

## **CABINET**

**Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 27th June, 2013 at 5.00 p.m. at the AFC Telford Learning Centre, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford**

**PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 3rd JULY, 2013**

**(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 8th JULY, 2013)**

**PRESENT:** Councillor K.S. Sahota (Leader and Chair), E.A. Clare, S. Davies, A.R.H. England, W.A.M. McClements, H. Rhodes, C.F. Smith and P.R. Watling

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader), Councillor W.L. Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader)

The Leader reported that Paul Clifford, Director of Care, Health & Wellbeing, was retiring from the Council on 5 July 2013. On behalf of the Council, he thanked Paul for all his many years of service and contribution to the achievements of the Council, and extended best wishes for his retirement.

### **CB-11      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 30th May 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### **CB-12      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor R.A. Overton

### **CB-13      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

### **CB-14      SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING – 2012/13 OUT-TURN AND 2013/14 UPDATE**

**Key Decision** identified as **Financial Monitoring – 2012/13 Out-turn and Initial Trends for 2013/14** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 30 April 2013.

### **Recommendation to Full Council – not subject to Call-in**

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance, which informed Members of the final outturn position for

Revenue and Capital for 2012/13, and the initial trends for the current financial year.

The gross revenue budget for 2012/13 was £411m – and the net budget for reporting purposes was just over £126m. The revenue outturn position was within budget, with a final net under-spend of £0.06m (-0.04% of net budget). Given the context of having to make £19m of budget savings in 2012/13, this was a positive year-end position and thanks were extended to the management team, officers and Cabinet colleagues for their strong and effective financial management and the ability to drive out efficiencies. There had been a number of favourable variations during the year which contributed to the final out-turn position. These included further savings of £2.1m relating to vacant posts, £0.9m arising from treasury management activities, reduced fleet/transport costs, and a contingency balance of £1.7m at year end. Provision had been made to create the £2.5m one-off budget contingency for 2013/14 as approved as part of the agreed Service and Financial Planning Strategy.

There had been a number of service pressures experienced in 2012/13, particularly the cost of children in care placements (£2.7m overspend relating to both placements and the use of agency staff), adult care and support services (£5.5m overspend on purchasing care packages, although this was part mitigated by one-off funding from the NHS), winter maintenance costs (£0.324k overspend due to adverse weather conditions) and income shortfalls totalling £1.7m.

Capital spend ended the year at £62.8m, against an approved estimate of £79.7m, which was in the main due to re-phasing into 2013/14. The main scheme delays/re-phasing to 2013/14 were detailed in the report, along with a number of new approvals and virements.

Council Tax collection (£61m), Business Rates (£69m) and sales ledger income collection (£37m) were all slightly behind target for the year. However, this was in line with the national trend and reflected the current economic climate.

Summaries of the outturn on revenue and capital, along with major variations, were appended to the report.

The Council faced an even more challenging year in 2013/14, and there were some emerging issues and cost pressures. These were outlined in the report, along with measures being taken to control and monitor expenditure.

During the ensuing debate, the Opposition Group Leaders welcomed the balanced budget. Some questions were raised around the capital programme, particularly the likely impact of delays and re-phasing of schemes, as well as the projected shortfall in capital receipts in 2013/14, including implications on revenue spending. The Cabinet Member stressed that the main capital spending projects, such as school building and the Southwater development, were long term projects where the costs were spread over many years, with variations within individual years to be expected.

**RESOLVED – to RECOMMEND to COUNCIL that**

- (a) the Revenue out-turn position and related virements for 2012/13, shown in Appendix 3 of the report, and the transfer to reserves detailed in paragraph 6.4 of the report, be approved, subject to audit by the Council's external auditors;**
- (b) the Capital out-turn position and related supplementary estimates, virements and re-phasing, shown in Appendix 4 of the report, be approved;**
- (c) performance against income targets be noted;**
- (d) the initial pressure areas identified for 2013/14 be noted.**

**CB-15            PLANNING OF SCHOOL PLACES: PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN LAWLEY**

**Key Decision** identified as **Ironstone School, Lawley** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 30 April 2013.

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Education & Skills, which sought approval to establish a new primary school in the Lawley area to cater for the increasing numbers of children living there as a result of on-going housing development.

The increase in demand for primary school places in the Lawley area had so far been accommodated by expanding the capacity of the existing schools closest to the new housing developments. However, the continuing pace of development meant more primary school places were necessary, which the existing schools would be unable to provide. A primary school site had been designated within the new development, and it was forecast that a one form of entry school (210 places) was likely to be needed by September 2015.

The expected cost of the new school was £4.7m, which would be funded through a developer's contribution (via a Section 106 Agreement) of £3.6m and £1.1m from the Council's capital programme. It was anticipated that the new school would need to expand to provide a two form of entry school, and the central infrastructure would be designed and built to accommodate up to 420 pupils.

Under Government rules, the new school would have to be an academy, independent of the local authority. The report set out the processes that had to be followed to establish a new academy and to invite proposals/bids.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) that the establishment of a new 210 place primary school within the Lawley area to open in September 2015 be approved;**

- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Education & Skills, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, to take the steps necessary to progress the new school, including inviting proposals under Section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 as amended by the Education & Inspections Act 2011.

**CB-16      REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2013/14**

**Non-Key Decision**

The Leader presented the report of the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection, which set out the appointments to outside bodies that the Council was required to make for 2013/14.

The list of outside bodies for which appointments were required for 2013/14 was appended to the report. Nominations had been sought from the political groups for those appointments that were not by position. The nominations received were shown in the Appendix.

**RESOLVED** – that the nominations to represent the Council on Outside Bodies for 2013/14, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

**CB-17      SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE CHILDREN IN CARE PLACEMENT STRATEGY**

**Non-Key Decision**

Councillor M.G. Ion, Chair of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, presented the Committee's report into the Council's Children in Care Placement Strategy.

The Committee had focussed on three main strands of enquiry:

- Whether current policies, procedures and practices kept children and young people in the Council's care safe?
- If the Council's strategy and processes for care placements offered the best value for money?
- What responsibility, if any, did the Council have for children placed in care in the Borough by other local authorities?

Thanks were expressed to the people who had provided evidence to the Committee, particularly foster carers and social workers, as well as senior Council officers and the Police. Visits to children in care were postponed, and, while it was recognised that the complex needs of many children in care made this challenging, it was hoped to meet with them at some point.

The Committee had concluded that the main strengths were the presence of a full time Director of Children's Services, which had made the lines of accountability much clearer, and joint working with other partner agencies, particularly the police. There were some areas that it was felt could and must be strengthened, and the report set out a number of recommendations aimed

at addressing the issues raised. The Chair highlighted, in particular, the recommendations around quality assurance of Systems and Processes and in relation to identifying the location of external children's homes in the Borough that cared for children placed by other authorities.

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families, responded to the report on behalf of the Cabinet. He thanked the Committee for the thoroughness of their review, and felt it was really positive that there was broad agreement that the Council was moving in the right direction. The detailed response to each of the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations was appended to the report attached to the agenda. All the recommendations had been all or partially accepted, and actions identified to implement them. It was intended to bring together all the providers of children's care in Telford & Wrekin, by September 2013 with a view to encouraging co-operation across agencies and providers in order to better meet the needs of the young people in care.

Members commented on the relatively high numbers of children in care in Telford & Wrekin who were placed by other local authorities. It was recognised that this may arise from lower costs compared to other areas. It was also felt it was important that Elected Members, as Corporate Parents, continued to be involved in monitoring the Strategy and in visiting care homes where possible. The Scrutiny Chair advised that it was the intention that members of the Scrutiny Committee would visit children in residential care outside the Borough on an annual basis as part of its work programme.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) that the recommendations made by the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee be noted, and the response set out in paragraph 3.2 and Appendix 1 of the Cabinet Member's report, be approved;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Director of Children & Families Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, to implement the proposals made as a result of the review of the Children in Care Placement Strategy.**

The meeting ended at 6.02 pm.

**Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices**

**Jonathan Eatough**  
**Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection**  
**Date: 3 July 2013**

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....