

Cabinet

Wednesday 17 July 2024

Minutes of the meeting held in Conference Room 2 at the Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall at 6pm.

Present

Councillor Perry	Leader of the Council
Councillor Andrew	Associate Leader – Economic Development and Regeneration
Councillor M. Statham	Deputy Leader – Finance
Councillor Elson	Children and Young People
Councillor Flint	Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Garcha	Resident Access and Housing Support
Councillor Kaur	Education and Skills
Councillor Lee	Internal Services
Councillor Murphy	Clean and Green
Councillor Pedley	Adult Social Care

In attendance

E. Bennett	Chief Executive
K. Allward	Executive Director – Adult Social Care
D. Brown	Executive Director – Economy, Environment and Communities
J. Greenhalgh	Executive Director – Resources and Transformation
C. Male	Executive Director – Children’s and Customer
S. Darcy	Director of Finance, Corporate Performance Management and Corporate Landlord
C. Goodall	Principal Democratic Services Officer
E. Cook	Democratic Services Officer

Others in attendance

Councillor Hicken
Councillor Nawaz

Part 1 – Public Session

4241 Welcome

Councillor Perry opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and explaining that the Cabinet was meeting that evening in person and that the agenda and reports for this meeting were available on the Council’s website. He explained that voting would be by way of a show of hands which would be witnessed and recorded by the Democratic Services officer in attendance.

4242 Apologies

There were no apologies received.

4243 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2024 were submitted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2024, a copy having been sent to each member of the Cabinet, be approved and signed as a correct record.

4244 **Declarations of interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

4245 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985**

Resolved

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items set out in the private part of the agenda for the reasons set out therein and Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972

4246 **Petitions**

No petitions were received.

4247 **Questions**

No questions were received.

4248 **Forward plan**

The forward plan as of July 2024 was submitted:

(annexed)

Resolved

That the forward plan be noted.

4249 **Recommendations from Scrutiny Overview Committee regarding the Housing Standards Working Group**

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Hicken introduced the report on behalf of the Scrutiny Overview Committee.

(annexed)

Councillor Hicken provided an overview of the Working Group's findings and Cabinet members thanked the Working Group for their work.

It was **moved** by Councillor Perry and **seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That:

1. **the findings and recommendations of the Housing Standards Working Group be noted, and;**
2. **a report responding to the working groups recommendations be received at a future meeting.**

4250 **Recommendations from Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Primary Care Access and GP Access Working Group**

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Nawaz introduced the report on behalf of the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(annexed)

Councillor Nawaz provided an overview of the Working Group's findings and Cabinet members thanked the Working Group for their work.

It was **moved** by Councillor Perry and **seconded** by Councillor Flint and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That:

1. **the findings and recommendations of the Primary Care Access and GP Access Working Group be noted, and;**
2. **a report responding to the working groups recommendations be received at a future meeting.**

4251 **Draft Council Plan 2025-2029**

Councillor Perry introduced a report which presented the draft new Council Plan for 2025-2029.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Perry and **seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the content of the report and agree the draft Council Plan for consultation with public, staff and partners;**
- 2. Noted the review and creation of a new Corporate Quarterly Performance reporting process including a review and refresh of the Council Corporate Performance Management Framework based on the new Council Plan.**

4252 Council Plan 2022/25 – Markers of Success

Councillor Perry introduced a report which reviewed the Council's performance against the Council Plan 2022-25 Markers of Success.

(annexed)

It was noted that this would be the final performance outturn against the 2022-25 Council Plan.

It was **moved** by Councillor Perry and **seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the performance and key achievements in Q4 relating to the period January-March 2024;**
- 2. Noted that this was the final performance outturn against the current Council Plan 2022-2025 and that a new Council Plan was in development which would have a new performance framework, to begin reporting following Council's ratification in January 2025.**

4253 Productivity Plan

Councillor Perry introduced a report which set out the draft Council Productivity Plan, in response to the request from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities for each Local Authority to produce a productivity plan.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Perry and **seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

1. **Noted and celebrated the successes highlighted by the Productivity Plan;**
2. **Approved the Council's Productivity Plan and noted the plans and work already underway to continue the Council's improvement journey and to deliver value for money in the delivery of effective services.**

4254 **Pre-Audit Outturn 2023/24**

Councillor Statham introduced a report which informed Cabinet of the pre-audit revenue and capital outturn position for 2023/24, and financial health indicators for 2023/24.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Statham and **seconded** by Councillor Perry and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

1. **Noted the pre-audit revenue outturn underspend of £856k, equivalent to 0.06% of gross revenue expenditure after service mitigating actions of £4.13m and central mitigating action of £19.95m. Without mitigating actions being identified the outturn would have been an overspend of £23.22m;**
2. **Noted the service's position (table 1 and Appendix 1), delivery of savings approved for 2023/24 including the amendments as detailed in section 4.8 to 4.10 and the carry forward of undelivered 2023/24 savings (Appendix 4) to 2024/25 and that 2024/25 savings delivery will be kept under review and progress reported to Cabinet in July;**
3. **Noted the transfers from and to earmarked reserves as set out in table 2 and Appendix 2;**
4. **Noted that the opening general reserves balance will be £19.56m as at 1 April 2024;**
5. **Noted the pre-audit capital outturn is a net break-even position, net of carry forwards of £53.54m (Table 5 and Appendix 5 and 6);**
6. **Noted and agreed the final amendments to the 2023/24 capital programme (since the last update to Cabinet in February 2024), as set out in table 4 in section 4.11 and approve the capital re-profiling from 2023/24 to 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 5 and 6;**
7. **Noted the financial health indicators for 2023/24 as summarised in Appendix 9;**

8. **Noted the prudential indicators as set out in section 4.22 to 4.24 and Appendix 10;**
9. **Noted the performance and demand data at Appendix 7 and 8 in relation to Adult and Children's Social Care Services.**

4255 Corporate Financial Performance 2024/25 and approach to Budget Setting for 2025/26

Councillor Statham introduced the report which reported on the forecast corporate financial position for 2024/25 and set out the approach and timeline for the 2025/26 budget process.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Statham and **seconded** by Councillor Perry and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

1. **Noted potential forecast revenue spend above budget of £9.05m, noting that further actions were being taken to address this potential position. A detailed plan would be reported to Cabinet in October 2024, outlining actions to be taken;**
2. **Noted that there were additionally high risks of £11.24m to the revenue forecast identified within services as set out in Table 2. These risks were actively being monitored and action was being taken to reduce / eliminate them where possible;**
3. **Noted the progress on savings approved for 2024/25 as detailed in section 4.13 and 4.14;**
4. **Noted the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) action plan position as detailed in sections 4.15 to 4.19;**
5. **Approved amendments to the capital programme as set out in section 4.21, including the rephrasing of capital programme to 2025/26 at Appendix 6;**
6. **Noted that the forecast for the capital programme was predicted on budget;**
7. **Approved the release of £875k from the development pool for the highways maintenance capital programme and detailed in sections 4.25 to 4.26;**

8. **Approved the release of £1.73m from the development pool to support the construction of a new road bridge over the Wyrley and Essington canal as detailed in sections 4.27 to 4.30;**
9. **Approved the release of £860k from the development pool to fund additional costs of enabling support services / one source programme as detailed in sections 4.31 to 4.32;**
10. **Noted financial health indicator performance as set out in sections 4.33 to 4.38 and Appendix 8;**
11. **Noted the prudential indicators as set out in section 4.39 to 4.41 and Appendix 9;**
12. **Approved the write off-of debt as detailed in section 4.42;**
13. **Noted the work underway to update to the medium-term financial outlook and approved the approach for setting the 2025/26 budget, as set out in sections 4.43 to 4.52, aligned to the Council Plan, Budget Framework and Proud Promises;**
14. **Approved the updated Medium Term Financial Framework as set out in section 4.53.**

4256 **Treasury Management Annual Report 2023/24**

Councillor Statham introduced the report which set out the council's 2023/24 year- end position for treasury management activities.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Statham and **seconded** by Councillor Perry and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet noted and forwarded to Council, for consideration and noting (in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2021)), the Annual Treasury Management Report 2023/24 including prudential and local indicators (Appendix A).

4257 **West Midlands Addressing Ethnic Disparity Pathfinder**

Councillor Elson introduced the report which provided an overview of the West Midlands Addressing Ethnic Disparity Pathfinder project and sought approval for its delivery.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Elson and **seconded** by Councillor Perry and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. That Cabinet approved the Council acting as the Accountable Body for the West Midlands Addressing Ethnic Disparity Pathfinder project;
2. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to subsequently sign contracts or other related documents and to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements should this be required.

4258 West Midlands Regional Independent Fostering Agency Framework

Councillor Elson introduced the report which sought approval to join the new West Midlands Regional Foster Care Framework (the 'new Framework') and to call off (order, arrange and pay) for foster placements from this framework.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Elson and **seconded** by Councillor Statham and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. That Cabinet authorised the Council to enter into the Access Agreement with Coventry City Council to join the new West Midlands Regional Fostering Framework;
2. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to subsequently authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of contracts and any other related documents for the provision of such services, as appropriate, including any agreement with Coventry City Council to facilitate these services;
3. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements or other related documents for such services should this be required throughout the duration of the term of any contracts;
4. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to enter into 'call off' contracts with Independent Fostering Agencies who are awarded 'Fostering Framework Agreement' contracts by Coventry City Council pursuant to the new West Midlands Regional Foster Care Framework for a period of 4 years from 1 August 2024 with the provision to extend the ability to call off for by 2 increments of 3 years to an expiry date no later than 31 July 2034;

5. **That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to enter into 'spot contracts' where the framework does not meet capacity and/or capability requirements.**

4259 **Families First for Children – Pathfinder Programme**

Councillor Elson introduced the report which provided an overview of the Families First for Children – Pathfinder Programme and sought approval for its delivery.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Elson and **seconded** by Councillor Perry and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. **That Cabinet approved the Families First Wave Two Pathfinder Programme;**
2. **That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to subsequently sign contracts or other related documents and to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements should this be required;**
3. **That Cabinet noted the initial overview and activity, the proposed structure, financial plan and implications for future budget setting.**

4260 **Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029: Draft for Consultation**

Councillor Lee introduced the report which presented the draft Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2029, 'Ensuring Equity'.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Leend **seconded** by Councillor Statham and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

1. **Noted and approved the draft EDI strategy for public consultation;**
2. **Noted the future plans and work already underway to strengthen EDI across the Council aligned to the EFLG;**

3. **Agreed to the inclusion of Armed Forces as a local characteristic for EDI within the Equality Impact Assessment process, alongside the existing 9 statutory characteristics and the existing local characteristic of care leavers.**

4260 **Interim Provision of Street Lights**

Councillor Murphy introduced the report which sought approval for the award of a contract for the interim delivery of public lighting services.

(annexed)

The decision was taken in the private session following consideration of exempt information.

4261 **Exclusion of public**

Resolved

That during consideration of the remaining items on the agenda, the Cabinet considered that the items for consideration were exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972, and accordingly resolved to consider the items in private.

Part 2 - Private Session

The following is a public summary of the decisions taken in the private session.

4262 **Interim Provision of Street Lights**

Councillor Murphy introduced the report which sought approval for the award of a contract for the interim delivery of public lighting services.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Murphy and **seconded** by Councillor Statham and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Regeneration, to enter negotiations with Amey with a view to directly awarding a contract for delivery of public lighting services for the 11-month interim period between the end of the PFI contract and the commencement of the combined highway services contract

(Exempt Information under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended)

4263 **Corporate Financial Performance 2024/25 and approach to Budget Setting for 2025/26 – Supplementary Report**

Councillor Statham introduced a supplementary report in conjunction with the public report and its recommendations, containing exempt information.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Statham and **seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet approved the release of funding from the Development Pipeline Fund for the Willenhall-Framework Plan Phase 1 scheme, Moat Street/Villiers Street.

(Exempt Information under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended)

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7:19 pm.

Chair:

Date: