

Lancashire County Council

Cabinet

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 26th November, 2015 at 2.00 pm in Cabinet Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Jennifer Mein

Leader of the Council
(in the Chair)

Cabinet Members

County Councillor Azhar Ali
County Councillor David Borrow
County Councillor John Fillis
County Councillor Marcus Johnstone
County Councillor Tony Martin
County Councillor Matthew Tomlinson

County Councillor Bill Winlow were also in attendance under the provisions of Standing Order No. 19(4).

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from County Councillors Geoff Driver and Albert Atkinson.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no interests disclosed.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 October 2015

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Executive Scrutiny Committee - Report of the Chair

County Councillor Bill Winlow, Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee, reported that the recommendations set out in the reports for consideration by Cabinet had been confirmed, with the following comments and proposed amendments:

Lancashire Corporate Strategy

Different service models should be developed having regards to local needs and that the County Council should work closely with all sectors including District Councils, local communities and organisations in the development and delivery of these models.

Property Strategy

Councillors have a key role to play in determining the selection of premises to become Neighbourhood Centres and in exploring opportunities for co-location and sharing service delivery with partners including District Councils.

The need to align new Neighbourhood Centres with various service delivery plans e.g. Library Strategy and the Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Health Strategy is considered to be vital.

Briefings should be held to enable members to discuss and present local knowledge on the options for the use of premises to deliver services locally.

Proposals for Transforming Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Help for Services for Children, Young People and Families in Lancashire

Further information around the 'Universal offer' that will be made available to all Lancashire residents would be welcomed.

The Council's budget position

ESC agreed to support the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet Report with the following suggested amendment to recommendation (vii) to read as follows:

- vii. Approve the attached budget proposals set out in Appendices D and E, authorise officers to proceed with their implementation subject to consultation where appropriate, and agree that the 2016/17 budget be prepared based upon these revenue decisions with the outcome of any consultations being reported to Full Council.

The principles and recommendations of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, as presented at the ESC meeting and circulated to Cabinet Members, were supported.

5. Public Service Equality Duty

Ian Young, Director of Governance, Finance and Public Services presented a reminder report outlining the implications for the council and councillors arising from the requirement to pay due regard to the equality duties set out contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, usually referred to as the Public Sector Equality Duty.

In setting out the obligations of decision makers, it was noted that the Budget Scrutiny Working Group and the Executive Scrutiny Committee had received the same information. Reference was made to the need for the council to take a proportionate approach and exercise additional care in areas where the impact was likely to be greater. Attention was also drawn to the fact that the council's financial position must not be used as a reason for not properly considering the implications of decisions in line with the duty.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

6. Lancashire County Council Corporate Strategy

Dave Carr, Head of Policy, Information and Commissioning (Start Well), presented the draft of the Corporate Strategy. The strategy set out the future direction for the County Council, covering a timeframe to 2021 and beyond. The Core Strategy document now presented would provide the starting point setting out the core purpose, vision, values, approach and evidence base which would be used to inform and guide the council's actions and future prioritisation of resources.

It was reported that the Core Strategy had been updated to take account of responses received during the consultation period, and which were shared with Cabinet, including a response from Chorley Council inadvertently omitted from the initial papers. In general, the responses had been favourable, although the opportunity had been taken to clarify and simplify some of the language used and to enhance the focus on the financial strategy. In addition, it was reported that the evidence base had been refreshed to take into account the most up to date data.

In considering the matter, the Cabinet reemphasised the rationale behind the Service Planning Areas and emphasised that there was recognition that people would use services based outside their own area, where transport or community links existed.

Resolved: That Full Council be recommended to agree the updated Corporate Strategy as presented.

7. Property Strategy

Matthew Tidmarsh, Head of Asset Management, presented a report setting out the methodology to enable the council to achieve a sustainable long term reduction in its property portfolio, in line with the Corporate Strategy. It was reported that it was intended that around half of the 220 properties under consideration in the ownership of the County Council would be retained for future use.

The strategy would lead to the creation of "Neighbourhood Centres", multi-functional premises which would form the basis of service delivery in an area. It was made clear that the report now presented was a methodology for achieving this change and not at this stage a list of properties to be retained or disposed of, which would require further analysis.

It was confirmed that the County Council would work extensively with partner organisations to explore options for shared facilities.

Resolved: That

1. the proposed strategy for the reduction of the County Council's corporate operational property and methodology for the delivery of public facing services from a series of multi-functional 'Neighbourhood Centres' be approved
2. the evaluation of identified datasets and subsequent consultation on the recommendations for the final selection of premises to become Neighbourhood Centres be approved.

3. approval be given for contact to be made with relevant public sector partners, including the voluntary sector, to explore opportunities for co-location and sharing of service delivery.
4. approval be given for the estimated cost of works required to premises to deliver the Property Strategy (Neighbourhood Centres) to be added to the Capital Programme, and that detailed phasing of the required expenditure be provided in subsequent reports.

8. Proposals for Transforming Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Help Services for Children, Young People and Families in Lancashire

Dr Sakthi Karunanthi, Director of Public Health, and Debbie Duffel, Head of Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Help Services, attended to present a report on the implementation of the proposals agreed by Full Council in February 2015. The proposals represented a saving of £7.4m on current spend, and would lead to the creation of a transformed and integrated wellbeing, prevention and early help service across Lancashire. The remodelled service would align existing core offers for Children's Centres, Young People's Provision, Prevention and Early Help and Lancashire's response to the national Troubled Families Unit programme.

It was confirmed that the new 0-19+ service would have a significant outreach element and would work with families across Lancashire, based on need. It was additionally confirmed that the implementation proposals now outlined would be the subject of significant consultation.

Resolved: That the implementation of the service offer proposals within the Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Help Services be approved, subject to consultation.

9. The County Council's Budget Position

The Deputy Leader of the County Council, County Councillors David Borrow, presented the "Money Matters" financial report, covering the current financial position, the financial outlook and medium term financial strategy (MTFS), as well as proposals to address the funding gap reported. It was noted that the forecast overspend for 2015/16 had reduced since the last report to £19.666m. It was also noted that the anticipated budget shortfall had increased to around £262m, largely due to the implementation of the National Living Wage.

Reference was made to the Government's Autumn Statement made the previous day, and it was confirmed that the implications of this for the County Council's finances would be worked through in due course.

Cabinet noted the views of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, and accepted the alternative recommendation proposed by ESC.

In considering the budget proposals, it was noted that revisions had been made to the proposals relating to Bus Services and Arts Funding, and it was made clear that, in

relation to Libraries, no specific decisions had yet been made about the location of services or the role of the mobile library service.

It was recognised that the decisions now facing the council were extremely difficult, but that they would be made on the basis of need in line with the Corporate Strategy. Workable alternative proposals were welcomed from other groups or external bodies.

Given the financial position, and the costs incurred in any delay to the implementation of the proposals, including consultation where appropriate, it was agreed that the decision should be designated as urgent in accordance with Standing Order 34(3)

Resolved: That

- (i) the forecast overspend of £19.666m on the revenue budget in 2015/16 and ongoing pressure of £37.161m be noted
- (ii) the revised funding gap of £262.0m covering the period 2016/17 to 2020/21 as set out in the revised financial outlook forecast for the Council be noted.
- (iii) the budget adjustments for 2016/17 and 2017/18, and following years' increases, included in the MTFs reflecting the phased financial impact of the national living wage be approved.
- (iv) the adjustment of previously approved savings targets to reflect the £52.8m of undeliverable savings identified within the MTFs and that the 2016/17 budget be prepared on that basis be approved.
- (v) the principle of reserves supporting the revenue budget in 2016/17 and 2017/18 be approved.
- (vi) the principle of replacing revenue support to the capital programme with capital borrowing be approved.
- (vii) the attached budget proposals set out in Appendices 'D' and 'E' be approved, officers be authorised to proceed with their implementation subject to consultation where appropriate, and that the 2016/17 budget be prepared based upon these revenue decisions be agreed, with the outcome of any consultations being reported to Full Council.
- (viii) a financial strategy that sets a spending target for service expenditure levels to move in line with the lower quartile of the most appropriate comparator group of local authorities for individual services be approved
- (ix) key stakeholders and partners be formally advised of the outcome of the budget decisions.

- (x) This decision be designated as urgent in accordance with Standing Order 34(3) as any delay in its implementation could adversely affect the efficient execution of the County Council's responsibilities

10. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Cabinet would take place on 7 January 2016 at County Hall, Preston

Jo Turton
Chief Executive

County Hall
Preston