



Cabinet minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 10 November 2020 in Via MS Teams Video Conference, available to the public at <https://buckinghamshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>, commencing at 10.30 am and concluding at 11.19 am.

Members present

M Tett, Ms A Macpherson, K Wood, S Bowles, B Chapple OBE, Mr J Chilver, A Cranmer, I Darby, T Green, C Harriss, P Hogan, D Martin, N Naylor, M Shaw, Mr W Whyte, G Williams and F Wilson

Agenda Item

1 Apologies

There were no apologies.

2 Minutes

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2020 were AGREED as an accurate record.

3 Declarations of interest

Angela Macpherson declared a personal interest in item 10 as Board Member of Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust.

4 Hot Topics

There were no hot topics raised.

5 Question Time

Cllr Robin Stuchbury's question

In light of the Motion taken at the last Full Council meeting regarding the Government's Planning White Paper, how will the Council proceed with this matter? In particular, due to the large implications that the Paper could have on Buckinghamshire, how will public consultation be undertaken with stakeholders, Parishes and interested parties?

Response provided by Cllr Warren Whyte, Cabinet Member for Planning and Enforcement.

The Council had responded to the Government's white paper consultation and a

copy of the Council's response could be found on the Council's website. The consultation on the paper was conducted by the Government, but the Council did seek comments from members of the Council and Town and Parish Councils as part of the Council's preparation of its response. The Council would wait and see how the Government responds to the comments they receive and if they propose any changes as a result. In the meantime, the Council would continue to take account of the white paper proposals as part of its ongoing service planning.

Cllr Martin Tett added that the Council consulted on the original draft extensively and that a substantial number of comments were received and that this was the version which had been submitted to Government on behalf of Cabinet.

Cllr Richard Scott

Before the formation of the new Buckinghamshire Council and the Covid pandemic, Marlow Town Council sent an outline proposal, including rough design plans, to Wycombe District Council to add additional parking spaces to the central car park on Riley Road, Marlow. This included adding a first floor to this existing car park, thus giving more provision to the Town's parking, which was on many days prior to the pandemic reaching full capacity. The Town Council is of course aware that this car park is situated in a conservation area. Would the Cabinet Member undertake to revisit these proposals and discuss with the Town Council with a view to including an appropriate scheme in future capital expenditure planning?

Response provided by Cllr David Martin, Cabinet Member for Logistics

Cllr Martin explained that whilst he was willing to revisit the concept of extending the car park on Riley Road in Marlow, it was important that current usage and projected usage of the car park be taken into account before any consideration was given to creating a design concept for a new car park. Whilst the usage in the last two months had increased, it was still somewhat below 60% than normal.

6 Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)
RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the forward plan.

7 Q2 Budget Monitoring Report 2020-21

Cllr Katrina Wood, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report which set out the overview of the financial Revenue and Capital outturn position for Buckinghamshire Council for the financial year 2020/21 as at quarter 2. The report took into account the pressures relating to Covid-19 and also the business as usual activity. Overall there was a forecast revenue overspend of £4.9 million, which was down from £5.97 million at quarter 1. This £4.9million was made up of unfunded Covid-19 pressures of £2.2 million and other pressures of £2.7 million. The Covid-19 pressure took into account the forecast additional costs and lost income of £41.8 million offset by expected un-ringfenced government funding of £39.6million. This includes an estimate of £10.5 million in relation to the Sales, Fees and Charges lost income compensation scheme. So far the Council had claimed

£5.3 million for the first 4 months on the financial year (April to July). These figures did not take into account the recent government announcement of an additional £1 billion for local authorities, which allocated the Council a further estimated £3.5 million government grant relating to the impact of Covid. This has had a positive impact on this outturn position but would not show until the next quarter. Cllr Wood explained that whilst this funding was welcomed, it was less than the Council was expecting based on previous allocations and furthermore it did not take into account the implications of the current lockdown which was likely to have a significant impact on the Council's income levels like parking and would have a negative impact on the next outturn position.

In terms of the other revenue pressures in business as usual; the main pressures were within Children Services and relate to home to school transport costs and reduced income of £3.9 million and also the looked after children placement costs of £1.2 million. These pressures were partly offset from within corporate contingencies where some budget was approved to cover the key financial risks facing the authority. All directorates were now looking at mitigating actions to bring their service areas back into balance and appendix 1 set out the details of the variances by each directorate. The Council was also reviewing the remaining corporate contingencies and ear marked reserves to ensure a break even position by the end of the financial year.

The capital programme forecast outturn position reflected an underspend/slippage of £15.7m and was summarised in Table 2 of the report. It was noted that slippage might increase further if Covid-19 restrictions continue to impact on delivery of the capital programme. Cabinet were advised that there was an ongoing review of the Capital Programme to ensure that the programme was realistic in terms of the profile.

Cllr Martin Tett stressed the uncertainties that the Council was facing. The Council had received only a further £3.5 million of government grant, when it had been expecting £7 million based on previous allocations. The Council's fee income was down and leisure centres were struggling and needed significant financial support to keep going. There was also no certainty yet on what would be reimbursed in terms of fees and charges lost and the new cost around the second lockdown.

Cllr Clive Harris, Cabinet Member for Sports and Leisure, explained that it was disappointing that leisure centres have had to close again as so much work had gone into keeping the covid risk to a minimum in leisure centres and that the Council would be doing all it could to get leisure centres back open as soon as they were able to.

RESOLVED

Cabinet noted the current forecast outturn for the financial year 2020/21 and the latest estimates of impacts and funding related to Covid-19.

8 High Wycombe Regeneration Board

Cllr Steve Bowles, Cabinet Member for Town Centre Regeneration, introduced the report which set out the proposal to establish a regeneration board for High Wycombe. There was a considerable programme of regeneration activity underway and planned in High Wycombe and it was recommended that a strategic board be established to provide guidance and decision making for regeneration.

Not establishing a board would mean that the benefits of having a regular forum to discuss and manage regeneration activity would not be gained. The board would not only be comprised of Cabinet members and local councillors but would also include representatives of the Local Enterprise Partnership, Bucks Business First and key private sector partners.

In the discussion which followed, the establishment of the board was welcomed. It was noted that one of the first agenda items for the board would be to review the current regeneration plans and whether any changes need to be made post Covid-19.

RESOLVED

Cabinet agreed that a regeneration board for High Wycombe be established, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Town Centre Regeneration. The Board would consist of Cabinet Members and representatives of stakeholder organisations.

9 Recovery and Growth Deal for Buckinghamshire

Cllr Martin Tett, Leader of the Council, introduced the report which asked Cabinet to consider a proposal which had been developed to set out a Buckinghamshire Recovery and Growth Deal proposition for Government.

Buckinghamshire has robust and effective partnerships and leadership, ready to accelerate the UK recovery. As England's newest unitary authority, Buckinghamshire has a uniquely integrated council, public service and business leadership with co-terminous Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Council, business support organisation (Bucks Business First), Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Health Care Trust boundaries. Buckinghamshire can deliver a strong recovery programme bringing together all the various different departments of government into a much more integrated approach on a place basis. Buckinghamshire's global USP is based on four super strength; space, creative and digital, high performance tech and medtech, linked to a set of world-renowned assets. Buckinghamshire also has an enormous amount of small and medium enterprises which makes Buckinghamshire the entrepreneurial heart of Britain which can provide so much of that underlying growth that is needed for the recovery of this country.

The proposition builds on the unique strengths, partnerships, and opportunities within the County and enables Buckinghamshire and the Government to support key 'bounce back' objectives including further increases in GVA in the context of a continuing and post COVID-19 environment, and further contributions to Treasury.

Investing in Buckinghamshire would also support and enable the 'levelling-up' agenda in other parts of the country.

Following partner engagement and formal support, the Buckinghamshire Growth Board would be asked to submit the final proposition to government in Mid-November.

Comments by Cabinet were as follows:-

- To check whether the map of Buckinghamshire could be superimposed on the map of the Country.
- As and where there are social mobility issues it was important to focus on the local economy as local businesses know what is best for development, not just focusing at the top end of the skills set but also bringing in opportunities at the apprenticeship level as well as devolution of the apprenticeship fund, to cater for all aspects of the employment market.
- Buckinghamshire was known for its high number of 'start-ups' and it was important to particularly provide assistance to young people because of the legacy of covid-19 and the need to generate new businesses.
- It was important for the bid to address areas of improvement such as digital connectivity, skills matching job opportunities and traffic congestion whilst also recognising development areas such as Winslow, which was ideally placed with its new green business park with East – West rail connections, Buckingham University and proximity to Silverstone.

RESOLVED

Cabinet agreed to:-

- **Support the Buckinghamshire Recovery and Growth Deal Proposal**
- **Delegate to the Leader of the Council the power to make & approve any minor amendments in light of any comments after Cabinet**
- **Approve the submission of the Proposal to Government by the Buckinghamshire Growth Board**

10 Next Steps Accommodation Programme Funding Award (NSAP)

Cllr Isobel Darby, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness, introduced the report on the Next Steps Accommodation Programme Funding Award. In order to follow on from the 'everyone in' initiative to assist all rough sleepers into accommodation in March, the Council successfully applied to the "Next Steps Accommodation Programme" (NSAP) in August 2020 with proposals which have been accepted by MHCLG and Homes England, awarding over £2m to the Council and its partners for this purpose.

In order to move forward with these proposals, officers were seeking delegated authority to grant fund Hightown Housing Association £650k of unallocated s.106 developer funding so that Hightown Housing Association can purchase Ardenham House, Aylesbury match funding a £650,000 award from the Next Steps

Accommodation Programme for this purpose. Furthermore officers were seeking delegated authority to match fund MHCLG's grant to Harrow Churches Housing Association to enable the purchase of 15 one bedroom units as 'move on' for former rough sleepers from supported accommodation.

These two proposals follow on from, and compliment the short term revenue award of £485,438 to the Council from the NSAP to assist the Council in accommodating rough sleepers in Buckinghamshire during the pandemic, through to April 2021.

Subject to contract and Cabinet approval, the £1.3m match fund capital outlay by the Council would provide the housing service with access to 15 one bedroom units in perpetuity for former rough sleepers for move on; and 9 high support needs, one bedroom units in Aylesbury. All of these 24 units would be at no revenue cost to the Council. Each unit represents one less rough sleeper on the streets of Buckinghamshire and creates a pathway from rough sleeping to longer term, affordable and independent accommodation.

The proposal to utilise S106 Developer contributions would enable the Council to ensure that funds were spent on affordable housing within the required agreement time frames, whilst meeting the housing need for rough sleeping homeless persons.

Cabinet were asked to consider a revision to the second recommendation as was set out in the report so that the second recommendation mirrored the model of the first recommendation.

In the discussion which followed, the initiative to provide long term accommodation to current and former rough sleepers was welcomed. Cabinet thanked all those officers involved with the initiative and for all their hard work in helping the most vulnerable during the pandemic.

RESOLVED

Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Planning, Growth and Sustainability and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness;

- **To grant fund Harrow Churches Housing Association £1.3m - using £650k of Next Steps Accommodation Programme grant awarded from MHCLG/Homes England and up to £650k of unallocated s.106 developer funding - for them to be able to purchase 15 one bedroom properties in the Wycombe and Aylesbury areas for move on from supported housing for former rough sleepers;**
- **To grant fund Hightown Housing Association £650k of unallocated s.106 developer funding - for them to be able to purchase Ardenham House, Aylesbury match funding a £650,000 award from the Next Steps Accommodation Programme for this purpose, subject to contract with**

Hightown and in return for a nomination agreement on behalf of the Council in perpetuity.”

- **That the two projects are added into the Capital Programme this year with agreement from the s.151 Officer and the Leader.**

11 Potential submission of a bid for the acquisition of the Friars Square Shopping Centre, Aylesbury

This item was withdrawn.

12 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 15 December 2020 at 10.00am