

Cabinet

28 November 2023 – At a meeting of the Cabinet held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ.

Present: Cllr Marshall (Chairman)

Cllr Crow, Cllr J Dennis, Cllr Hunt, Cllr A Jupp, Cllr Lanzer, Cllr Russell, Cllr Urquhart and Cllr Waight

Also in attendance: Cllr Baldwin (Virtual), Cllr Montyn, Cllr Oakley and Cllr Wall

Part I

22. Declarations of Interest

22.1 No declarations of interest were made.

23. Minutes

23.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

24. Performance and Resources Report - Quarter 2 2023/24

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

24.2 Cllr Hunt, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, introduced the report and reported that pressures had increased since quarter 1 with an increased overspend to £17.425m. Work was being done to lobby the Government for a long-term funding solution for councils' financial pressures. The finance team were working with portfolio holders to ensure savings were achieved. Where savings could not be achieved, mitigations would need to be considered. The recent Autumn statement had not made any reference to additional funding and so now officers were waiting for the provisional financial statement in December.

24.3 Taryn Eves, Director of Finance and Support Services, reported some amendments to the report. Table 4's Projected Outturn Variation by Portfolio showed Highways and Transport as red but, as this was an underspend, it should be green. Also the bullets at paragraph 47 should align with the figures in table 5's Savings Summary.

24.4 Taryn Eves reported that interest rates had helped with income but, as rates were expected to drop, the income from long term investments was likely to decrease. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit was at £67m, with no solution beyond 2026.

24.5 The following points were made by Scrutiny Committee Chairmen.

- a. Cllr Montyn, Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee (PFSC), reported that Value for Money had been considered at PFSC. Changing inflation forecasts had been

requested for the budget report. The Committee had noted that no Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) cases had been identified, and that checks were continuing. The Committee had wanted to record that the Council's staff were recognised as a key force for the Council, and the importance of mental health support and overseas recruitment was noted.

- b. Cllr Wall, Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC), confirmed that HASC had noted the challenging landscape and recognised future pressures. The Committee had looked into savings activity and challenged whether all were possible. The Committee welcomed the speed of the work in completing assessments.
- c. Cllr Oakley, Vice Chairman of the Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee (CHESC), confirmed that CHESC had noted the red indicators and the increase in highway repairs and their quality. Food waste collection plans were noted, and also the increased use of the waste site booking system.
- d. Cllr Baldwin, Vice Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny (CYPSSC), confirmed that CYPSSC had noted the budget pressures and the link with placement and transport costs. The work to increase key stage two standards had been noted as had the work on pupil attainment. The committee also welcomed the work to treat care leavers as a protected characteristic.

24.6 The following points were made by Cabinet Members in discussion.

- a. The Leader acknowledged the importance of budget setting to deliver Council Plan priorities and allowing communities to achieve their potential. Cabinet Members and officers were conscious of needing to make the best use of resources and were mindful of carbon and environmental factors. Highways were delivering key outcomes following an increase in funding. Disappointment was expressed that there had been no positive indications on settlement funding from the Government. The Government would continue to be lobbied on the pressures that were being felt.
- b. Cllr Russell, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills, reported that the improvement journey was continuing, with aspirations to get to 'good' and then 'outstanding'. Overseas recruitment was helping with vacancies and plans were in place to address Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) assessment backlogs. A SEND inspection was currently in progress. Service review cases were in place to ensure needs were being met where there were funding concerns. High cost placements were being reduced where possible.
- c. Cllr Crow, Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue, reported that the Horsham Fire Service Training Centre (Platinum House) was in operation and would lead to positive impacts on public and fire fighter safety. The library service had seen an increase in readership from the summer reading challenge. Performance measures were all green, with the safe and wellbeing visit targets being increased. Preventative work had also led to no recorded fire deaths for four quarters. The Leader added that Platinum House was receiving a formal opening in the afternoon and

acknowledged the hard work that had led to the centre being operational.

- d. Cllr Lanzer, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing, reported on the work towards smoking cessation and the proposals for a smoke free generation. Improvements had also been made to defibrillator accessibility and assisting people applying for defibrillator grants. The public health grant, £4.3m per annum, was being used across five portfolio areas to promote multiple health outcomes.
- e. Cllr A Jupp, Cabinet Member for Adults Services, reported that red Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had reduced since quarter one. The increasing demand on Adult Services was noted. Work was continuing on early intervention and assessment work. In year mitigations had been identified in response to overspends.
- f. Cllr Waight, Cabinet Member for Support Services and Economic Development, reported that the green performance measures were the result of hard work by officers. Work was continuing to find in year savings where available. Cyber security was discussed and the vigilance that was required to combat the increasing sophistication of attacks.
- g. Cllr J Dennis, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, reported that measures were showing an upward trend. Capital works has led to improvements in the quality of A,B and C roads. Focus was given to main routes and there had been an increase in the number of road repairs. The Bus Service Improvement programme was progressing well and funds had been received. The Department for Transport had praised the officers' grant application work and proposed that other authorities should follow their example.
- h. Cllr Urquhart, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, expressed disappointment with the Autumn statement for the lack of Government support for local authorities. Decarbonisation work was due to commence on Council properties. Food waste collection was being introduced in March 2026 so work on preparations would be done with District and Borough authorities. Overspends had been realised due to the Government mandating organic pollutants methods.

24.7 Cllr Hunt summarised the discussion and praised the work that all teams continued to provide to deliver an excellent service to residents despite financial pressures.

24.8 Resolved that the report be noted.

25. West Sussex Youth Cabinet Update

25.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the West Sussex Youth Cabinet (copy appended to the signed minutes).

25.2 The Leader welcomed Iffrat Rahman, Chairman of the West Sussex Youth Cabinet, to the meeting and invited Iffrat to introduce the report.

25.3 Iffrat introduced the report and summarised the campaign work of the Youth Cabinet which included racial equality, the environment and mental health and wellbeing. Collaboration with West Sussex Cabinet was praised and the importance of maintaining this link was expressed.

25.4 The Cabinet thanked the Youth Cabinet's hard work and also encouraged continued collaboration. The Cabinet noted that Iffrat's term as the Chairman was ending and gave particular thanks for her hard work and expressed best wishes towards future candidates. The GRIT campaign was particularly noted for the confidence and resilience it had offered young people in collaboration with the fire service.

25.5 Resolved that the report be noted.

26. Care Quality Commission Assurance - West Sussex County Council Self-Assessment for the delivery of Adult Social Care

26.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adults and Health and Assistant Director Improvement and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes).

26.2 Cllr A Jupp introduced the report which outlined the current assessed position of Adults' Services and their aspiration. The report would continue to be updated and supported as relevant data became available. The assessment had been considered by HASC, and Cllr A Jupp resolved to keep Cabinet updated with progress.

26.3 Mr Sinclair, Director of Adults and Health, confirmed that the assessment was ongoing and that quarterly updates were planned with improved evidence. The next version would include benchmarking information, but national information was not currently available. Uncertainty remained as to when the inspection would take place, but preparation would continue.

26.4 Cllr Wall confirmed that HASC had welcomed the report and the engagement with County Councillors. The early start on preparations had been praised, as had the deep dive into the service for the self assessment and the acknowledgement of good and poorer performance.

26.5 The Cabinet welcomed the objective view that had taken place for the self assessment and the recognition of required improvements.

26.6 Resolved that the report be noted.

27. Highway Maintenance - in depth performance report at Quarter 2 2023/24

27.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Place Services (copy appended to the signed minutes).

27.2 Cllr J Dennis introduced the report and explained how the additional £4.3m had been allocated following an exceptional winter to address highway repairs and underlying issues. The impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles and heavy electric vehicles on the road was acknowledged. The work of jet patching, fix and find gangs and patching works were discussed and how 95% of repairs had been 'right first time'. Highways officers and contractors were thanked for their commitment and hard work.

27.3 Cllr Oakley reported that CHESC would be examining the effectiveness of the introduced measures, and that PFSC would monitor value for money.

27.4 The Leader noted the challenges for the highway and the commitments that had been made for improvements. The Leader stated that the £17m from the Government was not sufficient for maintenance and so additional funding had been added from County Council budgets. Highways officers and contractors were thanked for their hard work. Flooding demands were also noted and that the Cabinet were committed to making necessary improvements in response to climate change weather events.

27.5 Resolved that the report be noted.

28. Emerging Issues

28.1 The Leader confirmed there were no portfolio updates required.

29. Date of Next Meeting

29.1 The Cabinet noted that its next scheduled meeting will be held on 30 January 2024.

The meeting ended at 12.35 pm

Chairman