

## **Cabinet**

28 January 2020 – At a meeting of the Cabinet held at 2.15 pm at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Marshall (Chairman)

Mr Crow, Mr Elkins, Mr Hunt, Mrs Jupp, Mr Jupp, Mr Lanzer, Mrs Russell and Mrs Urquhart

Apologies were received from

Absent:

Also in attendance: Mr Barrett-Miles, Mrs Dennis, Mr Jones and Mr Turner

### **Part I**

#### **33. Declarations of Interest**

33.1 In accordance with the code of conduct, there were no declarations of interest made.

#### **34. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

34.1 RESOLVED – that the minutes of meeting held on 14 January 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

#### **35. Approval of the County Council's Revenue Budget 2020/21, Capital Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25 and Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020/21 (CAB12\_19/20)**

35.1 The Cabinet considered a report by Director of Finance and Support Services (copy appended to signed minutes).

35.2 Jeremy Hunt, Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report for endorsement by Cabinet, ahead of full approval by County Council on 14 February 2020. Mr Hunt highlighted the following key parts of the budget:

- Despite the financial challenges of 2019/20, a balanced budget was being presented for 2020/21.
- The budget included funding growth of £32m and £2.6m into Children's Services and Fire and Rescue Service respectively.
- £18m of savings had been identified, and the early involvement of members in the budget process would continue for the following year.
- The total proposed Council tax increase for 2020/21 was 3.99% (1.99% core element and 2% Adult Social Care).

35.3 Katharine Eberhart, Director of Finance & Support Services highlighted the Section 25 statement on the robustness and adequacy of reserves. There would be £144m in reserves by the end of this financial year and it was expected that reserve levels would be similar by the end of 2020/21. Resilience indicators had been considered, and it had been

concluded that there was sufficient financial resilience to deal with the risks highlighted in the report.

35.4 Joy Dennis, Chairman of Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee, provided a summary of the recommendations and comments made by the Committee in relation to the budget. The Committee welcomed the early member engagement in the budget setting process for 2020/21 and welcomed this continuing for future years.

35.5 Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group commented that his group did not support some of the savings proposals that had been identified, including the Local Assistance Network. The group also highlighted that some of the performance issues, including drug and alcohol and killed and serious road accidents on roads had not been addressed in the budget.

35.6 Cabinet Members welcomed the balanced budget being presented, recognising the funding challenges and the difficult choices that had to be made to put resources into the top priority areas.

35.7 Cabinet Members made the following comments in relation to the budget:

- Welcomed the financial prudence of the County Council that had enabled an increase in core spending for vital services.
- Supported the strength of the Capital Programme that included investment in growth programmes across the County and significant major highways projects which both harnessed external funding.
- Recognised the need to understand the increase in KSIs on roads, and the importance of working with the Safer Sussex Partnership to address this.
- Welcomed the additional funding for Children's Services including £12m for improvement and £12m for increased placements. The aim was to have targeted investment into early help to maximise results for residents and families.
- Recognised the need for a long-term funding settlement from Government to provide certainty and enable long term financial planning. The Cabinet would continue to work with the Local Government Association and MPs to lobby government for this and would welcome cross party support.

35.8 Andrew Barratt-Miles, Chairman of the Environment and Communities Select Committee commented that the Committee welcomed the early review of savings and hoped this would continue. The Committee would welcome the opportunity to work with the Cabinet Member to look at the long-term condition of the highways.

35.9 Bryan Turner, Chairman of Health and Adults Social Care Scrutiny Committee confirmed that the Committee welcomed the £10m growth in the Adults Portfolio and recognised the complexity of being able to predict demand and growth levels in the service.

35.10 Nigel Jupp, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills welcomed the progress being made by Stedham Primary School towards federation. A

Memorandum of Understanding for federation had been received which would be reviewed and responded to in due course.

35.11 Mr Jupp confirmed that up to £20m had been allocated in the budget for Woodlands Meed. Work was ongoing to establish a pragmatic and realistic programme, with the earliest expected open date of Autumn 2023.

35.12 The Leader recognised the current financial challenges, but that the County Council had robust financial planning capabilities. The budget being proposed allowed for service improvements to help enable the county council to show the progress it is making on its improvement journey.

35.13 RESOLVED – that Cabinet endorses the County Council Budget for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix A and Annex 1, the Capital Strategy set out in Annex 2(a) and the Treasury Management Strategy set out in Annex 2(b), for approval by County Council on 14 February 2020.

### **36. Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

36.1 The Cabinet considered a report by Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes).

36.2 Cabinet Members confirmed that the Adults Services Improvement – Next Steps decision would now be considered at Cabinet in March. Work was ongoing for the West Sussex Children First Strategic Approach and therefore this decision would be taken later in the year. Cabinet would receive an update on the Practice Improvement Plan on the 18 March.

36.3 RESOLVED – Cabinet notes the progress against the Forward Plan and the decisions identified for future Cabinet meetings, taking into account the amendments outlined in paragraph 36.2 above.

### **37. Date of Next Meeting**

37.1 It was confirmed that the next meeting of Cabinet was scheduled for 18 February 2020.

The meeting ended at 3.31 pm

Chairman