

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

THURSDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2013

Councillors Present: Pamela Bale, Dominic Boeck, Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Graham Jones, Alan Law, Gordon Lundie, Irene Neill and Graham Pask

Also Present: John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Melanie Ellis (Chief Accountant), Gabrielle Esplin (Finance Manager (Capital and Treasury Management)), David Holling (Head of Legal Services), Bryan Lyttle (Planning & Transport Policy Manager), Caroline Walsh (Special Projects Officer), Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), Councillor David Allen, Councillor Jeff Brooks (Liberal Democrat Group Leader), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer), Councillor Adrian Edwards, Councillor Roger Hunneman (Deputy Liberal Democrat Group Leader), Councillor Royce Longton, Councillor Gwen Mason, Linda Pye (Policy Officer), Robin Steel (Group Executive (Cons)) and Councillor Keith Woodhams

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Joe Mooney

PART I

18. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2013 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

19. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

20. Public Questions

There were no public questions submitted relating to items not included on the agenda.

21. Petitions

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

22. Quarter 1 Council Performance Report (EX2646)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) concerning the Quarter 1 outturns against the key accountable measures and activities contained in the Council's performance framework. The report also noted by exception those measures or activities not achieved or behind schedule and cited the remedial action taken and the impact this had had.

Councillor Roger Croft reported that 50 key accountable measures were being captured in 2013/14 and of these 3 were not available at the time of preparation of the report and 15 were annual measures. Therefore 32 measures were available for this report. Of these 32, 23 were reported as green – on track to be achieved by the end of the financial year and 9 were reported as amber – behind schedule, but expected to be achieved at year end.

As normal, the report commenced with contextual measures concerning the State of the District and Councillor Croft made particular reference to:

- the 14% fall in domestic burglaries

EXECUTIVE - 5 SEPTEMBER 2013 - MINUTES

- the unemployment numbers which saw a 14% drop in the number of 'working age' claimants (those aged 16-64) compared to Q1 last year and a very encouraging 29% drop in 18-24 year old claimants.

The report then considered measures of volume indicators for Council Services.

In the main performance report, there were 9 amber measures at the end of the first quarter. These were all expected to be green by the end of the year.

In comparing performance against the Council's main strategic priorities:

- Caring for and protecting the vulnerable had 20 reported measures, 14 green and 6 amber.
- Promoting a vibrant district had 7 reported measures, 5 green and 2 amber.
- Improving education had 2 reported measures, 1 green and 1 amber.
- Protecting the environment had 3 measures, all green.

Councillor Croft commended the report and asked the Executive to note its contents and the explanatory notes.

Councillor Roger Hunneman questioned the 27% drop in the number of clients aged 65 plus having received a community based service in the past 12 months, excluding residential/nursing home care. In the Portfolio Holder's (Councillor Joe Mooney's) absence, Rachael Wardell acknowledged that the decrease was surprising, considering that Census data showed that the 65 plus population was rising. However, Rachael Wardell added that the decrease was largely due to the success of the Council's Access for All service which provided information, advice and signposting to enquirers which was enabling people to live independently for longer. The impact of this would continue to be closely monitored, but regardless of its impact, Rachael Wardell's expectation was that numbers would increase again over the coming years due to the nature of the population.

Councillor Hunneman then queried progress with the review of the Adult Social Care Eligibility Criteria. Rachael Wardell explained that there were proposals to set the eligibility level nationally which would be taken forward as part of the Care Bill. Rachael Wardell agreed to confirm with Members when this would be implemented.

RESOLVED that:

1. Progress against the key accountable measures and activities contained in the Council's performance framework be noted.
2. Those areas reporting as 'amber' be reviewed to ensure that appropriate corrective or remedial action had been put in place.

Reason for the decision: This framework complies and monitors progress in relation to the objectives laid out in the Council Strategy distilled from the Council's individual service 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 we can assess ourselves and publically report progress.

Other options considered: n/a

23. Financial Performance Report - Quarter 1 (2013/14) (EX2668)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) which set out the latest financial performance of the Council.

Councillor Alan Law noted that this was the first report to Members as part of the financial reporting cycle for the 2013/14 financial year which was reporting a forecast revenue underspend of £51k. This was the first Quarter 1 report in a number of years not to raise

EXECUTIVE - 5 SEPTEMBER 2013 - MINUTES

any emerging issues which was a testament to officers from Finance working more closely with service areas.

Section 3 of the report referred to the intention to set up a risk fund for Children's Services. This service had carried a significant risk for a number of years but had not had a specific risk fund to meet them. The fund would be built up as savings allowed but with the aim of achieving a fund level of £700k which was the 'expected outcome' as highlighted in the report. This was a similar arrangement to that in Adult Social Care and would allow the service to manage in year pressures in such a volatile area.

Councillor Royce Longton referred to page 25 of the agenda which stated that there was an overspend in Planning and Countryside of £198k which was largely due to below predicted income. He asked where income targets were not being achieved. Councillor Law responded that this was mainly due to a below predicted income achievement from planning applications.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for the decision: To ensure that Members are fully aware of the latest financial position for the Council.

Other options considered: None.

24. Treasury Management Annual Report 2012/13 (EX2645)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 8) which informed Members of the treasury management activity and performance of the Council's investments for the financial year 2012/13.

Councillor Alan Law in introducing the report stated that, in his opinion, the Council's treasury management system performed outstandingly and was very professionally managed with astute investments made. As an example of this, Councillor Law referred to the £325,291 investment income achieved by early payment of pension contributions into the Berkshire Pension Fund. The Council had also achieved a high rating in this area of work following a recent audit.

Councillor Jeff Brooks referred to the chart on page 53 of the papers and questioned the yearly average as this did not reflect the average value of the treasury fund throughout the year. Gabrielle Esplin acknowledged that this chart was not correct and to aid clarity agreed to circulate a corrected version to Members.

RESOLVED that the previous year's treasury management activities and performance of the fund be noted.

Reason for the decision: To ensure compliance with the updated CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services 2009 and in accordance with best practice.

Other options considered: N/A

25. Outcome of Consultation - Additional Resource Provision for Children and Young People with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (EX2721)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 9) which sought permission to identify schools and publish necessary notices.

Councillor Irene Neill informed Members of the Executive that the number of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) was growing which reflected the picture nationally. The corresponding numbers of complex cases in mainstream schools had also increased.

The number of pupils with ASD who were placed in out of area placements had remained fairly stable over time but some of the individuals placed over the last two to three years

EXECUTIVE - 5 SEPTEMBER 2013 - MINUTES

could have been placed locally if there had been space and would have equated to an annual saving of around £258k.

Councillor Neill stated that there was strong support for the development of two new resources – one for primary and one for secondary aged pupils. Capital had been identified in the current Capital Programme to provide the necessary accommodation for the resources and revenue costs would need to be built into the 2014/15 and 2015/16 budgets from DSG funding.

Councillor David Allen stated that he was supportive of the proposals but he had asked officers to consider synchronising this resource with any new school build in the near future.

Councillor Roger Hunneman asked if there was any explanation as to why numbers of children with ASD were increasing. Councillor Neill suggested that it could be due to better diagnosis and she reiterated the fact that it was not a position that was unique to West Berkshire.

RESOLVED that schools be identified and new resources developed (one for primary phase and one for secondary) for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in two more schools.

Reason for the decision: Numbers of Children and Young People (CYP) being diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have increased annually since the two resources at Theale CE Primary and Theale Green Secondary were opened in September 2005. The numbers of more complex cases have also increased. The resources were now at capacity. To enable CYP to be offered local provision additional capacity is required.

Other options considered:

Option A: Maintain the current level of provision and place additional pupils in high cost external placements.

Option B: Increase the places at the current resources.

26. **Members' Questions**

(a) **Question to be answered by the Leader of the Council submitted by Councillor David Allen**

A question standing in the name of Councillor David Allen on the subject of how Conservative proposals for changes to the Council's budget would be announced in future was answered by the Leader of the Council.

27. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraphs 3 and 5 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 4.2 of the Constitution](#) also refers.

28. **Sale of the Former Depot at Pound Lane, Thatcham (EX2714)**

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

(Paragraph 5 – information relating to legal privilege)

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 12) concerning the sale of the former depot at Pound Lane, Thatcham.

RESOLVED that the recommendation in the exempt report be agreed.

EXECUTIVE - 5 SEPTEMBER 2013 - MINUTES

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

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

29. S106 Bad Debts

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

(Paragraph 5 – information relating to legal privilege)

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 13) informing Members of an issue with bad debts and which sought guidance on the best way to proceed.

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 5.00pm and closed at 5.54pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature