

Minutes



Cabinet

Date: 16 January 2017

Time: 11.00 am

Present: Councillors D Wilcox (Chair), P Cockeram, G Giles, D Harvey, R Poole, J Richards and M Whitcutt

In Attendance: Mr M Nicholson and Ms B Owen (Strategic Directors); Mr G D Price (Monitoring Officer); Mr M Rushworth (Head of Finance) and Mr R Cornwall (Head of People and Business Change)

Apologies: Councillors R Jeavons and R Truman and Mr W Godfrey, Chief Executive

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by cabinet members

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 December were confirmed as a true record by the Cabinet and signed by the Chair of the Cabinet

3 Social Services and Wellbeing Act: Population Needs Assessment

Mr Phil Diamond, Theme Lead (Gwent Health and Social Care Transformation Team) attended the meeting for this item and made a presentation to the Cabinet on the report and the requirements of the Act.

The Leader, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services and Housing and the Cabinet Member for Education and Young People introduced the report and referred to the range of things that will need to be considered by the Council and the Health Board.

Cabinet was informed that under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) there is a statutory duty on local authorities and health boards to prepare a regional population needs assessment (PNA) in relation to people requiring care and support. The PNA would be signed off by full council in each Local Authority and by each Health Board

Cabinet was informed that a draft population needs assessment has been jointly developed across the region (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen) by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Gwent Transformation Team.

Details of the content of the draft were described to Cabinet and discussed by Cabinet Members. Members were informed that it was based on national research/reports and on the views of citizens, providers and the third Sector

The PNA was the first of its kind and would set the direction of travel for health and social care services. It would act as the 'shop window' in terms of priorities and next steps

Members considered what the PNA would mean for Newport. Members were informed that all pupils at St Joseph's School had undertaken dementia awareness training and this was the First School in Wales to do so. Members passed on their congratulations to the School and all pupils. The region had been recognised as Dementia Friendly and members stated they would consider how Newport could become a dementia friendly City.

Newport was recognised as being in the forefront of the Multi Agency Hub. It was pleasing to note that there had been good links with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act through close working with officers in Newport

The PNA set out the common priorities across the region and suggested actions. The final version of the Assessment would need to be agreed by the full Council later in the year.

Decision:

To recommend the draft assessment to Council on January 31st so that in accordance with statutory requirements, the final PNA can be approved before March 31st. This will take place during Council on March 2nd and then the PNA will subsequently be published on the Newport City Council website.

4 Improvement Plan Review for 2016-18

The Leader of the Council introduced a report informing Cabinet that the Improvement Plan helps the authority to show that we have met our duty to continuously improve in line with the Local Government Measure 2009.

In order to clearly demonstrate that the council is fulfilling this duty, eight priority areas were identified in which measurable improvement should be demonstrated.

The current Improvement Plan covers a 2 year period and contains eight objectives which were agreed by Cabinet in April 2016. The Leader stated that as it is a 2 year plan, a review at this point would ensure that the content of the objectives set at the start of 2016 is updated to remain relevant and meaningful for the second year. Extensive consultation had been undertaken before the eight priorities were set last year.

The Cabinet was informed that the overall objectives remain the same and a few updates had been made to the content of the objectives.

Performance measures are included in the Improvement Plan to help monitor the success of activities some of the measures used here are also reported nationally. The National Strategic Indicators (NSI) were revoked in July 2016, however many have now been included in the Public Accountability Measures (PAM) data set which is collected by the Data Unit Wales. Changes to measures and targets were reflected in the updated objectives.

The programme of Local Government Reform and the introduction of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, mean that local authority performance frameworks are changing to allow local authorities to focus on working more effectively to deliver the wellbeing goals, the content of the plan is now more closely aligned with the Wellbeing agenda.

The Leader stated that the updated plan will allow us to demonstrate continuous improvement in the eight areas that are focused on and to contribute to the Wellbeing goals.

Members were pleased with the progress being made and raised specific areas where significant improvement was being demonstrated. Member were, however, concerned about the impact of a reducing budget on the requirements for continuous improvement.

The Leader stated she had raised concerns about the Settlement with the Cabinet Secretary saying that in cash terms, this Council will receive c£892,000 less grant than the current year and in addition, it needs to fund two areas of new responsibilities – which amount to £530,000.

Decision:

To endorse the Improvement Plan review and recommend it to Council

5 Annual Improvement Report 2015/16

The Leader of the Council informed the Cabinet that the annual improvement report is compiled each year by the WAO and brings together regulatory reports that have been received throughout the year from the WAO and other regulators such as ESTYN, CSSIW etc.

The WAO form an overall opinion of whether we are likely to meet our duty to demonstrate continuous improvement by looking at the findings of these reports.

Based on 2015/16 regulatory work the WAO have concluded that we are likely to meet our statutory duty to demonstrate continuous improvement in 2016/17. Cabinet members referred to continuing improvements in a number of service areas and welcomed this positive outcome.

Decisions:

- i. To welcome the positive findings of the Auditor General in his Annual Improvement Report.
- ii. To ensure that the Council is putting in place arrangements to address the issues identified in his report.

6 Revenue Budget Monitoring

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources reported that the position at the end of November showed underspending of £165,000. Essentially this was a balanced position in the context of the Council's £260m budget

The Cabinet Member stated that despite this, there are significant budget hotspots which have been mitigated to balance the overall budget

The Cabinet Member mentioned overspending in : Adult & Community services mainly due to community care budgets; Education due to pressures on a number of SEN budgets; Children's social care mainly due to very expensive out of area placements; and Street Scene, where key factors included approved additional expenditure in respect of the pothole repair scheme and reinstatement of Pride in Newport.

Cabinet was informed that the net position assumes that the contingency budget of £1.47m is 'committed'. The administration is currently looking at options to utilise this budget in conjunction with existing reserves. If there were no commitments and this remained the case at year end, the position would be £1.6m underspent

The Cabinet Member was able to report that savings of £8.1m against £8.6m target have been achieved as at the November monitoring period.

Decisions:

- i. To note the forecast 2016/17 revenue budget position and the key risks that have been identified at this stage;
- ii. To ask Cabinet Members, Directors and Heads of Service to maintain on-going strong financial management, and People and Place directorates to confirm a comprehensive set of actions to reduce their overspending;
- iii. To note the planned reserve movements and revised balances at the end of the year.

7 Capital Budget Monitoring

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources presented a report which sought approval from Cabinet to amend the current capital programme via a combination of: Two additional grant/contribution budgets into the 16/17 capital programme on existing projects (VVP and Substance Misuse); Re-profiling of existing current year budgets into future years within Education and Fleet Replacement Programme; and reduction of scheme budgets in IT Replacement and removal of residual or unnecessary budgets in Education, Regen and Change & Efficiency.

The report also updated Cabinet on current expenditure on the revised capital programme this year, highlighting the forecast outturn position.

The Cabinet Member also provided provide Cabinet with an update on the capital receipts position as at the end of November – currently at around £9.7m. Almost all of this was committed to 21st Century School Band A but future receipts also need to be earmarked for future priorities such as 21st Century Schools Band B.

The Cabinet Member stated that following the amendments detailed in the report, the capital budget for 16/17 now stands at £37.8m, with expenditure as at the end of November totalling £12.1m. This means that the final quarter of the financial year is expected to see £25.4m of expenditure, largely within Education and Regeneration, to achieve the forecast outturn of £35.5m. While this is a challenge, officers are satisfied that the forecasts can be achieved, particularly with a high proportion of it relating to 21st Century Schools and Vibrant and Viable Places – the latter completing this year. A significant amount of the outstanding expenditure is grant funded with a deadline of 31st March 2017.

As to progress of schemes, major projects continue in Education while the decision on additional funding is expected from Welsh Government by early February 2017, which will increase the 21st Century Schools capital programme to £51m. The cabinet member stated that one area of concern was the new ASD/ Gaer Primary school, which is now forecasting a £750k overspending on its £4.3m budget. The Cabinet Member asked for a robust review to take place following completion of the project next month. Among the anticipated outcomes of that review, a reduction in the overspending is possible.

The Cabinet Member informed the Cabinet that generally across all other service areas, schemes are largely progressing as planned, with a total slippage of £415k forecast for the year.

Decision:

- i. To approve the additions and amendments to the Capital Programme requested in the report.

- ii. To note the capital expenditure forecast position as at November 2016 and to note and approve the 'risk' in spending on approved 21st Century Schools projects before confirmation of Welsh Government match funding is confirmed.
- iii. To note and approve the allocation of in-year capital receipts.

8 Work Programme

The Corporate Assessment suggested to the Council that it should consider strengthening committee work programming arrangements to ensure they are timely, meaningful, informative, and transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up.

In response to that suggestion, Cabinet had previously agreed that the Head of Democratic Services will regularly ask Chief Officers to update the Cabinet work programme and an update will be reported to Cabinet each month.

An updated work programme suggested by Chief Officers was discussed. This was, of course, a working document and will be subject to change.

Decision:

To adopt the suggested programme and provide an update at the next meeting

The meeting terminated at 1:10 pm