



Committee and Date

Cabinet

1st March 2023

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2023

In the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

10.30 am

Responsible Officer: Amanda Holyoak

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Present

Councillor Lezley Picton (Chairman)

Councillors Cecilia Motley, Ian Nellins, Gwilym Butler, Dean Carroll, Rob Gittins, Kirstie Hurst-Knight and Richard Marshall

128 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

129 Disclosable Interests

None were declared.

130 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

131 Public Question Time

A public question was received from Sally Stote regarding Shirehall.

The full question and the response provided by the Portfolio Holder for Growth, Regeneration and Housing are attached to the webpage for the meeting: [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 15th February, 2023, 10.30 am — Shropshire Council](#)

132 Member Question Time

Questions were received from the following Members. The full question and responses provided are attached to the webpage for the meeting. [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 15th February, 2023, 10.30 am — Shropshire Council](#)

Councillor Alex Wagner – in relation to street furniture in Shrewsbury.

Councillor Rosemary Dartnall – in relation to street lighting. In response to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Regulatory Services understood the frustrations with clusters of lights being out; however this was due to them being fitted at similar time. He provided reassurance that residential areas were being prioritised on the work programme. In relation to repairs, it was confirmed that any replacements would be fitted with improved technology lights.

Councillor Julia Buckley – in relation to the care home fee uplift. In response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Communities confirmed that the uplift would be discussed with providers before being made public.

Councillor Rob Wilson (read by Councillor Roger Evans) – in relation to Local Transport Plans..In response to a supplementary question relating to the 2021 – 2026 Shropshire Local Development Framework, the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Regulatory Services referred Members to the first paragraph of his previous answer.

133 **Scrutiny Items**

Chair of the People Overview Committee, Councillor Peggy Mullock, sought support from Cabinet to investigate the gap in provision of psychological and emotional support for exploited children, resulting in a waiting list for assessments. Members were advised that Health had no data on the timeframe for support for exploited children and that the committee had made a recommendation for the number of children currently awaiting assessment to be provided as soon as possible.

The Leader confirmed that, together with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Communities, this issue would be raised with colleagues in the ICS.

134 **Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2022/23**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources presented the report which estimated the Council's year end position based on information over the period 1st April 2022 to 31st December 2022. It was noted that the Council's projected financial position at Quarter 3 is still demonstrating a challenging position with ongoing cost pressures in Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care alongside the impact of inflation.

Concern was raised regarding unachieved savings in the Place directorate and the level of reserves. Members were advised that the predicted funds at the end of the next financial year were back up to £40million.

Members discussed the fair funding review; however members were advised that Cabinet had not relied on government funding to support the budget.

RESOLVED:

That Members:

- A. Noted that at the end of Quarter 3 (31st December 2022), the full year revenue forecast is a potential overspend of between £4.138m and £17.506m, with best estimates indicating an overall overspend of £9.950m;
- B. Considered the detrimental impact of this on the Council's General Fund balance and mitigating actions urgently required to avoid this.

135 Treasury Management Update Quarter 3 2022/23

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources presented the report which outlined the treasury management activities of the Council in the third quarter of 2022/23. It outlined the economic background against which decisions have been made. It also provided an update on the performance of the treasury management function.

RESOLVED:

That members discussed and noted the position as set out in the report, in particular the continued compliance with the prudential indicators and the treasury management strategy.

136 Financial Strategy 2023/24 - 2027/28 - Final

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources presented the report which provided an update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy which showed a much improved outlook for the medium term; however it was noted that the next twelve months were crucial and delivery is key. It was noted that the charge for waste collection and green waste could be removed, but this would be confirmed at full Council.

Concerns were raised that services affecting vulnerable people would be cut. It was confirmed that statutory services would not be affected and a request for clarity surrounding transport for excluded young people was received.

Members discussed alternative budget proposals, and it was felt that although there were some good ideas put forward, they had focussed on capital and had not addressed the deficit of £51million.

RESOLVED:

- That Cabinet considered the MTFs and, subject to any amendment, recommended the 2023/24 budget of £645.741m outlined in the Budget Book at Appendix 3, to full Council for discussion and approval.
- That Cabinet discussed the key changes since the December update of the MTFs and the advice relating to those changes, in particular
 - The public consultation and early results from that
 - The Alternative Budget process and its outcomes
 - The Financial Settlement and the outcomes for this Council
 - The Collection Fund outturn and the impact on next year

- The latest budget forecast for the current year, the deterioration in the outlook, and the resulting likely impact on reserves in this year and next (also included in the MTFS assumptions)
- That Cabinet noted that the Council papers will include the full budget report including all proposals to achieve the estimated MTFS position, but that some of those proposals will require further specific member approval, and possible consultation.
- Agreed the adoption of the Capital Strategy 2022/23 – 2027/28 attached as Appendix 2.
- That Cabinet noted that the budget report for Council will include the council tax resolution and the relevant decisions to be made in setting that.

137 Estimated Collection Fund Outturn For 2022/2023

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources presented the report and Members noted that the Council expects good collection rates for council tax and business rates in 2022/23, exceeding our estimates by £4.3m. This reflects strong financial resilience locally (despite pressures of the high cost of living) and high performance by the collections team.

Members thanked the Executive Director of Health for her team's work in contacting over 5,000 residents to offer support. Members urged residents who were struggling financially to contact the Council.

RESOLVED:

That Members:

- Noted the overall Collection Fund estimated surplus of £6.841m for the year ending 31st March 2023, comprised of an estimated surplus of £2.836m for Council Tax and an estimated surplus of £4.005m for Non-Domestic Rates (NDR).
- Noted the estimated surplus/deficit incorporates the final year of the three year phasing of the 2020/21 in year deficit.
- Noted the distribution of the Collection Fund estimated surplus for Council Tax and NDR to the major/relevant precepting authorities and the Secretary of State.
- Noted Shropshire Council's share of the overall estimated surplus of £4.313m, comprised of an estimated surplus of £2.331m for Council Tax and an estimated surplus of £1.982m for NDR, and how this will be applied to improve the council's overall financial sustainability and resilience.
- Noted the inclusion of Shropshire Council's share of the overall estimated surplus for Council Tax and NDR in the 2023/24 budget.

138 Treasury Strategy 2023/24

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources presented the report which proposed the Treasury Strategy for 2023/24. It set out the arrangements for how the council will appropriately manage its arrangements for banking, cash flow management, investments, and borrowing, supporting the delivery of the MTFs and The Shropshire Plan.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet

- Received the Treasury Strategy 2023/24 and recommended its adoption to Council from the perspective of this setting out the policy Cabinet wish to adopt;
- Recommends that Council:-
 - a) Approve, with any comments, the Treasury Strategy for 2023/24
 - b) Approve, with any comments, the Prudential Indicators, set out in Appendix 1, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, noting that the new Liability Benchmark indicator needs to be finalised.
 - c) Approve, with any comments, the Investment Strategy, set out in Appendix 2 in accordance with the DLUHC Guidance on Local Government Investments.
 - d) Approve, with any comments, the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement, set out in Appendix 3.
 - e) Authorise the Section 151 Officer to exercise the borrowing powers contained in Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and to manage the Council's debt portfolio in accordance with the Treasury Strategy.
 - f) Authorise the Section 151 Officer to use other Foreign Banks which meet Link's creditworthiness policy as required.
 - g) Authorise the Section 151 Officer to progress and finalise the restatement and amendment of Cornovii Development Ltd loan agreements.

139 Fees and Charges 2023/24

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources introduced the report which presented the budgeted income to be received and proposed the level of fees and charges to be applied by Shropshire Council in 2023/24.

It was noted that the report contained a charge for road closures and that this had yet to be agreed. It was confirmed that this would be removed from the report which was being taken to full Council.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet members discussed the proposed fees and charges and recommended Full Council to –

- Note the breakdown of the total income for 2022/23 and 2023/24 and in particular that the proposed 2023/24 charges for discretionary services represent £45.052m of the £86.918m of income derived from Fees and Charges.
- Approve the charges for 2023/24 as detailed in Appendix 3 to be implemented from 1 April 2023.
- Note that as previously agreed, any changes to fees and charges proposed by Shropshire Community Leisure Trust Ltd. in relation to the outsourced leisure facilities will only be referred to Cabinet and Council for approval if the proposed increases exceed Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the preceding November.
- Revise housing rents as follows (subject to restrictions or exemptions identified in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill):
 - i. Social Housing rents for 2023/24 are increased by 7% from 3rd April 2023.
 - ii. Affordable rents for 2023/24 are increased by 7% from 3rd April 2023
 - iii. Shared Ownership rents continue to be set at 2.75% of the outstanding capital value of the home at the time of sale and thereafter increased each April in accordance with the terms specified in the lease agreements. For 2023/24 the increase is capped at 7% in line with the cap imposed on social housing rents.
 - iv. Service charges continue to be set based on actual cost.

140 Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2022/23

The Portfolio Holder for Culture and Digital presented the Q3 performance report, which showed continued progress in the development of a Performance Management Framework to reflect The Shropshire Plan outcomes: Healthy People, Healthy Economy, Healthy Environment and a Healthy Organisation.

Members noted the increase in the number of looked after children but congratulated the team in the increase in the number of foster carers. The importance of promoting fostering opportunities was expressed.

Concern was raised that certain KPIs had been omitted from the report and a request for an update on the Homelessness Strategy was requested. Members were advised that all data was available on the portal, however there had been delays in the strategy due to redeployment of resource. Members were reassured that work was ongoing.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- Considered and endorsed, with appropriate comment, the performance to date
- Considered any issues in this report as set out in paragraph 9.2
- Reviewed both the appendix and performance portal to identify any performance areas that Cabinet would like to consider in greater detail.

141 Determination of Admission Arrangements 2024-25

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Education presented the report which sought Cabinet approval to formally determine the admission arrangements 2024-2025 for Shropshire Council's community and voluntary controlled schools in light of the recommendations of the Local Admissions Forum, and in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021 and The School Admissions Regulations 2012.

It was noted that no changes to the admission arrangements had been proposed.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet determined the proposed admission arrangements 2024- 2025 for Shropshire's community and voluntary controlled schools and further approved the publication of the arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021 and to the notification of this to parties specified in the Code.

142 Shropshire Schools Funding Formula 2023-24

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Education presented the report which sought approval from Cabinet for the proposed Schools Funding Formula in light of the recommendations of the Schools Forum, and in accordance with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) operational guidance on schools revenue funding for the Shropshire schools funding formula for 2023-24.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet accepts the recommendation of Shropshire Schools Forum on the funding formula for Shropshire schools for the financial year 2023-24 for maintained schools, and the academic year 2023-24 for academies

143 ICT & Digital Strategy

The Portfolio Holder for Culture and Digital presented the ICT and Digital Strategy which brings the previous strategy up to date and aligns with the objectives of The Shropshire Plan (agreed by Council in May 2022). It also takes the lessons we learnt from the pandemic about how the council can harness digital technology to enable quicker, safer, and more transparent communication with residents and local businesses.

Members raised concerns regarding digital inequality. Various options were discussed which would provide a method of payment; be it cash, a Shropshire card (pre-paid card), debit cards or a smartphone app.

Concerns were expressed with regards to cash payments in car parks no longer being accepted. It was felt that there should be a link with tourism as it was not just residents who used the county's car parks and therefore could not use a system such as a Shropshire card. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Regulatory Services understood these concerns and advised that a full business case would be brought to Cabinet before any changes were made. He also advised that there were on-costs when

using multiple services to take payments, and that there were also other issues with cash payments, such as the capacity of the parking machines and cash collection.

Members were informed that the Stepping Stones team had previously reported concerns with slow internet speeds; however the system had now been upgraded to provide a faster internet connection.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet and Council are recommended to adopt the ICT and Digital strategy (Appendix 1) and endorse the core objectives of the digital county.

144 The Shropshire Plan Update

The Leader presented the report which set out the significant progress made by Cabinet and Officers over the intervening 9 months and outlined the next steps for the authority.

Members were asked to approve the appointment of a Strategic Transformation Partner to provide capacity and capability in the delivery of the extensive transformation programme required to deliver The Shropshire Plan within the projected funding envelope over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Concern was raised regarding the estimated costs of £1million to £3million over three years; however, it was stated that this was investing to save in the long term.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- Noted the progress made since the approval of The Shropshire Plan by Council, driving the fundamental transformation of the Authority around the vision 'Shropshire Living the Best Life'.
- Approved the appointment of a Strategic Transformation Partner to provide capacity and capability in the delivery of the extensive transformation programme required to deliver The Shropshire Plan within the projected funding envelope over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

145 Church Stretton Neighbourhood Development Plan - Neighbourhood Area Proposal

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Regulatory Services introduced the report which sought Cabinet approval for the application by Church Stretton Town Council for the Parish area of Church Stretton to be considered as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agreed the designation of the proposed Neighbourhood Area identified on the map in Appendix 2, covering the Parish of Church Stretton as an appropriate basis for

the development of a Neighbourhood Development Plan and notifies Church Stretton Town Council accordingly.

146 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 [3] of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items

147 Exempt Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: