



Cabinet minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 28 July 2020 in Via video conference call - available to the public at <https://buckinghamshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>, commencing at 10.03 am and concluding at 11.44 am.

Members present

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

Agenda Item

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Gareth Williams, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health.

2 Minutes

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July were AGREED as an accurate record.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Question Time

Councillor Robin Stuchbury

"Draft accounts for 2019/20 for the Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils have all been made available for public inspection, but those for Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) have been delayed by up to three months. It is therefore difficult to apply any diligence to review of the reported outturn figures for 2019/20. However, with BCC recording a deficit on provision of services on its balance sheet for each of the last 6 years, we would be interested to hear if there is any early view on what this figure will be for 2019/20. BCC's deficit on provision of services increased significantly over the last two years, to £85.5M last year, and I am wondering whether we should expect the figure for 2019/20 to continue this trend. I also note that when comparing the draft accounts for the four District Councils with the reports reviewed by cabinet on July 7th, we note some significant variations in the reported revenue outturn for Aylesbury Vale DC. The most striking of these is in the Economic Development portfolio, the outturn for which was listed as £3,163,000 in the report reviewed last week, but which is

recorded as only £459,000 in the draft accounts. Which of these figures is correct and why are we seeing so much change in the figures reported only a few weeks ago?"

Response provided by Katrina Wood, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources

The statement of accounts is prepared in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and the Outturn is reported based on the budgets approved by the Council. As explained in September 2019 at the Shadow Executive, the deficit is mainly due to IFRS adjustments. Within 2018/19 accounts Note 1, tables on page 34 and 35 show the movement between the outturn and the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for both the years and the further table on page 36 analyses the adjustments made under IFRS. The main difference between the years is in relation to the movement on Earmarked Reserves and the IFRS adjustments. The actual outturn position on page 16 of the 2018/19 accounts shows a net deficit of £973k and the comparable for 19/20 is a surplus of £600k as reported to 7th July Cabinet. The 2019/20 accounts are not finalised yet and therefore, at this stage, it is difficult to quantify the figures under the IFRS standards. However, the budgets set by the Council would not include any accounting adjustments required under the IFRS as it does not have direct impact on setting the Council Tax. In the case of the Economic Development portfolio, there were two main adjustments done under the IFRS which makes up the difference between £3.163m and £0.459m: Investment properties reported under Financing and investment income and expenditure line £2.848m in the statement of accounts (Page 41, note 14) and offset by the Pensions adjustment of £0.144m (Page 30 note 7.1).

5 Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the Forward Plan.

6 Buckinghamshire Local Plan

Warren Whyte, Cabinet Member for Planning and Enforcement, introduced the report on pages 25-34 of the agenda pack. The report set out the two key areas i.e. the current position regarding the scoping work on the Buckinghamshire Local Plan and the broad timetable for its preparation. Buckinghamshire Council had a statutory duty to adopt a new local plan by 2025. W Whyte stated that it was timely, particularly due to the changing habits in retail, work and leisure, as result of the recent Covid-19 pandemic. The scoping of the local development scheme would be carried out in the first year with engagement from stakeholders, communities and neighbours. Steve Bambrick, Service Director for Planning and Environment, added that the broad vision would need to be established for the area and the economic vision would be developed with partner organisations. It would be a difficult exercise and the aim was to engage with as many people as possible in order to produce a sustainable and robust plan, with flexibility built in to enable the Council to respond to situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

The following points were raised and discussed by Cabinet:

- The Buckinghamshire Local Plan needed to make Buckinghamshire a greener place in the future and the effects of climate change needed to be a major part of the plan.
- Following a query on the timetable for scoping for the Community Involvement Statement from July-December 2020 and whether there would be enough time for engagement to be carried out in areas where the Local Plan had not been adopted; S Bambrick explained that a more detailed timetable would be provided in the Local Development Scheme. If local issues, raised through the consultation, required more time for consideration, members would be asked to agree an amendment to the timetable.
- It was agreed that superfast broadband and electric charging points should be a top priority and included in all new build properties as standard.
- The plan should dictate the maximum possible number of truly affordable homes in Buckinghamshire.
- The importance and adherence to of neighbourhood plans was highlighted. W Whyte stated that all parish councils would be encouraged to provide a neighbourhood plan or refresh their existing plan.
- Population projections would need to be re-dressed along with the housing targets due to the pressures and uncertainties in the county such as the Oxford to Cambridge Arc and Heathrow Airport.
- A White Paper was due in the autumn 2020 and would need to be taken into account.
- Changes in planning laws were expected which could have an impact.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the current position regarding the scoping work on the Buckinghamshire Local Plan including the broad timetable for its preparation.

7 Buckinghamshire Recovery Plan

The Leader introduced the Buckinghamshire Recovery Framework which provided clear co-ordination and governance arrangements for recovery planning across Buckinghamshire. The economy had contracted nationally, and in Buckinghamshire, and would have implications socially, on the mental and physical health and wellbeing of residents and on the overall economy. Key strategic partners had signed up to the Recovery Framework which would be structured around four thematic partnerships:

- The Health and Wellbeing Board – leading on population health
- The Local Enterprise Partnership Board – leading on economic recovery
- The Buckinghamshire Growth Board – leading on public realm, environment and infrastructure recovery
- The Voluntary and Community Sector Board– leading on community resilience.

The new community boards, which consisted of members from the unitary council,

as well as members from town and parish councils and local stakeholders, would also have an important role in leading the recovery process at a local level.

Sarah Ashmead, Deputy Chief Executive, added that the Buckinghamshire Coronavirus Health and Wellbeing Survey was available on the Buckinghamshire Council website until 5 August 2020 and residents' responses would contribute to the plan. The Community Boards were studying local Health and Wellbeing profiles to inform their local priorities.

Rachael Shimmin, Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire Council, stated that this approach to recovery would allow the Council to align the work of building the new Council and recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. Wherever possible, the Council would use this learning from the pandemic about how it could interact differently with members of the public and further improve our services in the context of unitarisation.

The following points were raised and discussed by Cabinet:

- A member of the Cabinet agreed the Community Boards had an important part to play. Praise was also given to the Public Health team on the quality of the Community Board Profile reports and also for their role in the response to the public throughout the pandemic.
- Free parking had been provided to help the high street shops recover but this would end on 31 July 2020. The Leader emphasised the need for residents to make use of local shops to support the local economic revival.

RESOLVED: Cabinet ENDORSED the recovery framework for Buckinghamshire attached at Appendix 1.

8 Corporate Performance Indicators 2020/21

Katrina Wood, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the Corporate Performance Indicator report which set out the corporate performance reporting process for the new council and focussed on agreeing indicators and targets for the year ahead. This would normally have been carried out at the end of the previous year but the report had been delayed due to the Covid-19 emergency. K Wood explained that the framework ensured that the council was focused on delivering the priorities that had been set in the Corporate Plan. The indicators would be reported to cabinet on a quarterly basis. Each indicator would be rated red, amber or green (RAG) depending on the performance. The report included Quarter 1 outturns where possible, for information, but there was no RAG rating or commentary. Full reporting on all the indicators had not been possible because of the delay in setting them. There were 120 indicators proposed with stretching, but achievable, targets across the portfolios. Some of the indicators had been labelled 'monitor', meaning that the performance would be tracked during the year in order to gain a better understanding of the indicator before setting targets next year. The

Quarter 2 report would be a full performance report and would include outturn commentary and deep dive analysis on the key performance challenges.

The following points were raised and discussed by Cabinet:

- In response to being asked how it was known that a performance indicator was stretching; K Wood advised that the indicators were benchmarked against other authorities. The Leader added that the Buckinghamshire Council's scrutiny committees could also challenge the performance indicators.
- Bill Chapple OBE, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, stated that he was happy with the indicators for the Waste Service but noted that no indicators regarding climate change were included. It was agreed that indicators for how the council might help mitigate climate change be considered.
- It was agreed that an annexe be published with a list of the acronyms and their meanings.
- Angela Macpherson, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, acknowledged that Indicator ASC 006 – Overall Satisfaction of Carers with Social Services (38%) sounded low but the indicator was benchmarked against the South East (38%) and England (39%) during 2018/19. It was agreed that the target indicator for ASC006 be reviewed.

RESOLVED:

1. **Cabinet AGREED the key performance indicators for 2020/21 with the caveat that indicators for how the council might help mitigate climate change be considered.**
2. **Cabinet AGREED the associated targets for 2020/21, subject to the target for indicator ASC 006 being reviewed.**

9 Q1 Budget Monitoring Report 2020-21

Katrina Wood, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the Q1 Budget Monitoring Report 2020-21 which summarised the end of Quarter 1 position for 2020-21. 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 £5.97 million. This was made up of unfunded Covid-19 pressures of £3.55 million and other pressures of £2.42 million. The Covid-19 pressure took into account the forecast additional costs and lost income of just over £39 million offset by expected government funding of £35.5 million, however, this included an estimated £6.5 million relating to the recent announcement about how government would recompense authorities for lost income. Guidance was still awaited as to how it would be calculated and which income streams would be included/excluded. Therefore, the £3.55 million gap could increase or decrease. The Council continued to lobby government for full recovery of all costs and lost income. In terms of the other revenue pressures in business as usual; the main pressures related to adult learning disability costs, home to school transport costs and staffing pressures within the Planning, Growth and Sustainability Directorate. These pressures were

partly offset from within corporate contingencies where some budget had been approved to cover the key financial risks facing the Authority. The Directorates were now looking at mitigating actions to bring their areas back into balance and Appendix One provided the details of variances by Directorate. On the capital side, an overall net slippage of £5.24 million was forecast which was made up of some acceleration of schemes and some slippages. There was an ongoing review of the Capital Programme which would consider a revised profiling of all the schemes in the light of the pandemic. Due to some Covid-19 related funding coming in as an un-ring-fenced grant e.g. the Emergency Assistance Grant for food and essential supplies, there was a recommendation to delegate how this funding would be used to the relevant corporate director in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member and the Section 151 Officer; this would ensure that such emergency funding was used in a quick and appropriate manner.

The Leader clarified the difference between Revenue expenditure which was the day to day costs and the Capital expenditure which was a one-off cost which enhanced/purchased an asset.

K Wood added that Appendix Two showed a Covid-19 pressure of £13.55 million which was before the government announcement on the 2 July 2020. It had been estimated the Council would receive £10 million which was why a £3.55 million pressure was forecast. Only £3.5 million had been confirmed and it was estimated there would be approximately £6.5 million from the announced income protection schemes around scales, fees and charges.

The following points were raised and discussed by Cabinet:

- It was noted that it was not just the amount the Council would receive from the Government that was uncertain but also that of our partners e.g. the NHS had received Government funding to facilitate speedy hospital discharges but it was not known if this funding would continue and was possibly another pressure for the Council.
- Rachael Shimmin, Chief Executive Officer, Buckinghamshire Council, reiterated that there were huge uncertainties related to Covid-19 which would impact the budget and the Council would have to respond accordingly.
- The Leader explained that any under-collection of Business Rates or Council Tax would impact next year's budget.

The Leader invited the following Cabinet Members to provide more detail on some of the pressures faced by the Council:

Mark Shaw, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Children's Services were facing a £6.1 million overspend. The following points were highlighted:

- The over 18 year olds were unable to be moved to normal accommodation

during the pandemic; single people's accommodation was difficult to find and work was being carried out with housing colleagues to help with the situation.

- The client costs were expensive and the number of available placements had decreased resulting in children being placed further away from home.
- Special Guardianship Orders were providing a very good check and challenge system; each case was reviewed to ensure that the child received the correct level of care.
- There was concern over a spike in the number and severity of cases when children returned to school in September 2020.

Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Home to School Transport had a pressure of £1.5 million; the risk was going down but there could be budget movement due to strategic changes in the department and the uptake by students. The Special Needs budget, was reported as being a £1 million overspend, but the deficit had been made up out of the schools forum budget. There would be an extra £9 million of government funding for Special High Needs in 2021-22. The Leader added that approximately £20 million a year of council tax payers' money was spent on the Home to School Transport Service.

David Martin, Cabinet Member for Logistics, added that there were many unknowns and the Home to School Transport Service was in the process of recruiting to a number of important posts. A large amount of funding had been given to support the Home to School Transport providers and the figures were being closely monitored.

Warren Whyte, Cabinet Member for Planning and Enforcement

There was an overspend of £7.6 million for the Directorate budget (not the portfolio budget). The following points were highlighted in the planning and enforcement budget:

- Covid-19 had resulted in a noticeable impact on the income from planning applications and building regulations. It was unknown if there would be a spike to replace the missing income.
- The transformation plan would re-shape the planning department and staff budget of the five legacy planning authorities.
- The base budget and relevant targets for 2021-2022 would be discussed.

Angela Macpherson, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

There was a forecast variance of £12.6 million for the Directorate which included Public Health and Housing. The Adult Social Care portion of the Directorate's variance was £10.8 million with £9.1 million due to Covid-19 costs to support the provider market, staffing, extra equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE). The day and respite services had been closed and there had been a one-off

expense on equipment and staffing to support vulnerable adults. There was an in-budget pressure in the Learning Disability provision (£1.755 million); there had been a small increase in the number of clients and an increase in the unit cost of supported living and other costs. However, an action plan was in place and the service was on track to deliver the Medium Term Plan savings of £2 million but there were many unknowns. The Leader acknowledged that the Adult Social Care budget was complex as it was interwoven with the health sector and care homes.

K Wood summarised that all the Directorates and Cabinet Members were working hard on the budget pressures and on recouping Covid-19 costs from the Government. The Leader added that car parking charges normally provided an income of £1 million a month and would be re-introduced in August 2020.

RESOLVED:

- **Cabinet NOTED the current forecast outturn for the financial year 2020/21 and the proposed mitigating actions to bring the position back into line with the budget.**
- **Cabinet AGREED to delegate to the relevant Corporate Director, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and the S151 Officer, agreement on the usage of specific un ring-fenced Covid-19 grants.**

10 Tatling End Housing Development, Denham

John Chilver, Cabinet Member for Property and Assets, introduced the report for the Tatling End Housing project which was a new housing development by the Council. The development was built on the site of the former Gerrards Cross police station which was acquired by South Bucks District Council in 2016. The appendix to the paper was a site plan which showed the project delivered a total of 34 apartments, of which 20 were intended for market rental and 14 were affordable properties. The amount of affordable housing was more than 40% of the total; a level which was not being provided locally by any private developers and demonstrated the Council's determination to help in the delivery of affordable housing for local people. The scheme was due to be completed in August 2020 and Cabinet was requested to approve the transfer of the site to Consilio Property Limited to manage both the market rental and affordable housing. The Council would retain all the nomination rights to the affordable properties which had also helped reduce the numbers and costs of those in emergency or short term accommodation at the Council's expense.

Isobel Darby, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness, thanked South Bucks District Council for their hard work and stated she was proud of Buckinghamshire Council's first affordable housing project.

The meeting went into private session to discuss the confidential appendix. Following a brief confidential discussion, the recommendations were agreed as follows:

RESOLVED:

1. **Cabinet NOTED the progress of this development and the financial details set out in part 2 of this report.**
 2. **AUTHORISED the Service Director Property and Assets in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and the Service Director Corporate Finance:**
 - **To agree the terms of the disposal of the development at Tatling End to Consilio Property Limited before or after Practical Completion in accordance with the values set out in Part 2 of this report, noting that the disposal value will comply with S123 of the Local Government Act 1972.**
 - **Agree the terms of the proposed funding agreement to Consilio Property Ltd to enable the transfer of the development to Consilio Property Ltd To be authorised to complete the legal agreements in relation to the disposal of the development at Tatling End and the proposed funding agreement to Consilio Property Ltd.**
 - **AGREED to delegate to the Service Director Property & Assets in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and the Service Director Corporate Finance to monitor the performance of the Company and its arrangements for managing the units.**
- 11 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).**
- 12 Tatling End Housing Development, Denham**
- 13 Date of next meeting**
8 September 2020.