

Cabinet

14 March 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 N Jupp, Cllr Lanzer, Cllr Urquhart and Cllr Waight

Apologies were received from Cllr Russell

Also in attendance: Cllr Boram, Cllr Linehan, Cllr Montyn and Cllr Wall (virtual)

Part I

28. Declarations of Interest

28.1 No declarations of interest were made.

29. Minutes

29.1 A request was made for the amendment of minute 24.7 from the meeting on 31 January to read 'Cllr Amanda Jupp described the budget as positive with the increased investment in the portfolio to meet demand from population increases and people with complex care needs. Government funding from the delayed Adult Social Care reforms will be used to mitigate pressures as well as continue preparation for the reforms.'

30.1 Resolved – that, subject to the inclusion of the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2023 are approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

30. Performance and Resources Report - Quarter 3 2022/23 (CAB07_22/23)

30.1 Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Support Services. The report was introduced by Cllr Jeremy Hunt, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property who outlined a slight increase in performance since Quarter 2 and the continuing pressures, particularly those in the social care areas. The Cabinet Member outlined key achievements this year across the portfolios and the investment in capital projects to support the infrastructure in the county. The Director of Finance and Support Services advised work is ongoing where savings are showing as amber rated to understand whether these are on track to achieve or not. The position at end of year is forecast to be balanced and whilst current and emerging pressures will continue into 2023/24, these will continue to be carefully monitored.

30.2 Cllr Kevin Boram, Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee congratulated the service on their performance

for the Quarter with all Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) forecast as green by the year-end. The availability of retained firefighters remains a concern for the Committee which it will continue to monitor. Cllr Boram suggested KPIs for 2023/24 are reviewed to ensure a drive of improved performance in the service and in the delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). Concerns around culture hope to be resolved although these measures may take some time to show results. The Committee noted that cost pressures within the service could impact the deliverability of some measures in the CRMP.

30.3 Cllr Garry Wall, Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee advised the Committee recognised the minimal changes from Quarter 2 to Quarter 3 but that the current environment remains challenging. The Committee noted the number of registered carers and welcomed the increase in paid employment of adults with learning difficulties. The accuracy and collection of data relating to KPIs was raised. Workforce issues remain challenging and the recruitment, retention and wage pressures on the care sector were noted by the Committee. Delivery of savings continues to be demanding and the recent budget decisions are supported. The Committee is concerned that the public health grant remains unconfirmed and the corporate risks 58 and 74 were noted.

30.4 Cllr Paul Linehan, Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee advised the Committee discussed the percentage rise in re-referrals to Children's Social Care between Quarter 2 and Quarter 3, noted the complexity of reporting and received assurance. The Committee noted the reduction in staff vacancy gap meaning that families will have shorter waiting times to access a social worker. Demand and impact on resources in relation Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) were discussed and placement costs pressures were a concern. The Committee is confident in progress being made across the Children and Young People Service improvement journey. The Committee were reassured plans are in place to reduce the attainment gap at Key Stage 2 (KS2) and noted the continued Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) pressure. The Committee welcomed the future data on statutory data for Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and the milestones to monitor performance.

30.5 Cllr Pieter Montyn, Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee advised the Committee welcomed the report. Some specific issues in relation to highways were raised including delays and issues with the A27 and requested that the Leader lobbies National Highways regarding the needs of the community. The Committee requested more information about the Capital Programme in the PRR. Presentation of the workforce information was noted as helpful however the Committee felt financial implications of staff sickness and absence would be useful to see in the report.

30.6 The following points were made by Cabinet Members in discussion:

- Cllr Steve Waight, Cabinet Member for Support Services and the Economy outlined the good progress of either completed or on track savings delivery in his portfolio, and use of the Covid-19 grant to offset legal costs for child protection cases. Changes to statutory complaints services has added an additional £130,000 cost on the portfolio. Attendance at member learning and development declined in Quarter 3. There are early signs that recruitment and retention of staff is improving. The digital and IT strategy is in final stages of development.
- Cllr Bob Lanzer, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing advised of a recent public health member development day, a positive and far-reaching Stoptober campaign and that vaccinations remain important and available. The Sussex Integrated Care Strategy represents an opportunity for further improved partnerships and data sharing. KPIs in the portfolio have in areas shown declines and there is an underspend of the current Public Health Grant mainly arising from the pandemic. The Public Health Grant for 2023/24 remains unknown. Work will be done to further enhance promotion of the flu vaccine next winter.
- Cllr Amanda Jupp, Cabinet Member for Adults Services described little change from Quarter 2 with ongoing pressures with workforce and demand and complexity of the service. The service continues to provide support to those requiring critical care and ensuring vulnerable people are kept safe and well. Plans for additional resources to manage KPIs relating to assessments and support plans and reviews of services users and carers in better timeframes are in place. The service saw a disappointing increase in domestic and sexual abuse during the World Cup. Adults with a learning disability in paid employment has increased by 3% and the service is working with the market. With Carers Support West Sussex, support, advice and information to the rising number of identified family and friend carers is being provided.
- Cllr Duncan Crow, Cabinet Member for Community Support Fire and Rescue advised the Fire and Rescue Service improvement plan closed during this Quarter and progress will now be managed through an assurance framework and the CRMP. Working practices with neighbouring services are being aligned and non-attendance to automatic fire alarms at certain premises is showing a reduction in false alarms. 10 new wholetime Firefighters have joined the service. The Cabinet Member was pleased to report there had been no fire injuries in West Sussex in this Quarter. Seasonal uplift payments for hosts in the Homes for Ukraine scheme have commenced. The Household Support Fund (HSF) continues to help people in need and the Community Hub and libraries remain busy offering support and advice. Performance measures in the portfolio are forecast to be green by the year-end. The new Horsham Fire Training and Station will become operational in the Summer.

- Cllr Nigel Jupp, Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills outlined that 93% of children attend Good or Outstanding schools. A High Needs Recovery Plan is in place which will increase the proportion of assessments for EHCPs. There are some staffing challenges including Education Psychologists. Where KPIs are reported as red action is being taken by the service to improve these, including support for schools to improve expected standards and the attainment gap at KS2 where the pandemic interrupted classroom learning. Savings in the portfolio are delivered or on track with one red due to a change in policy regarding the School Traded Offer.
- Cllr Joy Dennis, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport advised the service was working with bus operators to increase uptake of the concessionary fare. The Council had made a successful bid for funding for the Bus Service Improvement Plan. Energy costs for street and traffic lights is causing an overspend in the service. The performance measure relating to A and B roads requiring maintenance currently red rated is hoped to improve at the end of this financial year. Repairs to highway defects had improved significantly over the year however the high level of rainfall in November has moved the forecast to amber. Killed and seriously injured casualties has shown improvement. There has been some slippage with capital schemes due to a number of circumstances but these are being mitigated through the acceleration of others. The Cabinet Member noted increasing unpleasant behaviour towards staff and contractors and the impact on them.
- Cllr Deborah Urquhart, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and Deputy Leader advised the portfolio is performing well with emission reductions on track and one amber indicator relating to the stockpiling of wood, an international problem, but which should be cleared by the end of March. Work is progressing well on the Halewick Lane Battery Storage project and a local energy company has launched on a business park in Crawley which is attracting interest and is good news. Information on policy for waste collection and disposal is awaited from Government. Inflation costs have been offset by increased income from solar farms and the Council received a repayment from a waste recycling contract settlement.
- Cllr Paul Marshall, Leader of the Council outlined a funding award from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to deliver the Create Growth programme supporting businesses with high growth potential in the creative industries. Work with businesses to adopt digital technology with gigabit capable connectivity to achieve their goals is on track to meet and exceed a Government target by 2025. Investment in public realm works are progressive. The Leader outlined the broader contextual challenges of inflation costs, Covid-19 recovery and population growth in West Sussex. He described the Council Plan as a driving force for determining and delivering priorities notably keeping people safe from vulnerable situations. The renewal of the HSF, Free School

Meals, work with foodbanks and the work of the community hub supports those facing challenges by the circumstances of cost of living pressures. He also outlined the campaigns and initiatives supporting a sustainable and prosperous economy. The Leader was pleased to see the climate agenda underpinning key work and discussed plans to decarbonise schools and operational buildings to achieve carbon reduction aims.

30.7 Cllr Hunt noted the KPIs in the Finance and Property portfolio and explained the difficulty in quantifying aggregated unit costs for services and that work is underway to address this. He advised that water neutrality challenges are causing a hold up of some capital programme projects but also outlined some underspending in other areas which has been returned to Capital Improvements. The Cabinet Member thanked his colleagues and staff, highlighted the continued financial management and increased frontline funding possible due to savings made in previous years, providing excellent services for residents.

30.8 Resolved – that Cabinet:

1. Note the information contained in the Q3 Performance and Resources Report in Annex B, and
2. Agree the allocation of £4.409m from the contingency budget to service portfolio budgets to fund the nationally agreed £1,925 pay award for NJC, HAY, SMG and Public Health staff from April 2022.

31. Emerging Issues

31.1 Cllr Nigel Jupp updated Cabinet that a bid to central Government for a new specialist provision free school in West Sussex has been successful. He explained this is an important milestone for the county and that the school will provide much needed additional capacity for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

32. Date of Next Meeting

32.1 The next meeting of Cabinet will be held on 26 April 2023.

The meeting ended at 11.49 am

Chairman