

Cabinet

12 September 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 and Cllr Waight

Apologies were received from Cllr Urquhart and Cllr Oxlade

Also in attendance: Cllr Lord and Cllr Montyn

13. Declarations of Interest

13.1 None declared.

14. Minutes

14.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2023 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

15. Performance and Resources Report - Quarter 1 2023/24 (CAB05_23/34)

15.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Support Services outlining the council's performance and finance position for the first quarter, (April – June) 2023/24. The report was introduced by Cllr Jeremy Hunt, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property who explained that, with the use of the contingency budget and additional investment income, a balanced budget was expected at the year end. Current key financial pressures highlighted included continuing demand for adults and children's social services and the increasing Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit. Cllr. Hunt explained that the council's services continued to work to try to minimise the pressures and ensure delivery was sustainable for the future.

15.2 Cllr Pieter Montyn, Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee, summarised points raised at the 07 September meeting of the scrutiny Committee including the current net overspend forecast, the challenge posed by the DSG deficit and that, while savings were required in this financial year, those for previous years were also to be delivered and that the Committee would continue to monitor how the savings were to be achieved.

15.3 Cllr Kirsty Lord, Leader of the Liberal Democrat group expressed concern at the projected overspend of the Children and Young People, Learning and Skills portfolio budget and the risk of not reaching the target for delivery of Key Performance Indicator 56, which concerned the percentage of Education, Health and Care

plans completed within 20 weeks, and that more information on mitigation was required. Cllr Lord also highlighted educational attainment in the county stating that, with new data now emerging it was clear that nearly half the children in the county were not reaching the required standards and that more detail on mitigating action was required.

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

- Cllr Russell, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills reported on performance in the children's portfolio area, that children's social care continued to improve and that the recent staff survey had shown that staff morale remained high and increases in workforce recruitment numbers continued. Cllr Russell highlighted that the Education and Learning Strategy 2022-25 would help to focus work on initiatives, such as support for disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and disabilities. Cllr Russell highlighted pressure on costs for external care placements resulting in a forecast overspend of £16.1m and costs for home to school transport forecast to overspend by £4.4m, also that the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit stood at £20.3m at the end of June
- Cllr Crow, Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue noted that the portfolio continued to deliver against the targets set out in the Council Plan. Cllr Crow highlighted Key Performance Indicator (KPI)s, of which over half were on target and 'green', also that for KPI 10 concerning Safe and Well visits the service had exceeded its target and it was recommended that the Cabinet agreed that this be extended. Cllr Crow explained that the portfolio was forecast to overspend by £285k
- Cllr Lanzer reported that the Public Health and Wellbeing teams continued to play a role in supporting the Integrated Care System across Sussex, with a focus on delivering against elements in the Shared Delivery Plan. Areas of focus included improved GP access, improved response times to 999 calls and improvements to hospital discharge processes. Cllr Lanzer highlighted work to address vaping, an emerging health issue in quarter one and partnership work underway in the seven wellbeing hubs. On finance, Cllr Lanzer explained that a balanced budget was anticipated
- Cllr Jupp, Cabinet Member for Adults Services reported increased pressures for the portfolio both financially and on the workforce, and that the demands of the county's wide age range was a contributory factor. Work was underway to prepare for a Care Quality Commission assurance inspection and that the resulting self-assessment report would provide evidence of current strengths and areas for improvement. Cllr Jupp highlighted a £10m overspend which would be mitigated by a one-off fund but that 2024/25 would continue to be challenging and further savings would have to be identified
- Cllr Waight, Cabinet Member for Support Services and Economic Development commended the work of the Special Workforce Project Team to address vacancies in the workforce and the

Digital team for its work to improve and extend the West Sussex digital infrastructure. Cllr Waight referred to the strong performance of management teams across the portfolio including the work of the capital project teams in continuing to deliver projects as set out in the capital summary. Cllr Waight explained there were plans to offset with new savings those that could not be delivered this year. Cllr Waight also commented on the risks for the portfolio which remained the same as for the previous quarter

- Cllr Dennis, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport highlighted the success of the portfolio cycling programmes, the biofuel project, electric vehicle support measures and, with the highways maintenance measure showing amber, explained the types of repairs undertaken and the continued pressure on the workforce of the volume of repairs required. On the capital programme Cllr Dennis highlighted increased costs although currently the portfolio budget was predicted to underspend, which was related to fluctuations in energy costs and the low take up of concessionary bus fares
- Cllr Marshall commented on the performance measures for the Leader portfolio (including Economy) and highlighted the programmes targeting support to over 5000 businesses in the county, also the work of the growth programmes underway in partnership with the District and Borough councils.

15.5 The Leader thanked cabinet members for the comments and summarised that the council had experienced significant growth in demand for services in the children and young people and adults areas, increased pressure of inflation on goods and services and the growing challenges of recruitment and retention of the workforce required to deliver council services. The Leader highlighted that the services were largely paid for by residents via council tax and it was incumbent on the council to continue to deliver value for money and therefore to monitor the effectiveness of services and to change them if they did not deliver as required.

15.6 The Cabinet Member for Finance and Property noted the summaries given including the challenges highlighted and the excellent work to support residents. Cllr Hunt extended thanks to the Scrutiny Chairman and Performance and Finance Committee members for the work to scrutinise the council's performance and resources as set out in the paper.

15.7 Resolved that the Cabinet: -

- i. Notes the financial challenges set out in paragraphs 1.6 - 1.9
- ii. Notes the scrutiny feedback and
- iii. Approves the proposed change to the Key Performance Indicator measure for Fire and Rescue Service safe and well visits detailed in paragraph 1.3 of the report

16. Date of Next Meeting

16.1 The next meeting of Cabinet will be held on 17 October 2023.

The meeting ended at 11.51 am

Chairman