

# DRAFT

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

## EXECUTIVE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2018

**Councillors Present:** Graham Bridgman, Anthony Chadley, Jeanette Clifford, Hilary Cole, Lynne Doherty, James Fredrickson, Graham Jones and Rick Jones

**Also Present:** Catalin Bogos (Performance Research Consultation Manager), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Mark Edwards (Head of Transport and Countryside), Tandra Forster (Head of Adult Social Care), Andy Walker (Head of Finance and Property), Councillor Paul Bryant, Stephen Chard (Principal Policy Officer) and Councillor Alan Macro

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** John Ashworth, Councillor Dominic Boeck, Councillor Marcus Franks and Councillor Mollie Lock

#### PART I

##### 38. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2018 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader, subject to the following amendments:

###### Item 28 – Public Questions

The first sentence ‘There were no public questions submitted.’ was deleted.

###### Item 34 – Member Questions

The first sentence ‘There were no Member questions submitted.’ was deleted.

For both of these items, the link to the full transcription of the question and answer sessions needed to be enabled.

##### 39. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

##### 40. Public Questions

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

###### (a) **Question submitted by Ms Julie Wintrup to the Leader of the Council**

A question standing in the name of Ms Julie Wintrup on the subject of the ways in which the Council had responded to the 21 recommendations made in the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Report ‘Effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees’ would receive a written answer from the Leader of the Council.

###### (b) **Question submitted by Ms Julie Wintrup to the Leader of the Council**

A question standing in the name of Ms Julie Wintrup on the subject of how the role of the public in scrutiny was being promoted as per recommendation 18 of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Report ‘Effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees’ would receive a written answer from the Leader of the Council.

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(c) **Question submitted by Mr Chris Turner to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Young People**

A question standing in the name of Mr Chris Turner asking what the Council was doing to support Kintbury Pre-School to ensure improvements following their Ofsted report was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Young People.

(d) **Question submitted by MsCarolyn Culver to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste**

A question standing in the name of MsCarolyn Culver asking what proportion of households in West Berkshire had signed up for the £50 garden waste collection scheme was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste.

(e) **Question submitted by MsCarolyn Culver to the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport, Environment and Countryside**

A question standing in the name of MsCarolyn Culver asking what representations had the Council's Executive made to Richard Benyon MP calling for more central government funding to support people living in rural areas with transportation was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport, Environment and Countryside.

### 41. **Petitions**

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

### 42. **Key Accountable Performance 2018/19: Quarter One (EX3420)**

The Executive considered the report (Agenda Item 6) which outlined quarter four outturns for the Key Accountable Measures (KAMs) which monitored performance against the 2018/19 Council Performance Framework; which sought to provide assurance that the objectives set out in the Council Strategy and other areas of significant activity were being managed effectively; which presented, by exception, those measures that were predicted to be 'amber' (behind schedule) or 'red' (not achievable) by year end together with information on any remedial action being taken and its impact; and which recommended changes to measures/targets as requested by services.

Councillor Rick Jones presented the report in the absence of Councillor Dominic Boeck. He reported that the Council set itself challenging targets and performance against these, irrespective of the results, was outlined in this open and honest report.

Overall, the Council's performance was good, the majority of measures were 'green' and improvements were being seen. Councillor Rick Jones particularly highlighted the improvements made in reducing the number of delayed transfers of care (DTOC).

Four measures were reported as 'amber' and there was a single 'red' indicator, however actions plans were in place in each of these cases.

Councillor Rick Jones next made reference to the Performance Scorecard. This summary page reported the priority for improvement of 'Safeguarding Children and Adults' as being green/red and Councillor Jones gave some clarity on this. Firstly, the Council's target in this very important area was 100% and therefore rightly challenging. Councillor Rick Jones then explained that in relation to Safeguarding Children, the Council's performance was entirely green. This was also the case for Safeguarding Adults but with one exception – the Birchwood Care Home, as the home had received a Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating of 'Requires Improvement'. However, rapid improvements were being made under a strong action plan.

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Councillor Alan Macro noted from the Scorecard that the Council's net budget for 2018/19 was stated as £125.4m. However, this was stated as £119.4m in the Quarter One Financial Report and there was therefore an error to be corrected.

Also in the Scorecard, staff turnover of 14.5% was reported which he felt to be of concern. Councillor Macro asked what efforts were being made to improve this and how would issues highlighted in the Employee Attitude Survey be addressed. Councillor Graham Jones responded to this point and stated his view that this was a low rate of turnover for such a large organisation. This percentage would also be considered as low in the private sector. Councillor Rick Jones would ask Councillor Boeck to respond more fully to these questions.

Councillor Macro noted the reduction in the number of planning applications received since the same period last year and queried the reasons for this decrease. He followed this by asking if the proposed recruitment of three Planning Officers was still planned. Councillor Hilary Cole advised that there was not a clear view on the reasons for this reduction. She added that the Planning Service was currently understaffed and staffing requirements were constantly monitored.

Councillor Macro next queried the number of live applicants on the Common Housing Register (CHR). While this had marginally increased in comparison to Q1 of 2017/18, it had decreased since 2016/17. Councillor Cole explained that there had been several reviews of the Council's allocations policy since 2014. A more stringent criteria was in place with a view to giving greater assistance to local people and a greater level of vigilance was employed for reviewing applicants which could result in people being removed. Monitoring regularly took place.

However, Councillor Cole did not believe there to be a reduction in the level of need. The Homelessness Reduction Act enabled local authorities to assist people with finding housing in the private rental sector and this did result in a reduced number on the CHR.

Finally, Councillor Macro noted a decline in the Council's use of Shaw House and he queried what was being done to encourage greater use of the building for Council meetings etc. Councillor Rick Jones acknowledged that there had been a decline in Council use but this had been balanced by greater public use, for which there was a stronger business case, and this pointed towards a prosperous future for Shaw House.

Councillor James Fredrickson highlighted the exceptionally good news that a record number of properties subject to business rates was in place. An increase of 346 (5,359 to 5,705) since Q1 of 2017/18.

Councillor Fredrickson then drew comparisons to Q4 of 2017/18. Since that time, the number of properties subject to business rates had risen by 159 and the number of empty properties had only increased by 15, which further highlighted this positive news.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- Progress against the KAMs and key achievements in all services be noted.
- Those areas reported as 'amber' and 'red' had been reviewed to ensure that appropriate actions were in place (listed below):

### **Amber:**

- 1) (LRIER) London Road Industrial Estate redevelopment 2018/19 milestone: Create and gain approval for the business plan.
- 2) Average number of days taken to make a full decision on new Benefits claims.
- 3) % of clients with Long Term Service (LTS) receiving a review in the past 12 months.

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- 4) % of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time.
- 5) % of 'minor' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time.
- 6) % of 'other' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time.

### Red

- 1) % of WBC provider services inspected by Care Quality Commission (CQC) that are rated good or better by CQC in the area of "safe".
  - Additions and amendments made to KAMs, following Corporate Board's requests for further information during the target setting process, were noted and approved:
    - (a) Delayed Transfer of Care (DToC) target will be set nationally during Q2.
      - The removal of the KPI "% of high priority Disabled Facilities Grants approved within 9 weeks of receipt of full grant applications" and the proposal to investigate a more meaningful alternative be agreed.
      - The reporting of the number of people aged 16-24 and 16-64 who claim Claimant Count, instead of those just claiming Jobseekers Allowance, be agreed as a measure of volume to reflect the move towards Universal Credit.

**Other options considered:** None.

### 43. Revenue Financial Performance Report - Quarter 1 of 2018/19 (EX3561)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda item 7) which informed Members of the latest revenue financial performance for 2018/19. The current financial forecast was an overspend of £1.3m against a net revenue budget of £119.4m. This figure took account of a number of mitigation strategies, notably the in year reduction of expenditure, where appropriate, across the Council and in particular in Adult Social Care (ASC). Members were particularly asked to note the continued challenge of managing pressures in ASC, which were shared nationally, and the mitigation that was proposed in year to reduce the current end of year projection.

Councillor Anthony Chadley explained that costs for ASC were significant and concerned a relatively small number of residents. A change in the circumstances of a client could create a significant financial impact, however the costs of care needed to be met. Unfortunately, the funding that had been modelled for ASC was not sufficient to meet increasing costs, however mitigating actions had been and would continue to be taken and central government would be lobbied for additional funding. This included applying to remain in the Business Rates pilot, but there would be competition for this from other local authorities as a shortfall in ASC funding was a national issue.

Councillor Chadley added that the Council had an excellent record of balancing its budgets. He also pointed to the successful implementation of the Property Investment Strategy with the income target being exceeded. The Council was also on target to achieve anticipated income from green waste charging and he expected that this would soon be reported as 'green'.

Councillor Alan Macro noted the ASC overspend of £2.4m, which was the figure prior to any mitigation measures, and queried when the ASC risk reserve would be utilised as well as the criteria for its use. He asked whether it would be used prior to taking the step referred to of slowing down activity and expenditure.

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Councillor Graham Bridgman explained that risk reserves had been established to meet specific identified risks in the budget and were contingency funds to meet unpredicted costs. He also made the point that the timing for the deployment of risk reserves would not alter the outturn position for the financial year and it was felt to be at too early a stage in the financial year to do so. Mitigating measures needed to be implemented in the first instance rather than automatically turning to the risk reserve, this was particularly important when considering that the amount set aside for predicted risks was not sufficient to meet the forecast position due to the level of in-year pressure.

Councillor Bridgman then built on the comment made by Councillor Chadley that a small number of new clients and those with a change in their circumstances could make a vast difference to costs and therefore the ASC outturn. As an example of this he highlighted the cost of residential care placements which was in the region of £1m and was for just less than 25 people. However, this did align with demographic expectations.

Councillor Bridgman made the further point that ASC costs did not just concern elderly residents, they also encapsulated adults with high level needs that needed to be met. He added that the modelling would be worked through in detail to fully understand where there had been issues to aid future predictions.

**RESOLVED that** Members noted the report.

**Other options considered:** N/A – factual report for information.

### 44. **Capital Financial Performance Report - Q1 of 2018/19 (EX3591)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 8) which informed Members of the progress made with major capital schemes and forecast spend against the 2018/19 approved capital budget.

Councillor Anthony Chadley highlighted that at the end of Quarter One, a total spend of £81.6m was forecast against the revised capital budget of £84.2m and 37.1% of the revised budget had been committed. It was positive to note this forecast level of expenditure on capital infrastructure projects.

There had been an increase in the capital budget, but this was solely due to the reprofiling of funds from the previous financial year.

Councillor Alan Macro questioned the reasons behind the considerable delay with the delivery of the contracts with British Telecom and Gigaclear for Phase Three of the Superfast Broadband project, and what action was being taken as a result. Nick Carter explained that the primary reason was the fact that both providers were having difficulty with appointing sub-contractors to do the work due to current difficulties in the market.

Remedial plans were in place with both providers and this included a revised timeframe. There was confidence that the revised timeframe would be met.

**RESOLVED that** Members noted the report.

**Other options considered** N/A – factual report for information.

### 45. **Treasury Management Annual Report 2017/18 (EX3630)**

Councillor Anthony Chadley presented the report (Agenda Item 9) which informed Members of the treasury management activity and performance of the Council's investments for the financial year 2017/18.

He explained that both himself and Councillor Lee Dillon formed the Treasury Management Group and this group would continue to scrutinise and review the Council's investments and borrowing activity.

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**RESOLVED that** Members noted the report.

**Other options considered:** Not applicable.

**46. Members' Questions**

There were no Member questions submitted.

**47. 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 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.

**48. Insurance Tender Award (EX3634)**

*(Paragraph 3 – information identifying the financial/ business affairs of a particular person)*

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 12) which sought approval to award the contract for insurance services.

**RESOLVED that** the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

**Other options considered:** as outlined in the exempt report.

*(The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 5.37pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....