

Cabinet

Thursday 16 June 2022

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE (Chair)
Councillor Margaret Bell
Councillor Peter Butlin
Councillor Andy Crump
Councillor Andy Jenns
Councillor Kam Kaur
Councillor Jeff Morgan
Councillor Heather Timms
Councillor Martin Watson

Others Present

Councillor Sarah Feeney
Councillor John Holland
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse

1. General

The Leader welcomed Councillor Martin Watson to his first meeting of Cabinet as Portfolio Holder.

Councillor Andy Jenns extended the Cabinet's congratulations to Andre Russell, one of the Council's apprentices, who had been part of a winning team at the Local Government Apprentice of the Year event which had taken place on 25 May 2022.

Congratulations was also extended to members of the Council's Legal Team who had won awards at the Lawyers in Local Government Awards - Jack Cantwell (for Project Lawyer of the Year) and the Children's Legal Service Team (for Team of the Year). The Council's Monitoring Officer, Sarah Duxbury, had also been nominated at the awards for a lifetime achievement award.

(1) Apologies

Councillor Wallace Redford

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 12 May 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

(4) Public Speaking

None.

2. Council Plan 2020-2025 Year End Performance Progress Report

Councillor Andy Jenns (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) introduced the published report and summarised its key elements. Members' attention was drawn to the positive shift in the number of indicators being reported on-track, up from 53% of 47 indicators in quarter 3 to 65.9% of 54 indicators in quarter 4. Of these, there were several measures of note which were fully detailed in the report. Of the 34.1% (16) indicators that were not on track, there were 7 measures which were subject to exception reporting and the report provided detailed performance narrative, improvement activity and explanation of the projected trajectory in relation to those measures. Comprehensive performance reporting was enabled through Power BI. The report represented the final performance commentary against the Council Plan 2020-2025 and future performance reporting would be based on the new Council Plan 2022-2027.

In response, Councillor Roodhouse expressed concern regarding the human resource elements of the report, noting that improvements against these indicators would take time while recruitment and retention was addressed. Councillor Roodhouse also raised concern at the continuing position regarding learning disabled indicators and hoped to see these improving soon.

Councillor Secombe noted that employment issues were a key concern as a strong and committed workforce was required to deliver Council services and it was important that the Council was an employer choice. The Council was very proud of its staff and applauded their achievements.

Resolved

That Cabinet notes progress made in relation to the delivery of the Council Plan 2020 - 2025 for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

3. 2021/22 Financial Outturn report

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader, Finance and Property) summarised the published report, noting that for the majority of 2021/22, the Council had continued to manage the impact of, and looked to start recovery from, the Covid-19 Pandemic. Other international, national and regional events had now combined with Covid-19 to create a volatile and unpredictable financial environment, making forecasting difficult throughout the year. The Council had concluded the year with a £10.5m underspend, after allowing for investment fund reprofiling of £7.1m, net Covid costs of £10.6m and movements into earmarked reserves of £9.0m, there was a net remaining underspend of £8.6m. However, this masked some significant variances at individual service level as set out in the report. In terms of the Capital outturn, the delivery of schemes had continued to

be heavily impacted by the availability of labour and materials, which among other issues, had led to further reprofiling of the capital programme.

Councillor Jeff Morgan, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families, noted that projected overspend in his portfolio area was due to demand for placements, which was intended to be addressed by the investment in Children's Homes.

In response to a question from Councillor Roodhouse regarding delegated budgets, Councillor Butlin advised that work was taking place to ensure that expectations could be accurately managed.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the net spend in 2021/22 and the consequent revenue underspend for the organisation at the end of the year;
2. Notes the explanations and mitigating actions for variations to budgets, and the implications on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, as set out in Appendix A to the report;
3. Notes the capital spend in 2021/22 and its financing and the explanations for variations on individual projects set out in the report at paragraph 5.6 and Appendix B;
4. Approves the £3.473m carry forward of specific services' revenue funding originally expected to be spent in 2021/22, to support the delivery of the Council Plan in 2022/23, as outlined in the report at paragraph 4.4 and Appendix D;
5. Approves the £6.958m carry forward of funding originally approved to be resourced from the Revenue Investment Funds in 2021/22 to support the delivery of the Council Plan in 2022/23, as outlined in the report at paragraph 4.8 and Appendix E;
6. Approves the reprofiling of the capital programme as set out in Annexes A to M to the report and require Corporate Board to give an enhanced focus to the accurate phasing of capital spend in 2022/23 and over the medium term; and
7. Notes the current reserves position for the organisation as set out in the report at Section 4 and Appendix N.

4. Treasury Management Outturn Report 2021/22

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader, Finance and Property) opened this item by explaining that overall cash balances had risen to £458m over the year, up £63m. However, financial markets remained volatile and returns had generally been weak as a result of this and low interest rates. The overall return was below the original budget target but had still outperformed benchmarks. The actual return shortfall to the budget would be dealt with through interest rate volatility reserve, specifically held for this purpose. Despite the difficult conditions, the Treasury Management Team had done a good job of balancing returns against the overriding principles of security and liquidity

and it was pleasing that a 'substantial' audit opinion was given for the controls relating to Treasury Management activity.

Andy Felton, the Assistant Director for Finance was invited to respond, to a question from Councillor Andy Crump regarding driving improvement in the control framework. He stated that a focus on the requirements of the prudential code was at the heart of strong treasury management, together with ensuring that the right processes and procedures were in place to enable an understanding of where cash flow existed and the investments that could be made as a result.

Resolved

That Cabinet notes the Treasury Management outturn for 2021/22.

5. Corporate Peer Challenge - Outcome

Councillor Isobel Seccombe introduced this report, placing on record her thanks to the Peer Review Team. Overall, it had been a positive review with good outcomes as set out in the report and some recommendations to take forward.

In response to a question from Councillor Sarah Feeney regarding the development of a climate change action plan, Councillor Heather Timms advised that the review had recognised the journey of the Council in this regard, including the work of the Council's cross party working group. She noted that the Sustainable Future Strategy was under development and was due to be placed before the Cabinet in October 2022, alongside a costed action plan.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse considered that the review had provided a fair and honest reflection, and that the key to improvement would be how the findings were translated into an action plan. The sought involvement for Scrutiny in the development of the action plan. In response, Councillor Seccombe welcomed wider input into the development of the plan.

Councillor Kam Kaur highlighted the need for the organisation to do more to address digitalisation and Councillor Butlin shared his pride at the review, particularly comments regarding the Council's "sound financial management". Councillor Seccombe echoed these views and recognised that whilst the Council was in a good position, there was still more to do.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the LGA Peer Challenge report attached to the report at Appendix 1.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to develop an action plan to address the themes identified by the Peer Challenge as set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

6. Coventry and Warwickshire's Living Well with Dementia Strategy (2022-2027)

Councillor Margaret Bell, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care & Health summarised the published report, noting that there were two elements: the comprehensive strategy and the underpinning

delivery plan that would be refreshed annually. She explained the background to the development of the strategy and the partnership approach to its delivery.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, reflecting on the popularity of the virtual dementia bus at a recent fun day in Rugby, commented on the need to raise awareness and deliver training for the community and local businesses.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe welcomed the strategy and shared her personal experience of caring for her mother, noting that patients and carers would have different needs at different times and the importance of training for care workers.

Councillor Bell advised that extensive engagement on the strategy had taken place and echoed the view that patients needed independence and control for as long as possible. She also recognised that community training was required.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

1. Supports Coventry and Warwickshire's Living Well with Dementia Strategy (2022-2027) and authorises the Strategic Director for People, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health, to finalise the strategy taking into account feedback from partners.
2. Approves the approach to the development of the associated annual strategic Delivery Plans and authorises the Strategic Director for People in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health, to work with partners to develop and implement the Delivery Plans.

7. All Age Community Autism Support Services

Councillor Margaret Bell introduced this report which sought approval to go out to tender for a redesigned service as set out in the report. Councillor Jeff Morgan welcome the all-age approach being taken.

Councillor John Holland welcomed the proposals as part of a bigger strategy, particularly noting concerns from residents regarding diagnosis times and the support available.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse sought clarification behind the rationale of the short contract length and was advised that this an assurance measure to test a new partnership alongside a new type of commission.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

1. Approves proceeding with an appropriate procurement process for the provision of Coventry and Warwickshire's All-Age Community Autism Support Services by the Council on behalf of Coventry City Council and Coventry and Warwickshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

2. Approves and authorises the Strategic Director for People in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Families to enter into all relevant contracts for the provision of Coventry and Warwickshire’s All-Age Community Autism Support Services on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

8. Age Range Changes – Arley and St John’s Primary Schools

Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Education) summarised this paper which was seeking approval to change the age range at both Arley and St John’s Primary Schools from 3-11 to 4-11 with effect from September 2022.

Resolved

That Cabinet approves the change of age range at both Arley and St John’s Primary Schools from 3-11 to 4-11 with effect from September 2022.

The meeting rose at 2.52pm

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Chair