

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

THURSDAY, 23 JULY 2015

Councillors Present: Dominic Boeck, Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Lynne Doherty, Marcus Franks, Graham Jones, Alan Law and Garth Simpson

Also Present: Steve Broughton (Head of Culture & Environmental Protection), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Andy Day (Head of Strategic Support), Karen Felgate (Contracts and Commissioning Manager), Peta Stoddart-Crompton (Public Relations Officer) and Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer), Councillor Lee Dillon (Shadow Executive Portfolio: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Finance), Councillor Dave Goff, Councillor Mollie Lock (Shadow Executive Portfolio: Education and Young People, Adult Social Care), Councillor Alan Macro (Shadow Executive Portfolio: Leader of the Opposition, Housing, Planning, Transport, Environment, Culture) and Jo Reeves (Policy Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Keith Chopping and Councillor Gordon Lundie

PART I

12. Minutes

(Councillor Roger Croft, Deputy Leader, in the Chair)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2015 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2015 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader, subject to the following amendment:

Item 11 – Superfast Berkshire Phase 2 Procurement:

RESOLVED that the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed, **with the additional agreement that the Council would endeavour to do all it could to ensure that the appointed contractor was incentivised to implement at least 90% coverage of Superfast Berkshire Phase 2.**

13. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

14. Public Questions

A full transcription of the public question and answer session is available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

(a) **Question submitted by Mr Tony Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Emergency Planning**

A question standing in the name of Mr Tony Vickers on the subject of the need to introduce additional reminder painted 'roundels' in the 20mph zone in Newbury in order to increase road safety was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Emergency Planning.

EXECUTIVE - 23 JULY 2015 - MINUTES

(b) **Question submitted by Mrs Martha Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Property, Culture, Customer Services, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Countryside, Cleaner & Greener, Waste**

A question standing in the name of Mrs Martha Vickers on the subject of the recently removed drinking fountain in the Wharf Toilets and whether this was to be replaced was answered by Councillor Hilary Cole on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Property, Culture, Customer Services, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Countryside, Cleaner & Greener, Waste.

(c) **Question submitted by Mr John Gardner, to be asked by Mrs Martha Vickers, to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Newbury, Hungerford, Thatcham and Eastern Area Visions**

A question standing in the name of Mr John Gardner (asked on his behalf by Mrs Martha Vickers) on the subject of whether the Council would publish the traffic studies used for planning the infrastructure supporting the proposed Sandleford Housing Development was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Newbury, Hungerford, Thatcham and Eastern Area Visions.

15. **Petitions**

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

16. **Provisional Financial Outturn Report 2014/15 (EX2832)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) which informed Members of the provisional financial outturn for the Council for the 2014/15 financial year. These provisional figures might change during closedown and as a result of the External Audit process.

The total revenue expenditure in 2014/15 was £121m with a provisional year end overspend of £30k or 0.02% of the net budget. This overspend would result in a reduction in the General Fund.

The Council had delivered revenue outturns close to its budget requirement over recent years. The revenue underspend as a percentage of net budget was 0.44% in 2011/12, 0.5% in 2012/13, 0.37% in 2013/14 and, as reported, an overspend of 0.02% in 2014/15.

The Communities Directorate year end position was an overspend of £605k, which was due to pressures in Children's Services. The Environment Directorate year end position was an underspend of £324k and the Resources Directorate an underspend of £272k.

In summary, the Council had managed to achieve a relatively small revenue overspend in what had been a challenging year. This had been achieved through effective management of its finances over the last 12 months against a back drop of continued local and national financial volatility.

The Capital Programme was underspent by £4.7m, against the revised budget of £35.2m. It was proposed to carry forward this sum to 2015/16 to meet ongoing capital commitments.

Councillor Alan Macro challenged that the overspend was £30k and instead argued that the Council had overspent by £275k as some funding had been drawn down from the risk fund. Councillor Macro stated that the use of the risk fund had not been made clear in the report. Councillor Roger Croft offered assurance that movements from the risk reserve were part of normal accounting practices. Councillor Alan Law added that Councillor Macro's net figure was not correct and further information on the use of risk reserves would be provided in the audited accounts. Councillor Croft advised that he would ask

EXECUTIVE - 23 JULY 2015 - MINUTES

the Section 151 Officer to provide a written statement to Councillor Macro which detailed all movements of funds from the risk reserves.

Councillor Lee Dillon contested the validity of some of the savings identified in the report. He put forward the argument that savings would be made by providing the same services for less money whereas the Council had been providing fewer services for less money. Councillor Dillon stated that cuts had harmed the most vulnerable people in the community and while he recognised the context of the economic downturn and the need to make savings, it needed to be clear in the report where a saving was achieved versus where a cut had been made.

Councillor Macro, referring to pages 28 and 29 of the agenda, noted the overspend in Children's Services. He noted that the number of Looked After Children was increasing as the number of children receiving Early Intervention services was decreasing. Councillor Macro asserted that by seeking savings in the Early Intervention service's budget, extra pressure had been placed upon Children's Services as a whole and therefore the budget was overspent. Councillor Lynne Doherty explained that 34 additional children had required care packages in 2014/15 than had been forecast. Children's Services had a demand-led budget and some hard decisions had been made to enable the most vulnerable children to receive care packages.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for the decision: n/a.

Other options considered: None.

17. **Council Performance Report 2014/15: Year End (Key Accountable Measures and Activities) (EX2780)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) which presented the basket of key accountable measures and activities contained in the 2014/15 Council Performance Framework; reported quarter four outturns against these measures and activities; and reported by exception those measures/activities not achieved and the remedial action taken as a result/its impact.

The report informed of the progress made against the basket of 52 key accountable measures and activities aligned to the objectives set out in the Council Strategy. Of these 52 reported measures, outturns were available for 51, 40 of which were reported as 'green' – achieved or exceeded the targets by year end. This gave a percentage of 78.4% of measures with targets achieved or exceeded, the previous year's percentage was 78.3%.

11 measures were reported as 'red' - meaning the Council had not achieved the activity or target within the year. Reported 'reds' at year end were:

Education

1. KS1-2: Proportion of pupils making 2+ levels of progress in Writing.

Older people and vulnerable adults

2. Maintain the proportion of adults with a learning disability who live in their own home or with their family (ASCOF 1G)
3. Reduce the number of repeat safeguarding referrals through the monitoring and review of protection plans
4. Decrease the level of delayed transfers of care from hospital and those attributable to social care from acute and non-acute settings (ASCOF 2C Part 2)

EXECUTIVE - 23 JULY 2015 - MINUTES

5. Maintain the overall satisfaction of carers with social services. (ASCOF3B)
6. Increase the number of carers receiving a carers assessment or review
7. Maintain the percentage of people accessing a housing related support service who have been assessed as needing support who go on to achieve economic wellbeing by improving debt management skills

Infrastructure

8. Aim to complete at least 75% of all works orders for permanent pothole and edge of road repairs within 28 days of the order date
9. Bring 80 empty homes back into use by 31/03/15 using the councils framework for engaging with identified empty home owners
10. Nos of West Berkshire premises able to receive standard broadband services 2Mb/s or above

Community safety

11. Work with the Environment Agency and other partners to deliver flood alleviation scheme in Purley.

The exception reports provided a narrative relating to these missed targets.

Councillor Marcus Franks commented that the successful delivery of 40 measures was a good achievement and showed how well the Council was performing. He also drew attention to the areas where services had outperformed anticipated outturns which included maintaining a low percentage of children receiving a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time within a two year period; as well as measures in relation to the road network and in Planning.

Councillor Alan Macro referred to the fact shown in the report that there had been a reduction in the number of planning applications received in 2014/15 compared to 2013/14. This would have contributed to the ability of the Council to determine planning applications within set timeframes.

Councillor Macro then turned to some of the red indicators and highlighted that some measures missed their target quite significantly. For the measure 'increase the number of carers receiving an assessment or review', there was an inconsistency in the exception report with 537 and 457 given as the achieved number against the target of 700. The number achieved needed to be confirmed. However, either way the number achieved was a very significant downturn from the previous year's outturn of 682. Councillor Hilary Cole responded to this point by advising that the carer's assessments were outsourced and there was a concern that data recording was inaccurate. It was therefore not necessarily the case that there had been a reduction in the number. This issue was being addressed and the numbers double checked.

(Post-meeting note: Regarding the discrepancy identified by Councillor Alan Macro, the figure of 457 was a typographical error and should read 537 as elsewhere in the document where the provisional number of carers receiving an assessment or review was reported.)

Councillor Macro then turned to the measure 'bring 80 empty homes back into use by 31/03/15 using the Council's framework for engaging with identified empty home owners', with an outturn of 64 achieved. Councillor Macro felt the target set was modest when there was a shortage of affordable homes and all efforts should have been made to achieve this target. Councillor Cole was disappointed that it had not been possible to meet this target, she did however point out that the situation in this area had improved

EXECUTIVE - 23 JULY 2015 - MINUTES

significantly in recent years. However, further improvements would continue to be sought. Councillor Cole made the further point that it was not possible to force people to bring their property back into use if they did not wish to, although Officers worked hard to try and achieve this target.

Councillor Lee Dillon was concerned at the high number of 'red' measures in relation to activity concerning vulnerable older people and adults (around 30% of the measures in this area). He asked what additional monitoring would be undertaken to avoid continued poor performance in this single important area. Councillor Cole acknowledged that there were red indicators in this area but was of the view that Adult Social Care was not a failing service. Actions were being put in place to ensure West Berkshire's vulnerable residents were kept safe. This included a good deal of work being undertaken within the West Berkshire and Berkshire wide Safeguarding Boards. The arrangements for safeguarding adults matched those in place to safeguard children and young people. She was therefore confident that improvements would be made where necessary.

Councillor Graham Jones made the point that the Council set itself ambitious targets. There was therefore a possibility that some would be missed. Councillor Roger Croft agreed that it was important for aspirational targets to be set.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) progress against the key accountable measures and activities would be noted;
- (2) those areas reporting as 'red' be reviewed to ensure that appropriate corrective or remedial action had been put in place.

Reason for the decision: This framework compiles and monitors progress in relation to the objectives laid out in the Council Strategy and on key activities and areas of risk from the Council's individual service delivery plans. In doing so, it expresses the purpose and ambition of the Council and by extension the Council's main focus of activities and key measures of success against which the Council can assess itself and publicly report progress.

Other options considered: n/a.

18. Members' Questions

A full transcription of the Member question and answer session is available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

- (a) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Member for Adult Social Care, Housing submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of the action being taken by the Council to bring the affordable homes in the Parkway development into use was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Housing.

- (b) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Member for Planning, Economic Development, Newbury, Hungerford, Thatcham and Eastern Area Visions submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro requesting an update on the implications of the Firlands planning appeal was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Newbury, Hungerford, Thatcham and Eastern Area Visions.

EXECUTIVE - 23 JULY 2015 - MINUTES

(c) Question to be answered by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance, Insurance, Health & Safety, Human Resources, Pensions, ICT & Corporate Support submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon

A question standing in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon on the subject of the Council's plans to encourage take up among residents of Superfast Broadband was answered by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Insurance, Health & Safety, Human Resources, Pensions, ICT & Corporate Support.

(d) Question to be answered by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance, Insurance, Health & Safety, Human Resources, Pensions, ICT & Corporate Support submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon

A question standing in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon on the subject of how the Council's ICT Service would work with service providers to maximise the benefits of having nearly 100% Superfast Broadband coverage was answered by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Insurance, Health & Safety, Human Resources, Pensions, ICT & Corporate Support.

19. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006. Rule 8.10.4 of the Constitution also refers.

20. Contract Award - Social Care Case Management System (EX2991)

(Paragraph 3 – information relating to financial/business affairs of particular person)

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 10) which sought to obtain authority from the Executive to award the contract for the Social Care Case Management System following completion of the tendering process and to enter into a contract with the successful bidder.

RESOLVED that the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

Reason for the decision: as set out in the exempt report.

Other options considered: as set out in the exempt report.

21. Contract Award - Cleaning Services (EX2923)

(Paragraph 3 – information relating to financial/business affairs of particular person)

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 11) which sought to obtain authority from the Executive to award the contract for the provision of Building Cleaning Services following completion of the tendering process and to enter into a contract with the successful bidder.

RESOLVED that the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

Reason for the decision: as set out in the exempt report.

Other options considered: as set out in the exempt report.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 6.43 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature