



## Cabinet minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 15 November 2022 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 12.10 pm.

### Members present

M Tett, Cllr A Macpherson, G Williams, S Bowles, S Broadbent, J Chilver, A Cranmer, P Strachan and M Winn

### Others in attendance

M Bracken, R Carington, S Kayani, D King, J MacBean, P Martin and R Stuchbury

### Agenda Item

#### 1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cabinet Member, Clive Harriss and Rachael Shimmin Chief Executive.

#### 2 Minutes

##### RESOLVED –

**That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 October 2022 were agreed as a correct record.**

#### 3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 4 Hot Topics

The following hot topics were raised:-

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

The impact of the Autumn Statement 2022 would need to be looked at following the announcement on Thursday including social care reforms. Social Care was a big part of the cost pressures which Councils were facing nationally.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

An award was received from Chiltern Rangers to the Council on the outstanding

contribution to conservation. The Council had worked very hard on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and other areas such as tree planting (140,000 trees) and improving chalk streams. The Team were congratulated by Cabinet Members.

#### Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources

The new County-wide Revenue and Benefits System went live on 20 October 2022 which covered benefits, council tax and business rates. The new system should deliver significant savings and residents were encouraged to register for an online account so that they could view and update their details easily and quickly.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/council-tax/>

#### Cabinet Member for Transport

Reference was made to traffic issues on A413 coming into Aylesbury which was due to failed lights, an officer had been called to resolve the traffic management issue from the utility company who had to resort to stop and go boards. There was also some emergency work being undertaken near Stoke Mandeville by utilities which also impacted the area.

He also referred to being successful in the largest ever single bid for electric vehicle charging. The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles had fully funded the bid of £400,000 which allowed the service area to push forward on their EV Strategy to have a 1,000 publically accessible points. The Leader welcomed this and commented that the UK had the biggest sales of electric vehicles out of any European Country. It was therefore important for Councils to help facilitate the provision of infrastructure to reduce the number of carbon producing vehicles.

#### Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services.

The Service Area had won a national award for the best local offer. The National Association of Family Information Services presented the award which was a digital based offer to help families trying to access information about services, including special needs. The Team were congratulated by Cabinet Members.

#### Cabinet Member for Communities

25<sup>th</sup> November would mark White Ribbon Day to end male violence against women. Communication around the campaign would include advertising on the radio and the success of the campaign would be analysed by the take up of support services on the Council and partnership websites.

#### Leader

The Leader also made reference to the Autumn Statement which would impact on the Council's planning assumptions with regard to building the budget for next year and years beyond that. Normally the Council would have some clarity around budget setting but this year there was uncertainty about the impact of the Autumn statement, particularly in the area of social care reforms. Officers would be analysing the impact on the Council. In addition the Leader made reference to the cost of living crisis and the Council was helping the Government in rolling out their local support which included the Helping Hand Programme to help residents who

were struggling.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living/>

## **5 Question Time**

The following responses to the Cabinet questions were noted:-

**Question from Councillor Michael Bracken to Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration**

**“My question follows a period in which I have been seeking to advise and assist a number of residents impacted by construction and planning issues in a particular location. The underlying issues are complex and clearly difficult to address and include:-**

- **prolonged and delayed construction project including multiple changes of contractors and project managers;**
- **repeated disruptions to access residences either because of deliveries or of inconsiderate behaviour and the parking of vehicles blocking access;**
- **poor site management practices which took no account of their impact both causing detritus, dust and noise through to outright damage to neighbouring properties and possible planning breaches requiring investigation;**
- **additional wear and tear to public roads and pavements including damage caused by deliveries and equipment;**
- **noise disruption including construction work at unreasonable hours such as weekends and bank holidays; In particular residents were dismayed at around the time of public examinations where students had their ability to study and work on revision harmed or constrained; and**
- **light pollution at the site including through the night directly into neighbouring properties. This arose from both construction lighting as well as what appears to be a permanent feature of the new property which was not considered at the time of planning.**

**May I ask you to consider reviewing the impact of problematic construction projects on residents and in particular:-**

- **consider the instances of problematic construction projects and whether this may be a category which should receive additional attention. For example, consider the tracking of issues which are reported to our various departments, functions and to the extent that we are aware, external agencies; and**
- **as we look to continue to improve our Website to review the advice and guidance available to residents when faced with a problematic construction project. Specifically it can be difficult for residents to know to which department or function either in the council or separate government agencies they should properly raise issues and the mechanism to do so.”**

**RESPONSE from Councillor Strachan**

The Council provides a number of services which investigate issues occurring at construction sites in its area and have powers to pursue formal action where such issues breach either local requirements (such as planning permission details) or national legislation (such as highways). Due to the large array of potential issues that could occur at a construction site (planning, highways, noise, light, dust, Health & Safety), and therefore the complexity of legislation involved, it would be difficult to address all the possible scenarios within a single team. Therefore whilst I acknowledge that the issues you raise are likely to cause local concern, it is our job to ensure we provide a joined up response across the teams that are involved. It would be unfair to expect residents to know who within the Council to report their concerns to without us trying to provide some assistance, so we have already commenced internal team liaison meetings where we will seek to provide a guide to reporting issues with the correct team on our website.

In the meantime and in addition, I can also report that the Planning Enforcement Team have recently commenced a series of pro-active monitoring of planning conditions on larger construction sites. We are piloting a series of development sites across Buckinghamshire of 10 or more units and will be investigating the compliance with pre-commencement conditions. This will include desktop investigations as well as our on-site presence to monitor and enforce compliance with imposed planning conditions such as the provision of wheel washing facilities, hours of operation, on-site parking provision, delivery of materials etc. If we can continue to bear down on these issues with the support of local members like yourself, we can continue to make a positive difference to local communities.

**Question from Councillor Robin Stuchbury to Councillor Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services**

**"Many of our secondary schools are oversubscribed, I understand that this includes The Buckingham school with classes containing over 30 pupils. Are there any figures available for Buckinghamshire regarding school places by catchment area/secondary school to better understand how the education authority is managing the growth within the community?"**

**If these figures are available, do they include any children who have to travel out of their catchment area to obtain a school place which could be detrimental to the Council's aspiration to lower its carbon footprint and which also incurs a cost to parents and/or the Council's home to school transport budget?**

**Members would also benefit from understanding capacity and vacancy figures for primary schools given the significant growth in Buckinghamshire, particularly the north of the county."**

**RESPONSE from Councillor Cranmer**

In most year groups the Buckingham school is below their planned admission number of 210. In two year groups they have exceeded that number, this is due to

pupils arriving in catchment outside of the normal admission point in Year 7. In both these year groups the school has admitted children above their normal number due to Fair Access requests from the local authority. Buckingham School would normally be asked to take under Fair Access where it is the nearest school, as we try to place the children as close to home as possible to minimise the need for home to school transport.

The school place planning team use an established methodology to ensure that there are enough school places in each planning area, and with only very rare exceptions, schools have been able to accommodate the first choices of all parents who have chosen a catchment school for transfer to secondary school.

We review the school capacity of all our planning areas across the county on an annual basis, and whilst there are peaks and troughs in the predicted and actual figures, we have strong relationships with schools so that we can work with them to create capacity as required. Where significant capacity is required, such as with the development of the Kingsbrook Estate in Aylesbury Vale, we have worked with developers to bring a brand new secondary school on line. In the next ten years, the highest number of pupils that we have modelled is 335, 25 above the capacity of 310 that upper schools in the area would normally take, this is not until 2029 and we are confident that we can work with schools to find a solution for this.

#### **Question from Councillor Sophie Kayani to Councillor Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services**

**The Q2 Budget Monitoring and KPI Reports on Education & Children's Service demonstrates a service in crisis and a portfolio without a firm grip, namely:**

- **£9.2m adverse on its operating budget (worsening by £5.3m in Q1) due to placement budgets (£3.2m), agency staff (£1.9m), client costs (£2.9m), adoption and special guardianship allowances (£0.5m), and care leavers' accommodation and allowances (£0.9m).**
- **The portfolio is failing to deliver its planned savings with a shortfall of 35% (£0.3m) due to these agency staff commitments, even with the Social Worker Academy.**
- **The contingency for Children's Services' demography (£1.4m) will be fully used up, but High-Cost Children's Placements contingency (£0.5m) is seemingly not being deployed in spite of the shortfall noted above.**
- **This contingency has been proven to be wholly inadequate although categoric reassurances were given by the Cabinet Member during Budget Scrutiny.**
- **It is failing to deliver its capital projects, such as school places (£3.4m), SEND projects (£1.5m), and Children's Homes (£0.5m)**
- **There is "£0.6m pressure in Legal & Democratic Services from increased demand linked to Children's and Adult cases".**
- **KPIs show worsening Red ratings on Re-referrals within 12 months, EHCPs issued within 20 weeks, Family Support Plans issued within 31 days, repeat Child Protection Plans, Children In Need seen within 4 weeks**

**The Report provides no confidence, stating that *“a detailed review of the budget and forecast expenditure is taking place in order to identify actions that can be taken to reduce spend. An action plan is being drawn up as a result of this review identifying priority actions, timelines, and estimated savings. This plan will be monitored by Children’s SLT and Children’s Budget Board and the potential financial impact included in the forecast in future months as actions are agreed and implemented.”* This 2022-23 revised forecast and 2023-24 Budget will clearly need to be the subject of detailed scrutiny through the Budget process.**

**Can the Cabinet Member provide a categorical reassurance that this is the worst-case financial position for 2022-23; how spend can be possibly reduced in a so-called *“dysfunctional”* Children’s services market where demand is increasing, even with all the substantial demography assumptions made in the 2022-23 budget; confirm when this detailed review will be completed and subject to scrutiny by the appropriate Select Committees; and that this portfolio is not creating a further reputational and financial risk to Buckinghamshire Council through inferior or inappropriate placements for children ending up in unnecessarily traumatic and costly legal disputes?**

**RESPONSE from Councillor Cranmer**

This Council, like every local authority in the country, has a significant challenge in securing sufficient placements for looked after children, especially older adolescents. The placement ‘market place’ nationally does not work for children and young people and requires a national approach in order to address the problems. This is a well-publicised problem that to date has no solutions in play. All staff in the service are fully focused on the implications to the Council of having to purchase external placements at extremely high cost and having to use placements that are unregulated. Officers keep Ofsted, the Department for Education and the Children and Families Courts fully apprised of all unregulated placements. Significant work takes place on a daily, weekly and monthly basis to drive down costs and devise solutions for all high cost placements. The current projections for this financial year and future costs will influence Medium Term Financial Planning (MTFP) discussions. This is a national challenge facing all local authorities and meeting our statutory obligations to children and young people in a demand led environment means that no cast iron guarantees can ever be given.

In addition to the above, the recruitment and retention of social workers is also a significant challenge for the service and whilst having a permanent workforce and reducing reliance on agency staff is one of the main priorities for the service, the size of the national social care workforce is not keeping up with demand. This, coupled with demand challenges are impacting the service’s ability to maintain consistently high performance across all indicators. The actions of the service to ensure that children and young people are being protected in line with their presenting risk and that drift and delay does not become a strong feature of casework continue to be effective. In our drive towards delivering the council’s ambition to achieve

consistently good services, the service will continue to follow a cycle of improvement, reviewing and testing our practice and oversight to ensure that the service is making progress and creating actions to address our priority areas.

On the subject of capital projects, the service has not failed to deliver its capital projects and the capital programme is progressing as planned. The favourable variances detailed within the Q2 Budget Monitoring relate to the associated costs to complete the work or where future projects have not yet started. Whilst there have been some minor slippages due to building work, all school places have been delivered as planned. In addition, SEND projects remain on track and at present, will be delivered within the initial time frame. The investment of £0.5m in Children's Homes was quite rightly been put on hold as the service continues to review its strategic response to the increasing the availability of provision, including both in county and regional options, for our children and young people that meet their needs and provides them with a safe place to live and thrive.

The Leader of the Council spoke in support of the service area and highlighted that they were doing an excellent job under particularly difficult circumstances which were being faced by Council's nationally.

**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 Cabinet would be discussing at forthcoming meetings.

**RESOLVED –**

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

**7 Select Committee Work Programme**

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 Select Committees would be discussing at forthcoming meetings.

**RESOLVED –**

**That the Select Committee Work Programme be noted.**

**8 Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee Review of Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams**

The Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee agreed to set up a Rapid Review of Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams at its meeting on 22 January 2022. The Review Group was chaired by Cllr Robert Carington and thanks were given to the Members which comprised of Cllrs Bill Chapple OBE, Peter Brazier, Mick Caffrey, David King and Adam Poland-Goodyer. The Chairman also thanked the two Cabinet Member involved Cllr Gareth Williams and Peter

Strachan, stakeholders and officers particularly Karen Fisher and Chris Ward.

Between March - June 2022, the Review Group collected evidence through meetings both in person and on Teams. The Review Group then met in June to discuss and agree its key findings and recommendations, which were presented in the report found at Appendix 1. The report was presented to the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee on 3 November 2022.

The Chairman in his presentation made the following points:-

- Chalk streams were unique as they provided pure, clear water from underground chalk aquifers and springs where wildlife could grow and thrive. These environments were rare, with an estimate of 85% of the known chalk streams in the world being located in southern and eastern England; nine significant chalk streams alone could be found in the Chilterns Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- The Government's Environmental Audit Committee recently concluded that every single river in England was contaminated by chemicals and made recommendations on how to overhaul the situation. Buckinghamshire's rivers and chalk streams, like many others across England, were impacted by a range of different factors. This included pollution from sewage, highways, agriculture, water abstraction and flooding. The Environment Agency stated that the majority of the county's rivers have a moderate status – none have a good or high status. The Select Committee was especially concerned to hear of reports of increased discharge events by water companies and HS2 work potentially polluting the chalk aquifer beneath the Misbourne Valley. As a result, Members were keen to undertake a cross party Rapid Review to gain a better understanding of the current health of Buckinghamshire's waterways and areas of responsibility, understand concerns, and hear how these were being addressed. In addition, the Rapid Review wanted to identify areas for potential improvement through, for instance, increased partnership and collaborative working.
- A number of meetings were held with voluntary sector organisations and stakeholders such as Chilterns Chalk Stream Project & Chilterns Conservation Board, Chiltern Society, National Farmers Union, River Chess Association & Impress the Chess, and the River Thames Conservation Trust. Other meetings were held with the Strategic Flood Team, Highways, the Water Services Regulation Authority, Thames Water, Anglian Water and Natural England. Affinity Water and the Environment Agency were both unable to attend and sent in written answers to the Committee's questions.
- There were three main areas that the Committee felt should be prioritised and were also areas where the Council could have the most impact; water pollutants and run-off, communications and engagement and education.
- With regard to water pollutants and run off – the urban and transport sector accounted for 20% of the poor river water quality in the Thames River Basin. It was reported that diffuse urban pollution was a significant issue for most of the chalk streams in Buckinghamshire due to surface water from road run-



off carrying pollutants directly into watercourses. These pollutants included decomposing plant and animal matter (humus) and by-products from vehicles such as hydrocarbons, oil, brake dust, tyre fragments, hydraulic fluids, and anti-freeze. Therefore the first two recommendations were directed to the Cabinet Member for Transport when considering gully technology and cleaning.

- With regard to communication and engagement, whilst the Council did not have responsibility for water quality, the Council did work in partnership with the Environment Agency and the water companies. This covered recommendation 3-9, recommendation 5 being considered the most important recommendation asking the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs regarding the Council's concern with engagement from the EA with regard to the discharge of their statutory function. Further work should also be carried out with water companies and improvements could be made with the Council website.
- With regard to education a communications campaign should be promoted through existing channels (e.g. newsletters and planning informatives) to encourage residents to ensure that their builders/contractors connect the right drain to the right place on works that were exempt from checks by Building Control.

Cabinet was asked to consider the recommendations of the Select Committee Review of Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams and made the following points:-

- The Leader thanked the Review Group for an important piece of work which impacted greatly on Buckinghamshire residents. It was concerning that Buckinghamshire did not have any rivers that were good or excellent. The Leader confirmed that he was happy to write to the Secretary of State. He expressed disappointment that the Environment Agency were unable to attend the Committee in person.
- A Cabinet Member asked if a response had been received from Thames Water. As part of the Smarter Water Catchment Programme they had been quite proactive in this area. The Chairman of the Review Group reported that Thames Water had been very helpful through the Review process and had responded to a number of questions and illustrated areas of improvement. However, a holding response had been given to the Review but there was no timeframe when a response would be received.
- A question was asked about tributaries and how important they were e.g. the Bearbrook ran through Aylesbury and had its own tributaries and the River Thame fed into the River Thames. The Chairman of the Review Group reported that they were considered as part of the report but the main focus was on the overall catchment areas of the streams and rivers, questions were aligned with the relevant water companies.
- A Cabinet Member reported that he was happy that Affinity Water had been involved in river improvement projects across its region over the past few years, including the Smarter Water Catchment Plan, and had also halted

water abstraction from the Chess thereby improving natural water flow and quality. He also asked a question regarding the difference of opinion held by HS2 and whether there was any consideration regarding East-West Rail and its proximity to the River Ouse. The Chairman of the Review Group reported that Affinity Water were the only company to mention that they had halted water abstraction and Thames Water went into a lot of detail about planned works in their catchment areas. On the Environment Agency point there was a particular incident which had been investigated and they had concluded that it was not caused by HS2. East-West Rail had not been part of the considerations.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment thanked the Chairman of the Review Group for his report and commented that the recommendations impacted on a number of areas and that Members and local action groups had been proactive for a number of years with regards to the River Chess and other streams in the local area. There was good partnership working with the Smart Water Catchment Area and although the Council did not have responsibility for water quality as an Authority it was a good vehicle for scrutiny and public interaction with the utilities companies, particularly with storm discharge events. The Environment Agency were a critical partner and it was important to engage with them on a regular basis.

#### **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.**

Note: a complete breakdown of the scrutiny recommendations and Cabinet's responses can be found [here](#).

#### **9 Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee Inquiry report on Development of Primary Care Networks**

The Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee agreed to set up an Inquiry into the development of primary care networks in Buckinghamshire in September 2021.

A small group of councillors volunteered to participate in the Inquiry. Evidence gathering meetings, with a number of stakeholders, took place between January 2022 to June 2022. Following the evidence gathering meetings, the Inquiry Group then met to discuss and agree its key findings and recommendations, which were presented in the report found at Appendix 1.

As the focus of this Inquiry was on the development of primary care networks, the majority of recommendations were aimed at the Integrated Care Board, Integrated Care Partnership and Place-based Partnership. Representatives from the Integrated Care Board have been asked to respond to the recommendations relevant to them. Cabinet was asked to consider the recommendations of the Select Committee which

were aimed at the Council.

The Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee made the following points in presenting the Committee's report:-

- In July 2019, as part of the NHS Long-Term Plan, around 7,000 general practices across England came together to form more than 1,250 Primary Care Networks. In Buckinghamshire there were 13 PCNs.
- The regulations around PCNs have been incorporated into the contract that each GP practice had with the NHS through NHS England.
- To support PCNs, the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) provided funding for 20,000 additional roles to create bespoke multi-disciplinary teams, including pharmacists, physiotherapists, paramedics, mental health practitioners and social prescribing support workers.
- NHS England also introduced a statutory requirement for every surgery to set up a Patient Participation Group to allow patients to work with their surgeries to enhance and improve the service they offer.
- Since 2019, the HASC Select Committee had, over the past few years received presentations on PCN development. It was fair to say that the PCNs were developing at very different rates and their success in recruiting to the additional roles and reorganising was varied.
- The Inquiry was set up to look at the different working practices of 13 PCN's and Patient Participation Groups to understand the key challenges they faced. In addition, the Inquiry Group wanted to collate examples of good practice and discuss areas of improvement with key partners.
- Evidence gathering took place between January and June of this year and the Chairman thanked all those who gave up their valuable time to talk to the Committee. In particular, the Chairman thanked the Inquiry Group for their hard work, which comprised of Cllrs Phil Gomm, Carol Heap, Howard Mordue, Alan Turner and Julia Wassell. She also thanked Liz Wheaton who supported the Group from the Scrutiny Team.
- The report contained 17 areas of recommendation based on what the Committee heard during the evidence gathering. The majority of the recommendations were aimed at health partners.
- In July, clinical commissioning groups were abolished and Integrated Care Systems became legal entities. The Integrated Care Board, Integrated Care Partnership and Place-based Partnerships have been formed and the Committee hoped that the findings and recommendations in the report would ensure that the delivery of successful Primary Care Networks was a priority and appropriate resources were allocated to help deliver this.
- Philippa Baker, the newly appointed Place-based Director, attended the Select Committee meeting when the inquiry report was discussed and has worked with the Head of PCN Delivery and Development in responding to the recommendations. 14 of the recommendations were for external partners and 3 related to Council services; two for the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and one for the Cabinet Member for Communities.
- Progress in implementing the recommendations would be monitored by the

Select Committee at 6 months and again at 12 months, although one of the recommendations was around preparing an annual report for the HASC on the performance of PCNs, including resourcing, staffing and outcomes.

- The HASC Select Committee would also be inviting all those who were responsible for overseeing the delivery of the recommendations to a Select Committee meeting in April.

The Leader thanked the Chairman for an excellent report and commented on the different stages of development of PCN's referring to table 1 in the report. He emphasised the importance of Patient Participation Groups in understanding the experience of customers to PCN services.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- In response to a question about how external partners were going to highlight this to their patients, the Chairman reported that nationally there was a lot of reorganisation being undertaken in terms of integrated care systems and place based partnerships. The local partnership was still in its infancy but with the newly appointed Place-based Director this should develop at pace. The Chairman had been concerned at the development of PCN's over previous years and also that Patient Participation Groups were a statutory requirement of every GP practice but some still had not had any Group meetings or they were meeting but not being as effective as they should be. The pandemic had been an incredible strain on GP surgeries but there had been a lot of good work to transition into new ways of working and there was a lot of funding to recruit to these new roles and GP surgeries should group together in their PCN's to take advantage of this funding. Funding was decided year on year which did not give GP surgeries enough continuity which needed to be addressed. Buckinghamshire was a very diverse county with large rural areas and densely populated urban areas and the PCN's were very different in nature. There were some examples of best practice and health partners should encourage the sharing of information across Buckinghamshire e.g. technology and expertise. The NHS should provide further support. There were also a number of professionals at GP surgeries that could help patients other than GPs and this needed to be communicated more widely. Other GP surgeries needed to recruit more non-GP service professionals.
- The Leader commented that it must be difficult for residents to understand the reorganisation changes locally and how it impacted on them. The Chairman reported that explaining acronyms was key including understanding the new complex structure. From 1 July 2022, the new BOB Integrated Care Board (ICB) gained the commissioning responsibilities of the area's three Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs – which dissolved on 30 June), together with some current national functions, including pharmacy, optometry and dentistry. The BOB Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) – whose statutory members were the ICB and the five upper tier local authorities – would develop an overall strategy by the end of 2022 which would set out

how to improve health and care outcomes for the local population. The new system should bring economies of scale, new ways of working and centres of excellence but it could have implications for how far residents needed to travel to access services. The Chairman reported that an informal meeting had been held with partners including the five authorities to look at the emerging picture and to scrutinise new services to ensure that there were good outcomes for residents.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing responded saying that the report was excellent and forensic in nature. With the implementation of the Health and Care Act earlier this year the NHS had undergone significant change and it was important to look at how these changes had been delivered on the ground. The Inquiry had provided great scrutiny into one of the most fundamental building blocks of NHS services locally. The recommendations provided a focus for NHS commissioners in the ICS system to ensure that all residents should be able to expect the same quality services from primary care. It was important to highlight the need for an active and engaged network of Patient Participation Groups. Two of the recommendations related to adult social care and although the portfolio area would not be taking the approach proposed by the Committee for reasons of practicality and capacity, there was agreement about the importance of having effective and close working relationships with PCN's.

In relation to Recommendation 13 and a named social worker, Adult Social Care have restructured their operational teams into four geographical areas of the County aligning them more with PCN's and providing direct telephone numbers and email addresses to make sure issues were picked up in a timely manner. Service Managers would be making contact with PCN's regularly over the next few months to make sure this was working effectively.

In relation to recommendation 14 multi-disciplinary meetings were taking place when necessary to help individual patients and clients which was the most efficient use of time. There was also a process for more complex cases which could be requested by partners. The Cabinet Member reported that she was looking forward to the development of the place-based partnership and the opportunities this would bring for even more integrated working at a neighbourhood level in Buckinghamshire.

In terms of recommendation 15 which related to the Cabinet Member for Communities it was important to build relationships with Community Boards and PCN's and Public Participation Groups to tackle inequalities. Opportunity Bucks would provide support to 10 wards in Buckinghamshire targeted at the specific needs of the community.

#### **RESOLVED**

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

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

Note: a complete breakdown of the scrutiny recommendations and Cabinet's responses can be found [here](#).

**10 Council Resilience Framework and Standards (CRF&S)**

At Vesting Day, the Council put in place an interim Civil Contingencies Policy to discharge its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA). Since then the Government had developed a national strategy for resilience and the new Council Resilience Framework and Standards Policy (CRF&S) at Appendix 1 would ensure that the Council complied with these new national standards together with its duties under the CCA.

The CRF&S policy had been discussed at a range of presentations to Members, including the Select Committee for Communities and Localism in April 2022.

The new Council Resilience Framework and Standards Policy was the overarching policy document and this included 3 'sub' policies covering Emergency Resilience; Place Resilience and Organisational (Council) Resilience. The CRF&S Policy incorporated the detail covered in the interim Civil Contingencies Policy, so allowing that Vesting Day policy to be replaced.

The Cabinet Member for Communities reported that the draft Policy had already been considered by the Select Committee for Communities and Localism and also presented to other Members, Service Directors, Parish Clerks and Community Boards. Feedback from the consultation process was extremely positive and that the new framework brought a range of resilience within the Council. The Policy would be reviewed annually.

In response to a question it was noted that a Member briefing would be held to communicate the new Policy. The Team had held community workshops with Chepping Wycombe, Wexham and Iver and Marlow and further workshops would be held with town and parish councils including the unparished area in Wycombe. The aim would be for local parishes to develop their own local emergency resilience plans. Another question was raised by the Leader about the multi-disciplinary approach and buy-in from partners to the new framework. In response it was noted that the service area had engaged with the Thames Valley Resilience Forum and the draft Policy was presented at their Annual Conference. The Bucks Resilience Group which mainly included local partners and responders had also been included in the process. Other authorities had contacted Buckinghamshire to follow their good practice.

**RESOLVED that the new Buckinghamshire Council Corporate Resilience Framework and Standards Policy be endorsed and it be noted that this replaces the interim Civil Contingencies Policy agreed prior to Vesting Day.**

## 11 Q2 Budget Monitoring Report 2022-23

This report sets out the Revenue and Capital outturn position for Buckinghamshire Council for the financial year 2022/23 as at Quarter 2. The Council was continuing to experience significant financial pressures due to the current economic situation and the high levels of inflation. In Adults and Children's social care, pressures continued to be experienced due to increased demand and complexity and in Children's Services the market had become dysfunctional with a lack of suitable placements driving up unit costs.

The Revenue outturn position as of Quarter 2 was a forecast adverse variance of £1.8m, which was a reduction of £2m from the adverse variance of £3.8m reported at Quarter 1. This reflected the Council's prudent financial management, successive delivery of targeted savings and strong processes in place to manage risk. There was an adverse variance on portfolio spend of £15.7m (£10.4m forecast at Quarter 1) offset by £13.9 m (£6.6m forecast at Quarter 1) of corporate mitigations which included the use of contingencies and corporate funding, such as interest and a one-off legal settlement of £4.4m.

Appendix 1 provided detailed information on the revenue forecast outturn by Portfolio. £19.2m of savings were incorporated into the approved 2022-23 Revenue budgets. The £15.7m adverse variance in portfolios included £4.7m in Health and Wellbeing from demand pressures, £9.5m in Children's Services, including £3.2m in placement budgets due to the national lack of available placements and increased demand and complexity of need and staffing costs, £2.1m in Accessible Housing and Resources of which £1.1m was attributable to inflation on energy costs in Property and Assets and £1m of new pressures in Legal and Democratic Services and Insurance, £2m adverse variance in transport services due to increased contract costs and a favourable variance of £3.3m in Climate Change and Environment from additional income from the sale of electricity from the EfW site. Cabinet was being asked to transfer £15m of income arising from this to an earmarked reserve.

Work was ongoing to understand the impact of inflation and how this would affect the capital programme. The current exceptional rates of inflation might have a significant impact on what can be delivered within the approved budget for the year. There was a forecast slippage of £13m which was 8% of the total budget which was within 10% target. The biggest spend was in Education and Children's Services much of which related to savings against budget and a delay in delivery. Table 3 in the report showed that the Council was on track to deliver 98% of its targeted savings in the current financial year.

The Leader reported that the Council had robust financial management and referred to two other Councils who were facing financial difficulties due to increased demand pressures. The underlying pressure on this Council was currently at £16m which was a serious concern going forwards but was currently being managed through corporate mitigations. Savings on the capital programme was due to savings achieved on the Kingsbrook School.

**RESOLVED -**

- 1) That the report and the risks and opportunities contained within it be NOTED.**
- 2) That the following reserve movements be APPROVED:**
  - **A contribution to a corporate earmarked reserve of £15m of income arising from Energy for Waste electricity sales.**
  - **A contribution to a corporate earmarked reserve of £4.4m from income arising from a legal dispute regarding third party waste and metals income, and a corresponding contribution from reserves of £4.4m into corporate budgets.**
  - **A drawdown of £0.15m from the “Mitigating Future Financial Risks” reserve to create an employee hardship fund as approved by the Senior Appointments & Pay Committee (SAPC).**

**12 Q2 Performance Report 2022-23**

Cabinet received a performance report which detailed the key performance measures reported through the Corporate Performance Framework for 2022/23. Cabinet also received the performance scorecard, which provided information on four key elements of performance for the Council covering Finance, Customer Service, Performance and Human Resources indicators.

Within the performance report and performance scorecard, outturns which were performing at or better than target were classified as Green, those which were within 5% of the target were Amber and those which were more than 5% of the target were Red. At the end of Quarter 2, 92 indicators had outturns reported with a Red, Amber or Green status. Of these, 62 are Green (67%), 12 are Amber (13%) and 18 are Red (20%).

Cabinet Members then provided comprehensive explanations for the performance marked as red (shown below) where performance was more than 5% off the target for each of their portfolio's, these were as follows:-

**Leader**

Buckinghamshire unemployment rate as a percentage of National unemployment rate – the Leader reported that this was higher than it should be. However, many businesses in Buckinghamshire were desperate for staff such as Pinewood and Silverstone and a whole variety of other businesses. The Council was working with businesses to address this issue. A number of Deputy Cabinet Members were working on skills with employment workshops and also through the Opportunity Bucks programme where they were collaborating with key partners to ensure direct engagement with community groups in the worst affected wards.

**Accessible Housing and Resources**

Percentage of phone calls answered in the Customer Service Centres and Average Call Wait Time

The Service Area were outside target but an improvement had been made on Quarter 1. They had been impacted by the waste service reorganisation and also the



£150 energy and council tax rebates. Mitigating actions were detailed in the report which included the recruitment and training of new starters and the development of a flexible workforce that could be brought in to deal with surges in demand. Last week the average wait time was below three minutes which was within target.

Average time for processing new Housing Benefit claims (days)/ Average time for processing Housing Benefit change claims (days)

This had been impacted by the new Revenues and Benefits System. The system was closed for a number of weeks so no changes could be made and they were now addressing the backlog. The service area should be back on target by the year end.

Number of sickness absence days per FTE annually (rolling 12-month period)

This was marginally over target but there was an improvement on Quarter 1. If excluding the impact of Covid the Council was within target. The Council did provide targeted support to employees on health and wellbeing across the Council.

Climate Change and Environment

% of Missed Bin Collections

The Council was now back to the levels prior to the round reorganisation. There was an occasional day with a 100 missed bins and the service area had nearly completed a week below 100. There should be an improvement for the next quarter and the service continued to look for ways to improve the service. There had been an issue with the contractor but officers and members had been working hard to drive improvement. The Leader complimented the Cabinet Member on the good work on climate change and the environment which were covered by other performance indicators.

Education and Childrens Services

% of re-referrals within 12 months

% new Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions)

% of initial Family Support Plans completed within 31 working days

% children who became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years

% of Children in Need seen within 4 weeks

The Cabinet Member referred to an increase in demand including complexity of cases. The Cabinet Member reported that there was only one area that was concerning which was the number of re-referrals within 12 months and the most common reason for this was domestic violence. They were working in partnership to reduce the number of re-referrals through the Multi agency safeguarding hub.

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

% of births that receive a face-to face New Birth Visit within 14 days by a health visitor in the quarter

There has been a slight dip which was due to team capacity across Aylesbury and Wycombe. 25 people have received no visit and staff had checked to see if they were vulnerable. Some of the reasons why the visit had not occurred was due to people refusing visits, babies in ICU, parents being on holiday or moving out of

county.

% of service users due an annual review that receive their review

The service area was working hard to bring this on target. However there were over 1700 people to review and also staffing challenges.

Number of older people (65+) admitted to permanent residential or nursing care homes per 100,000 population

There were huge pressures around nursing care and the numbers admitted had increased particularly with the impact of covid.

% of carers who report that they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person that they care for.

The Service area were undertaking transformation work; they recognised that the carers offer needed to improve. The Cabinet Member was confident that they would meet targets by year end. It was important to involve carers and hear their voice.

The Cabinet Member reported that she had set challenging targets for her service area which exceeded CIPFA partners by some considerable way. There were also issues nationally.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

% of Building Control applications checked within 21 days

There was a change of legislation in July which slowed down the system since then the service area had increased resources and they continued to monitor the situation. The target had been set at a high level and the Cabinet Member expected to see an improvement the next quarter.

Cabinet Member for Transport

Highways capital programme % spend against forecast

This was due to a number of issues such as inflationary pressures regarding work programmes, working on designs and also the weather (both hot and wet weather) which slowed down delivery. The Cabinet Member expected to be on target year end.

**RESOLVED -**

- 1) That the Council's performance for the Quarter 2 period 2022-23 be NOTED.**
- 2) That the actions being taken to improve performance, where required, be NOTED.**

**13 Date of next meeting**  
6 December 2022 at 10am