has been undertaken into the four key areas to ensure that forecasts are robust, covering:

- Children's Placements
- Adult Social Care
- Temporary Accommodation
- Energy

The specific issues for each of these is included in Cabinet Report Appendix 1 and provides detailed commentary and proposed actions across the main demand led areas.

- **Cabinet Members are actually able to approve the actions set out in the Report to address the pressures if those Detailed Portfolio Action Plans are still in development;**

The key action that Cabinet Members are being asked to agree is the development and ownership of the Portfolio Action Plan. This is a fast and emerging situation, officers and members are not waiting for the Cabinet meeting (on 11 July) to start developing the action plans, as a result many of the actions are included in the report (as listed above) and are already in place; whilst further actions and mitigations are being considered. The Portfolio Action Plan will bring these actions into a single place to facilitate ownership, monitoring and scrutiny of delivery.

The detailed action plans will come back to Cabinet for review and formal approval.

- **the acceleration of savings plans from future years is feasible given a projected miss on savings of £6.6m this year, given the existing pressure on statutory services in particular;**

The report sets out the forecast shortfall of £6.6m on income and savings. The shortfall relates only to income and two Portfolios, Climate Change & Environment and Transportation. For ease this is repeated below alongside the mitigation:

#### Income shortfall

- a) £1.1m Off-Street parking income – the recovery towards pre-Covid levels of income is slower than budgeted
- b) £5.0m Energy from Waste Income – due to the reduction in market energy prices both contract based and spill market (daily based). The in-year impact of this is being mitigated by a proposed drawdown from the waste reserve to manage this risk. The amount will be monitored over the course of the year and will reflect prevalent market conditions, with the final amount determined for the outturn position.
- c) £0.3m Streetworks Income – expenditure allocated to the permit scheme has increased but volumes are forecast to be similar to last year. Therefore, the forecast increase is not achievable.
- d) £0.2m External contract savings in Waste services - Volatility in market price fluctuations relating to dry mixed recycling materials.

All portfolios are currently reporting on track for delivery of in-year savings and, although challenging, it is appropriate and feasible to look at whether any future year's savings could also be brought forward.

- **the Detailed Portfolio Action Plans and details of the proposed member led Strategic Property & Financial Review will be presented to the Finance & Resources Select Committee on July 20<sup>th</sup> alongside the Q1 Report to demonstrate how they will urgently bring budgets back into line?**

The detailed portfolio action plans and the Strategic Property & Financial review will be presented to F&R Select Committee at an appropriate date following their review and agreement by Cabinet.

Examples of the deep dives undertaken into the four key areas previously referred to:-

Example 1: Health & Wellbeing £3.9m adverse variance

“This adverse variance mainly relates to care packages carried forward from 22/23. There were 252 more clients at the start of the year (*than anticipated in the budget*) at an average weekly cost of £667. However, this variance has been partly offset by additional income associated with these clients. In April demand for services continued to outstrip budget however, the following mitigations have been put in place and data from May suggests that spend is reducing.”

These are the specific actions that will feed into the Portfolio Action Plan that the Cabinet Member is being asked to agree:

- i. Weekly monitoring of spend – reports are sent to Service Directors and Heads of Service to show how the number of clients and the cost of packages is changing week on week. This enables managers to identify emerging issues and take appropriate management action.
- ii. Biweekly tracking of management action – Service Directors meet with the Corporate Director to review management actions to deliver savings and identify further mitigations. Mitigations include reviews of clients with two carers, clients with multiple services and the highest cost clients.
- iii. Scheme of Delegation – thresholds for authorisation have been lowered to provide greater management oversight when agreeing packages of care.
- iv. Other budget scrutiny – all budgets are being scrutinised by managers to identify any additional savings.
- v. Further work on funding sources for staffing should release additional underspends going forward.”

Example 2: Children’s Placements £3.9m adverse variance

“The key pressures identified to date include:

- i. Placements for children looked after £3.5m – this forecast is based on current activity, and known forward activity, and includes adoption and SGO allowances. As yet no forecast of future activity through the year has been included in the forecast and therefore there is significant risk that this overspend will increase further. The projected overspend relates to placement mix rather than placement volume. Projected numbers of unregulated placements are higher than budget and the projected number of foster care and residential placements are lower than budget.

There is a significant risk that expenditure on placement costs for children looked after will increase during the year if the numbers of unregistered placements continue to increase.”

These are the specific actions that will feed into the Portfolio Action Plan that the Cabinet Member is being asked to agree.

“Mitigations include the release of existing capital budget in the current year for the development of further in house residential capacity and urgent work to review and accelerate priority actions within the Sufficiency Strategy to focus on reducing the number of unregistered placements.”

Example 3: Temporary Accommodation £1.6m adverse variance

“Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Revenue is reporting an adverse variance of £1.6m due to increased pressures on temporary accommodation. Demand has increased from the budgeted 179 households in nightly paid accommodation to 218 households, as at the end of May. There has been a steady increase in households presenting as homeless throughout the winter and early spring and, whilst the trend is starting to plateau as we enter the summer, the underlying lack of cheaper, Council-owned temporary accommodation units, and short supply of affordable housing units to move clients on to, means we are not seeing households leave expensive nightly paid accommodation as quickly as expected.”

These are some of the initial specific actions that will feed into the Portfolio Action Plan that the Cabinet Member is being asked to agree.

“The forecast variance includes the savings from mitigating actions to move the most expensive households into cheaper accommodation and improving our processes around preventing homelessness.”

**Question from Councillor Robin Stuchbury to Councillor Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport**

**“I believe it is important that we gain a full understanding of the use of section 106 funding for transport on the Lace Hill development in Buckingham. The Schedule of Payments within the Section 106 agreement clauses refers to the timing of delivery of bus and transport links and in relation to London Road there is a £95,000 Public Transport contribution payable in five annual tranches after the 50<sup>th</sup> dwelling is occupied and before the 300<sup>th</sup> dwelling is occupied, to provide a twice per hour bus service between Buckingham and Aylesbury, and 4 bus stops with shelters and real-time information within the development. The Section 106 quarterly update in 2015 also referred to the £250,000 footway/cycleway contribution *“Contribution received and awaiting ASB approval for 2015/16 programme”*, £380,000 Bus/public transport subsidy *“Ongoing revenue support for Line 60 extension to Moreton Road and £125,000 Lace Hill service X60 enhancements which was awaiting ASB approval for 2015/16 programme.”* Therefore, as it appears that the estate roads are nearing adoption, I am seeking reassurance that this money is still being programmed to deliver the additional transport services the section 106 agreements indicated to improve transport connections/conductivity for the community of Buckingham and reduce vehicle journeys.”**

### **RESPONSE from Councillor Broadbent**

As you are aware, Council Officers and I are meeting with local Members on Tuesday 18th to discuss progress on sustainable transport improvements in Buckingham. So we can explain any of the points that have been here in more detail during this meeting, if necessary.

To confirm, the s106 agreement associated with the Lace Hill development was completed in 2009. Planning obligations included:

- £475,000 towards the cost of providing an improved bus service and public transport infrastructure
- A Footway/Cycleway Contribution of £300,000 towards the cost of improving the footpaths and cycle paths in Buckingham

I can confirm that these contributions were all received and were indexed for inflation, so the actual amounts secured were somewhat more.

The Council used these funds to improve the X60 bus service to two buses an hour between Aylesbury and Buckingham; provided bus stop infrastructure on the A413 London Road; and helped fund the Buckingham-Winslow cycle route project. As intended, these improvements all benefited residents of the development and other users. Unfortunately the increased frequency of the X60 bus came to an end in March 2020 when the developer funding came to an end, also coinciding with the COVID pandemic. Unfortunately this has had a lasting impact on bus usage generally and the X60 now runs every 60 mins.

In line with the S106 agreement wording for the footway/cycleway contribution, this was used to fund the Buckingham-Winslow cycle route project. It is worth adding that - as Local Members already know - we were recently successful in our Active Travel 4 Funding bid to DfT for further active travel improvements within Buckingham Town Centre. This work will inform the use of future S106 funding and will ultimately help deliver a wider active travel network for the town.

The s106 agreement associated with the Lace Hill development (planning permission 09/01035/AOP) was completed 28 October 2009. Planning obligations within this included requirements for:

- A contribution of £475,000 (plus indexation) “towards the cost of providing a twice per hour bus service operating between the Land Buckingham and Aylesbury town centre” and public transport infrastructure.
- A Footway/Cycleway Contribution of £300,000 (plus indexation) “towards the cost of improving the footpaths and cycle paths on that part of London Road which lies to the north of the A421 and the footpath and cycle path network in Buckingham”.

These contributions were all received by November 2017, and both contributions were indexed for inflation so the actual amounts secured were somewhat more. The total amounts received were:

- £475,000 + £90,815 (indexation) = £565,815

- £300,000 + £26,166 (indexation) = £326,166

More detail on the use of the funding from the Lace Hill site is set out below:

#### Bus services

The public transport contribution was used to increase the Aylesbury to Buckingham from one bus an hour to a bus every 30 minutes between Aylesbury and Buckingham between November 2014 and March 2020. Initially, the increased bus service alternated between an express service via the A413 and also via villages south of Winslow. In 2019 the twice per hour service was revised to be all express services, with none via the villages.

The S106 funding from the Lace Hill development came to an end in early 2020. Unfortunately, since that time the COVID pandemic has had a lasting impact on bus usage and it has not been possible to continue the X60 as a service every 30 minutes; it now runs every 60 mins. It's not possible to be certain but our Passenger Transport teams judgement is that without the pandemic the 30 mins service may well have been able to continue as a commercial service at certain times of day.

#### Public Transport Infrastructure

The X60 service never went through the Lace Hill development itself so a southbound bus shelter was installed on the A413 at Benthill Farm in 2014 in order to serve residents from the development site. Three Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) displays were also installed at the Tesco stops and at Benthill Farm.

#### Footway/Cycleway Contribution

The Foot & Cycleway s106 contribution from the Lace Hill development was put towards the cost of the Buckingham-Winslow cycle route project, which runs adjacent to the development along the A413 London Road. As Local Members have already been informed, we were recently successful in our Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 bid (DfT) for funding to carry out feasibility work for active travel improvements within Buckingham Town Centre. Our new term consultants, Atkins, have already been commissioned to commence this work and officers will shortly be engaging with local Members and the Town Council at appropriate stages of the programme in order to understand local priorities. It is envisaged that this work could help to appropriately inform the use of both existing funding and to secure future S106 funding from development sites in Buckingham to enable delivery of the measures that are identified in this work. This work will ultimately help to contribute to delivering the wider active travel network for the town as identified in the Interim Buckingham Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan.

## **6 Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)**

The Leader introduced the Forward Plan and commended it to all Members of the Council and the public, as a document that gave forewarning of what reports would be discussing at forthcoming meetings.

**RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.**

**7 The Dementia Journey - a rapid review of support for people living with dementia and their carers in Buckinghamshire**

The HASC Select Committee had been reviewing the Adult Social Care transformation programme, which included a workstream around dementia support for people living with dementia and their carers. The Committee had already reviewed the refreshed Better Lives Strategy and were aware of the proposal for additional funding made to the Integrated Care Board for an expanded dementia support service. The scoping document for a rapid review into dementia services was agreed at the February HASC meeting and three full days of evidence gathering took place in March with health and social care colleagues, voluntary and community organisations and other key stakeholders. The Committee were keen to explore the dementia journey across existing pathways from first patient presentation to end of life care and also to include a review of the prevention programme.

The Chairman, Councillor Carol Heap paid tribute to the small group of councillors who volunteered to participate in the rapid review and also those organisations that had provided evidence. Evidence gathering meetings, with a number of stakeholders, took place across three full days on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March and Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The review comprised of Cllrs Shade Adoh, Phil Gomm, Robin Stuchbury, Nathan Thomas and Alan Turner. Following the evidence gathering meetings the review group then met to discuss and agree its key findings and recommendations, which were presented in the report found at Appendix 1. The recommendations were grouped together under the NHS England Dementia Well Pathway which had been adopted by Buckinghamshire.

The Chairman provided the following information on introducing the report:-

- The Dementia Journey was a complex one which involved many different agencies and it was very difficult and confusing to navigate for people living with dementia and their carers. One of the main aims of the review was to identify what was currently working well and any gaps in the current pathways and areas needing improvement and to develop recommendations that would lead to a better integrated service and improved access to support to people living with dementia.
- To put this review into context, there were just over 4,000 people diagnosed with dementia (aged 65+) in Buckinghamshire with an estimated prevalence of 7,266 meaning there was unmet need amongst residents in Buckinghamshire. There were 3,000 people undiagnosed who may not be receiving any support. Nationally, there were currently 900,000 people living with dementia in the UK and this was set to rise to around 1.6 million by 2040. There were over 42,000 people with young onset dementia in the UK with 240 residents in Buckinghamshire. This had particular challenges and needs that were not always recognised.
- One of the aims of this review was to identify gaps in the dementia journey

and to look for ways to improve access to services. There was a need for greater collaboration between service providers and this was mentioned almost universally as a way to improve services.

- The Group heard many examples of good work being undertaken to support people with dementia and carers but currently it was dis-jointed and could be hard to access the support needed at the right time. Evidence showed that there were long waiting times for the memory clinics and people did not always receive the support they need following a diagnosis. Dementia diagnosis rates were low locally and nationally leading to significant unmet need and poorer outcomes.
- The Group appreciated budget pressures and capacity issues but felt there needed to be renewed effort to use existing resources in a better way to make a real difference. For example, council run day centres – these could provide much needed local support in partnership with voluntary groups.
- The Impact of Covid on existing dementia support service meant it was taking time to get back to running some of the services pre-covid.
- The Group felt there was a lack of ownership and leadership to drive forward improvements across the whole system and a lack of a clearly defined strategy. One of the recommendations was to urge commissioners to work together to co-design support services that met the needs of people living with dementia throughout their journey and to support carers, including access to community support. The Group heard from a number of community organisations who provided activities and support and it was important to make the most of this work and actively take steps to integrate them into the dementia support network. Nearly all these organisations were self-funding and could do so much more to take pressure off the health system if they were better integrated.
- The Group hoped this review would strengthen the approach to the prevention agenda, reduce the stigma and increase diagnosis rates. In addition to raise awareness amongst young people about dementia and encourage family and friends to receive the support they need.
- The Group also hoped that access to information, support and advice was made easier for people living with dementia and their carers. Many were not able or have time to go online to search for help. Leaflets and booklets were valued as was peer support.
- This review was undertaken as a rapid review to ensure the report could be used to help inform Integrated Care Board discussions around future funding of dementia services. It was clear through the evidence gathering that Bucks was currently underfunded in this area and to ensure future needs were met, there needed to be additional funding alongside a renewed effort to work more collaboratively across the integrated system to provide a more joined-up and accessible service.
- The report put forward 18 recommendations. Some of these recommendations were aimed at council services whilst others were aimed at health partners and other key organisations. It is hoped that the report and recommendations would serve to confirm the need for additional funding request that had already been made to the Better Care Fund and the

ICB. The review identified as one of its key recommendations the need for an overall multi-agency dementia strategy that covered the entire dementia journey that had clear responsibilities for all partners and was properly integrated. The Committee felt it was the Council that was in the best place to lead and co-ordinate this Strategy. Improving access to long term support should reduce costs for both the health service and social care by keeping people as well as possible at home for longer reducing hospital admissions.

Cabinet then asked the following questions:-

- It was important that there was broad representation from all of the community groups. As part of the review the Group did look at the membership of the Dementia Steering Group and it did include representatives from all of the agencies involved in dementia care and the voluntary groups were well represented and did attend the meetings.
- A question was asked whether the multi-agency strategy would be the driving force in making changes. The Review Group Chairman reported that this was essential and would be the framework to show the responsibilities of all the partners and would encourage them to work together to provide a more joined up service. There were a lot of service providers who were not entirely aware of what other providers were delivering which was where the gaps in service occurred.
- Reference was made to the undiagnosed residents who were not on the dementia pathway and whether this was just an issue at the early stages of the journey due to stigma or whether patients had started the journey but had not reengaged. The Review Group Chairman commented that both applied typically a number of residents came quite late to the process with a reluctance to come forward. The pandemic had also not helped where many patients had been isolated and found it difficult to see their GP. Diagnosis was key. There were also long delays to attend clinics with capacity issues. It was important to note that social prescribers could also diagnose dementia. Once on the pathway the support would be available to residents and they would be better supported. The Chairman of the HASC Committee reported on two big pieces of work that they were about to undertake that were integral to this; the year's review of the recommendations of the development of primary care networks which looked at numerous new roles in the PCN which could be raised with the ICB e.g carrying out dementia checks and a joint piece of work with the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee on future health care planning, primarily looking at whether there were enough resources, development etc for primary care. The Leader agreed and responded that one of the biggest challenges for the NHS was the ageing population with chronic illnesses and also with dementia which would also impact on Council budgets.
- A Member queried the number of people undiagnosed in Buckinghamshire (57%) and asked how this figure had been reached and who had provided the data. The Review Group Chairman reported that the figures had been provided by the ICB and PCN monitoring which were in line with national

figures and also could be underestimated, however they were confident with those figures. The HASC Chairman reported that there were a lot of organisations working in the field who supported this figure. The Review Group Chairman reported that they had spoken to dementia patients and carers and it was a relief to obtain a diagnosis so that they could start to manage their dementia and commissioners played an important role in communicating what services were available to engage service users and support them to keep well.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing responded to the report stating it was an excellent report which impacted on a number of workstreams including the Carers Strategy and that nothing should be looked at in isolation. It was crucial to obtain the voices of patients and carers living with dementia which should feed into any service design. Listening to the questions asked around unmet need and the importance of being granular around the data it was important to share data across agencies and partners to establish accurate figures in order to plan health and social care. This review would feed into the Health and Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care Board priorities. The additional funding for the ICB was welcomed but it was still unclear how much funding would be available and in addition there was the Better Care Fund. Resourcing was always important.

The Cabinet Member then went through a complete breakdown of the cabinet responses to the recommendations which can be found [here](#). The following questions and points from Cabinet Members were as follows:-

- There were a number of inter dependencies and co-dependencies and it was important therefore to keep a careful eye on tracking actions to ensure that progress could be monitored. The Cabinet Member reported that this was the world of social care and co-ordination was key with more joined up services. The Dementia Strategy Group was the best vehicle to manage these recommendations and the transformation work. The Corporate Director also reported that it would be part of the service improvement plan.
- Under the section on access to information it referred to improving information on the website and this could be addressed through the Cabinet Member's service area and the digital team. The Corporate Director also referred to the Dementia toolkit which was very useful and easy to navigate. The Cabinet Member also referred to the Bucks Online Directory and making sure this was up to date and easily accessible and providing hard copy information.

The HASC Chairman and Review Group Chairman were thanked for their work.

## **RESOLVED**

**1) That the Select Committee and Review Group, as well as the supporting officers, be thanked for their work and subsequent recommendations.**

**2) That Cabinet's responses to the review and recommendations, as set out and circulated to Members, be AGREED.**

**8 Buckinghamshire Community Infrastructure Levy**

This report described how the Council collected developer contributions for infrastructure, how this operated in practice, through s106 contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), including variation between different legacy planning areas.

There was a case for considering the introduction of CIL in the north and central areas of the County to secure funding for infrastructure from developments there. This would also ensure a more consistent approach to developer and infrastructure funding across the county. The opportunity to commission, review and hold a public examination to introduce CIL in the north and central planning areas, might also provide the opportunity to review the charging schedules in the west, south and east planning areas. This would bring these up to date and would enable a countywide approach to planning and infrastructure considerations. The Leader reported that the CIL was more flexible than Section 106 funding which had to be spent on specific projects.

**RESOLVED:-**

**(1) that the process of considering the introduction of CIL in the north and central planning areas of the County be supported;**

**(2) that a review of the Charging Schedules in the south, east and west planning areas be undertaken;**

**(3) that, subject to technical assessment, work to commence on a single charging schedule for Buckinghamshire Council;**

**(4) that a programme of technical work and consideration of the options for a new charging schedule be noted including coordination with the new Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. This will be produced and agreed with the Cabinet Members for Planning and Regeneration and Transport. An indicative timeframe and key steps in preparing and adopting a charging schedule were included in the report.**

**9 Q1 Budget Monitoring Report 2023-24**

This was the first budget monitoring report for the new financial year and came at a time when the Council was continuing to experience significant financial pressures due to high levels of inflation and continued increase in demand and complexity of need in key services, such as Adults Social Care and Children's Social Care. The forecast revenue outturn position for 2023/24 was an adverse variance of £8.3m, 2% of Portfolio budgets. This was primarily due to pressures in Health and Wellbeing and Education and Children's Services from demand and market insufficiency issues, coupled with pressures in Accessible Housing and Resources in Energy budgets, Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Services in Temporary Accommodation

budgets and Transport in Parking income budgets.

Detailed Portfolio Action Plans were already in development to address the pressures, with a view to urgently bringing budgets back into line. These would consider the acceleration of savings plans from future years. In addition a member led Strategic Property and Finance Review would be initiated to examine opportunities for additional savings, income or capital receipt. The delivery of the action plans would be managed by the Portfolio Holders. The forecast position on capital budgets was break even.

The Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources outlined the £14m adverse variance in portfolios as follows:-

- £3.9m pressure in Health and Wellbeing due to growth in client numbers, and increased cost of care packages
- £3.9m pressure in Education & Children's Services predominantly due to the national insufficiency of placements for children looked after leading to a shortage of available placements and very high unit costs of those placements that can be accessed
- £1m adverse variance in Accessible Housing and Resources from Energy costs in Property & Assets exceeding budget
- £1.5m adverse variance in Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Services in Temporary Accommodation budgets due to increased demand, particularly for nightly paid accommodation
- £3.2m adverse variance in Transport Services. This includes £0.8m due to increased contract costs in Home to School Transport with provider pressure to increase costs on letting of new contracts. In addition there is a forecast shortfall of £1.8m in the Parking Income budget
- £0.7m pressure in Climate Change and Environment due to recycling income shortfall due to market volatility
- The position also reflects a forecast shortfall on Energy from Waste income of £5.0m due to the reduction in market energy prices.

The £5.7m of favourable variances in corporate budgets includes:

- i. £4.3m favourable variance relating to Interest on Revenue Balances. This reflects further increases in the Bank of England base rate.
- ii. £0.8m favourable variance on interest payable budgets, due to recalculation of loan repayments.
- iii. A minor surplus of £0.2m in grant income due to the budget being set prudently.
- iv. A favourable variance of £0.3m arising predominantly from contribution from grants towards central overheads.
- v. Corporate Contingencies are retained to address the ongoing risk of further pressures within the year.
- vi. Available reserve balances.

The Leader referred to the current shortfall of £6.6m relating to the savings target.

This had not been met due to parking income being affected by a reduction in demand since the pandemic, energy from waste income due to the reduction in market energy prices, streetworks income due to an increase in expenditure and a volatility in market prices fluctuations with regard to waste recycling. Financial risks on capital were currently the Housing Infrastructure Funding Schemes and securing Homes England approval to reallocate the HIF grant and for DfT to finalise the agreement of additional funding to deliver the South East Aylesbury Link Road, Future High Streets and committing the remaining grant funding and two Council projects; biowaste and Crematory and Hampden Chapel replacement.

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1. That the report and the risks and opportunities contained within it be NOTED.**
- 2. That the actions set out in the report to address the budget pressures be APPROVED.**

**10 Q1 Capital Budget Adjustments and Reprofiling**

The Capital Programme for 23-24 to 26-27 was approved by Full Council in February 2023 as £505.9m. The 22-23 outturn underspend was £44.3m. After a detailed review of each scheme in the programme, £46.3m of unspent budget has been carried forward into the new financial year. The increase was due to a small number of projects overspends that were funded in 22-23 and not carried forward. The capital programme now needed to be reprofiled in future years to ensure the annual spend profile was realistic, and to reduce the likelihood of slippage. There were also some recommended additions for new funding, reductions and reallocations of funding from closed projects, plus a small number of projects with inflationary overspends that required use of the corporate contingency to complete. The report set out the recommended changes for approval and would result in the Capital Programme increasing from £505.9m as agreed at Full Council, to £556.7m. Since the Budget was approved by Council in February 2023 there was an additional £5.782m recommended to be added to the Programme. Of this: £4.184m was externally funded from grants; £1.232m was the addition of agreed, specific s.106 projects; and £0.365m was a recommended use of an earmarked revenue reserve to fund a project overspend.

The Leader confirmed that the underspend on schools related mainly to Kingsbrook Secondary School and the Cabinet Member confirmed this with an underspend of £6.6m which was subject to the Homes England decision. Mention was made of £400,000 which was coming out of Country Park reserves.

**RESOLVED that the following budget adjustments to the approved Capital Programme be APPROVED:**

- 1. That £5.782m of additions be made to the capital programme, £5.416m to be externally funded from grants and S.106, and £0.365m funded from ringfenced Council reserves.**

2. That £0.288m of the Capital Contingency be used to fund the inflationary pressures of two existing projects.
3. That £3.366m of budget reductions for completed projects from the capital programme be approved, of which £0.644m of corporate funded projects are to be reallocated to the capital contingency.  
(Note: where external funding was released it will be reinvested in alternative projects that would come forward in due course).
4. The reprofiling of the revised £556.8m Capital Programme inclusive of £46.3m of carry-forward budgets over the MTFP 2023-27.

#### **11 Corporate Performance Indicators 2023-24**

This report detailed the key performance indicators and targets being proposed for reporting to Cabinet in 2023/24. Once agreed, reporting against these indicators would commence for Quarter 2. Proposed key performance indicators and the associated targets to be reported to Cabinet have been agreed within each Directorate and with each portfolio holder. These would be reviewed on an annual basis.

#### **RESOLVED:-**

1. That the Key Performance Indicators for 2023/24 be AGREED.
2. That the associated targets for 2023/24 be AGREED.

#### **12 Property Acquisition: Plot 1 Gateway Aylesbury**

The report recommended acquisition of the freehold interest of Plot 1 of Phase 3 Gateway land, Aylesbury ("Plot 1") subject to survey, legal due diligence and the simultaneous sale of Plot 2 of Phase 3 Gateway land, Aylesbury ("Plot 2") to a third party. The proposed transaction provided the Council with control of all the car park land in front of its Headquarters and also use of the site in the short term as a car park whilst the Council reviews its plans for its overall landholding in this part of Aylesbury.

Whilst the property transaction did not generate revenue, it did ensure that Buckinghamshire Council ("BC") retained sufficient free car parking spaces in front of its HQ building; it also completed land ownership of a 5.2-acre site that offered medium term "employment led" development potential. The acquisition would enable a strategic and proactive approach to delivering a more comprehensive scheme than simply on existing BC owned land.

The Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources reported that the capital requirement to complete the purchase was not currently budgeted for in the Capital Programme but this size of investment could be funded from known headroom on completed projects within the MTFP which would no longer require their remaining budget.

The Leader clarified that:-

Plot 1 was the current council car park  
Plot 2 was the derelict bank site  
Plot 3 was for commercial use such as the tyre depot.

The Leader commented that as this was the Council's headquarters it was important to own the car park. A question was asked about the right of way over the land so the car park could be accessed through the white gates. The Cabinet Member confirmed that there were guaranteed rights of access across the site and this would not affect this transaction.

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1. That the Service Director for Property and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources, the Section 151 Officer and the Service Director for Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to conclude negotiations, agree contracts, appoint consultants and undertake due diligence, arrange finance, exchange and complete on the acquisition of Plot 1 as set out in the Cabinet report and the confidential appendix.**
- 2. That the commitment of capital budget for this acquisition as a priority investment opportunity be APPROVED, to be funded from known headroom within the Capital Programme.**

**13 22 Queens Square, High Wycombe**

The proposed acquisition was another part of the Wycombe Future High Streets' development programme. To date two vacant shops have been acquired – one of which (37 High Street) had been refurbished and let to two separate independent 'experiential' businesses; refurbishment of the other (16 Church Street) was about to start on site. Agreement for co-funding the repurposing of Eden's ex House of Fraser store had been completed. This would relocate Primark into Eden, strengthening its footfall (and hence rental values, of which the Council received a share through its ground rent), and enabled comprehensive redevelopment of the existing Primark building and the adjacent Chiltern Shopping Centre, for a mixed-use scheme including c300 apartments (subject to planning), removing redundant retail floorspace from the town centre.

An Option to Purchase the High Wycombe Social Club building, forming a key part of the programme's 'Southern Gateway', was close to exchange. Queen Square was a small but prominent corner retail unit with residential upper parts. It had proven 'hard to let' and the freeholders want to dispose of their ownership. Its purchase would enable ground floor reconfiguration with the aim of either letting it to an occupier that would be displaced by the redevelopment of the Chiltern Shopping Centre or by open marketing of the unit. The costs of the project were budgeted for within the Council's published Capital Programme, as part of the Future High Streets Programme. The acquisition would be funded from the Future High Streets external Government grant (a total of £12m), and the

refurbishment would be funded by the Council's match funding (£3m), which was required to secure the Future High Streets grant from Government.

**RESOLVED:-**

1. That the purchase of the freehold of 22 Queens Square, High Wycombe, as part of the Future High Streets programme be APPROVED, as set out in the confidential appendix.
2. That authority be delegated to the Service Director for Property and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources and the Section 151 Officer, to finalise and agree detailed heads of terms, appoint necessary consultants to undertake due diligence, exchange contracts and complete on the purchase.
3. That authority be delegated to the Service Director for Property and Assets to:
  - a. progress refurbishment works including the appointment of contractors and consultants.
  - b. dispose of the second floor flat on a long lease, letting it on a Shorthold Tenancy in the meantime, returning the proceeds of sale to the Future High Streets Capital programme allocation.
4. That a technical adjustment to the Capital Project budget for this project be APPROVED, as set out in the confidential appendix, and to reflect the ringfenced capital receipt from the disposal of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor long lease.

**14 Exclusion of the public (if required)**

**RESOLVED - that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

**Paragraph 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)**

**15 Confidential minutes**

**RESOLVED – That the Confidential Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 June 2023 were agreed as a correct record.**

**16 Confidential Appendix - Property Acquisition : Plot 1 Gateway Aylesbury**

Cabinet Members discussed the confidential appendix before taking the decision in the public part of the meeting.

**17 Confidential Appendix - 22 Queens Square High Wycombe**

Cabinet Members discussed the confidential appendices before taking the decision in the public part of the meeting.

**18 Date of next meeting**

12 September 2023 at 10am