

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 17th October, 2013 at 5.00 p.m. at the AFC Telford Learning Centre, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 23rd OCTOBER, 2013

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 28th OCTOBER, 2013)

PRESENT: Councillor R.A. Overton (Deputy Leader and Chair for the meeting), E.A. Clare, 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) and W.L. Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader)

CB-44 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meetings held on 19th September and 3rd October 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CB-45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors K Sahota (Leader) and S. Davies

CB-46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CB-47 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2013/14

Key Decision identified as **Financial Monitoring 2013/14** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 19 August 2013.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance, which provided Members with the latest financial monitoring information for 2013/14.

Revenue spending was projected to be within budget at year end, after using £3.0m of the budgeted contingencies (including allocation of the contractual inflation contingency) leaving £2.5m available in remaining contingencies. This was a considerably improved position to that reported in July. A great deal of proactive budget management activity had been carried out by the Senior Management Team, which had resulted in the identification of just under £2.5m of further in-year savings. This had enabled additional pressures, such as the 1% pay award, to be covered and the call on

contingencies to be reduced by just over £1m. However, it was increasingly difficult to protect front-line services in the face of further Government austerity measures, which by 2015/16 would equate to cuts of £75m in the Council's budget.

There were still a number of significant pressures on the budget, including the cost of Children in Care placements (overspend of £1.9m); the cost of Adult Care and Support services (overspend of £3.1m); and the cost of ICT maintenance contracts (overspend of £0.350m). Projected variances of over £0.100m for individual service delivery units were detailed in the report. There were benefits from active treasury management of £1.1m, a refund of £0.731m in relation to previously top-sliced revenue support grant, and a benefit of £1.4m from early delivery of savings. In relation to Adult Care and Support services, the Cabinet Member advised that a large proportion of expenditure went to private sector providers, and there was a need to drive these costs down. He also referred to the on-going issue regarding the below national average funding of Continuing Healthcare by the Clinical Commissioning Group, and the impact this was having on both individuals (who were now having to contribute more for their care) and on the Council's services/budgets.

The capital programme totalled £125.7m, which included slippage from 2012/13. Spend was currently standing at 17%, which was broadly in line with previous years. Funding for the programme included a significant amount of capital receipts anticipated to be delivered over the medium term. As previously reported, monitoring indicated that £31m of these receipts would not now be received until future years, and a contingency plan was being developed should some of the receipts not be forthcoming.

Collection levels for Council Tax and Sales Ledger debt were behind the targets set for the year, but the collection level for NNDR was ahead of target.

Cllr A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care, reported that the Council was working with care providers to try and bring down costs. All care packages would need to be reviewed to see whether costs could be reduced through the use of such things as assistive technology. A re-organisation of Adult Care and Support services into five key areas would hopefully generate a saving of £0.5m. Cllr P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, reported that all Children in Care budgets were being carefully monitored, and £400k had been saved as part of the strategy to reduce the use of long term care placements. However, the Council was now seeing more teenage children coming into care, which was adding to the cost pressures.

The Opposition Group Leaders asked a number of questions relating to the current financial position. In response to a question from Councillor Eade regarding sponsorship income from advertising on roundabouts, it was reported that less income than anticipated had been generated due to the provider, who had been used for several years, going into administration.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that it be noted that the 2013/14 revenue spend is currently projecting to be within budget at year end;
- (b) that the uses of the budgeted contingency detailed in paragraph 5 of the report, and the savings detailed in Appendix 2, be approved;
- (c) that the position in relation to capital spend be noted, and TO RECOMMEND to COUNCIL that the new allocations and slippages detailed in Appendix 3 of the report be approved;
- (d) that the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger be noted.

CB-48 DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARCHES LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP EU INVESTMENT STRATEGY, STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN AND GROWTH DEAL

Non-Key Decision

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Director: Development, Business & Customer Services, which provided information on the Government's proposals for both the EU structural funds programme and the new Single Local Growth Fund.

The 2014-20 EU structural funds programme would operate as a single national operational programme, with the majority of funding being allocated to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The notional EU funding allocation for the Marches LEP was approximately £98m, and it was now required to submit an EU Investment Strategy setting out how this notional allocation would be spent to support both economic growth and meet EU priorities – details of which were included in the report. If successful, projects included within the EU Investment Strategy would require match funding – particularly from the private sector. In parallel, LEPs were also required to develop their multi-year Strategic Economic Plans and Growth Deal proposals in order to secure a share of the Government's Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF). Nationally, the SLGF pot would comprise £2bn for 2015/16, within which were national allocations for transport, skills and housing. It was not a source of additional funding, but would be the route through which a number of existing funding streams would be received from 2015/16.

The Marches was a rural/urban LEP and there were conflicting priorities to reconcile and an effective governance structure, involving senior members and officers from each of the local authorities, would be key to addressing these issues. Details of the Council's representation on the Marches LEP Board were provided in the report. An internal LEP Board had been established to co-ordinate strategic planning across key service areas directly engaged with the LEP, and delegated authority was sought in order for senior Officers to be able to make decisions on behalf of the Council in relation to the

work being undertaken on the Investment Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan. Some resources would be needed to support this. It was important that the Council's interests were effectively represented in order to get the best deal for the Borough from the funding available through the LEP.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the context and process for the completion of the EU Investment Strategy, Strategic Economic Plan and Growth Deal for the Marches LEP be noted;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Director: Development, Business & Customer Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, to undertake all steps to progress development, agreement and submission of the Marches EU Investment Strategy, the Marches Strategic Economic Plan and the Marches Deal;**
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Director: Development, Business & Customer Services, in consultation with the Leader, to take decisions on behalf of the Council at the Marches LEP Board or its advisory and sub-groups, and that in the absence of the Director, this delegation be granted to his designated representative, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, except where the decision involves a change in Council policy or variation from the approved Council budget;**
- (d) that any project ideas or proposals aligning with the EU investment priorities set out in section 4.6 of the report are raised with the Team Leader: Investment and Funding by 31 October 2013.**

The meeting ended at 5.35pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

**Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection
Date: 23 October 2013**

Signed:

Date: