

Cabinet

26 May 2020 – At a meeting of the Cabinet held at 10.30 am at Virtual meeting with restricted public access.

Present: Cllr Marshall (Chairman)

Cllr Crow, Cllr Elkins, Cllr Hunt, Cllr A Jupp, Cllr N Jupp, Cllr Lanzer, Cllr Russell and Cllr Urquhart

Also in attendance: Cllr Barling, Cllr Barrett-Miles, Cllr J Dennis, Cllr M Jones, Cllr Turner, Cllr Waight and Cllr Walsh

7. Declarations of Interest

7.1 In accordance with the code of conduct the following personal interests were declared:

- Cllr Bob Lanzer as a member of Crawley Borough Council, in relation to item 5, Covid-19 Update.
- Cllr Duncan Crow as a member of Crawley Borough Council, in relation to item 5, Covid-19 Update
- Cllr Bryan Turner as a practising pharmacist, in relation to item 5, Covid-19 Update.

8. Minutes

8.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2020 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

9. Key Decisions

9.1 Cllr Paul Marshall, Leader, introduced the item.

10. Total Performance Monitor and Capital Programme Quarter 4 (CAB02_20/21)

10.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Finance and Support Services.

10.2 The report was introduced by Cllr Jeremy Hunt, Cabinet Member for Finance, who advised the outturn position was in line with predictions and the £6.3m overspend was proposed to be balanced from reserves.

10.3 Investment in improvement plans in the Fire and Rescue and Children's Services were running on course, however it had been a challenging year both financially and operationally. Savings of £6.7m had not been achieved. Next year's budget would require difficult decisions to be made. Pressures would continue to grow owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

10.4 A supported review of the Capital Programme was required, which would involve consideration of corporate transformation and key performance indicators.

10.5 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy would address continuing pressures including plans to rebuild reserves in the context of the challenges presented by Covid-19. The anticipated cost of the pandemic to West Sussex in 2021 was in the region of £75-80m. Arising issues had been identified with prompt and decisive action taken to mitigate these risks, and the service had done well to estimate the size of the overspend.

10.6 Cllr Joy Dennis, Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee noted the current TPM results did not reflect the current emergency, however noted the improvements in the FRS and Children's services. The Committee felt the West Sussex Plan should be reviewed and refreshed as appropriate.

10.7 Cllr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group raised the One Public Estate proposals in Littlehampton and the adequacy of healthcare facilities.

10.8 Cllr Paul Marshall, Leader, summarised that the improvement programmes had incurred additional costs and presented growing challenges. Covid-19 was likely to continue to be prevalent for 18 months or longer and that this would feature alongside existing priorities. The Leader agreed it was necessary to reset the West Sussex Plan with a draft in the coming months.

10.9 Resolved – that Cabinet:

1. Noted the information contained in the Total Performance Monitor in particular the requirement to utilise reserves to meet the expenditure requirement and
2. Agreed the allocation of the contingency budget set out in paragraph 1.8 of the report.

11. Woodlands Meed (CAB03_20/21)

11.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Property and Assets and the Director of Education and Skills.

11.2 The report was introduced by Cllr Nigel Jupp, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills. There were some difficulties with the current site in terms of access and proximity which were being considered as was usual for such a project.

11.3 Governors and teaching staff had been consulted, and work continued to be honed. Planning would be submitted in November and other due processes would be undertaken. The ambition was to complete the school as soon as possible.

11.4 Cllr David Barling, Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee welcomed the decision. He highlighted three

success factors: an ongoing dialogue with governors, the cost in a post-Covid-19 context and timing.

11.5 Cllr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group advised the decision was welcome, however felt the current stage should have been reached some time ago and he praised the efforts of campaign groups. He questioned if the service were confident that no expansion of pupil places was required.

11.6 Resolved – that Cabinet approved:

1. The allocation of £19.5m, bringing the total budget available to £20m to fund the replacement of the Woodlands Meed College building on its existing site and with its existing capacity of 100 places (option 1B as set out in paragraph 2.3)
2. The authorisation of the Director of Property and Assets to commence a procurement process and appoint contractors to fully design and cost the replacement college on the college playing field while the college staff and pupils remain in occupation in the existing accommodation
3. The submission of applications for full planning permission and statutory consents; and with the Director of Law and Assurance, to enter into such agreements as the completion of the project may require, and
4. That subject to receipt of planning permission and statutory consents, the delegation of the authority to enter into a construction contract with the successful provider to the Director of Property and Assets.

12. Covid-19 Update

12.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive. The following key points were highlighted in WSCCs response to Covid-19:

- WSCC continued to provide a significant response to the pandemic, including working with care providers as part of the care home resilience plan.
- The authority was supporting the ease of lockdown as an employer through testing, tracking and tracing.
- Preparation was underway to support the economy at Gatwick, coastal and rural areas, residents and businesses.
- A fundamental focus remained on the needs of communities and responding to those flexibly and creatively. WSCC was lobbying government to understand the short and long-term difficulties and impact the Covid-19 situation presented. Proactive work with district and borough councils continued.

12.2 Cllr Joy Dennis, Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee advised she was pleased with the regular reporting on the response to Covid-19 and found this to be reassuring.

12.3 Cllr David Barling, Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee considered the service's ability to protect

vulnerable children and families during Covid-19 and was pleased there had been no reduction to statutory services.

12.4 Cllr Andrew Barrett-Miles, Chairman of the Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee reported the reopening of household waste recycling sites had gone well and noted the upcoming cycling and walkways schemes and hoped that these were adequately financed and offered longer-term solutions.

12.5 Cllr Bryan Turner, Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee highlighted that the service had responded well to the needs of the social care sector and welcomed the care home resilience plan. The Committee would likely scrutinise the issue of vulnerable residents remaining in the community. He raised the lack of focus on acute mental health services and that dental and pharmaceutical services were also under strain.

12.6 Cllr Steve Waight, Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee noted the adaptability and versatility of the service to engage with and support the community.

12.7 Cllr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group commented there was an urgent need to move ahead on the pop-up cycling strategy and that there was anxiety about schools reopening.

12.8 Cllr James Walsh, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group commented that pedestrian and cycle routes should be treated with urgency. He stated that additional financial support was required to mitigate the impacts of low collection rates of council tax and business rates.

12.9 Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Chairman and Minority Group Leaders gave thanks to staff and officers across the authority for their hard work in the current circumstances. The Leader also thanked the residents of West Sussex. Each Cabinet Member provided a brief portfolio update in the context of Covid-19.

12.10 Resolved – that Cabinet note the update and discussion, including comments from Scrutiny Chairman and Minority Group Leaders, in the council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

13. Outside Body Appointments (CAB04_20/21)

13.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance.

13.2 Resolved – that Cabinet approved:

1. The appointment of Cllr Jacky Pendleton to the Littlehampton Harbour Board for the remainder of the County Council term (May 2021)
2. The appointment of Cllr Kevin Boram to the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee for the remainder of the County Council term (May 2021)

3. The addition of the Rural Service Network to the County Council's Outside Bodies list
4. The appointment of Cllr Janet Duncton to the Rural Services Network for the remainder of the County Council term (May 2021).

14. Date of Next Meeting

14.1 The next meeting of Cabinet would be held on 16 June 2020.

The meeting ended at 1.07 pm

Chairman