

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 17 December 2013 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 2.58 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Ian Hudspeth – in the Chair
Councillor Rodney Rose
Councillor Mrs Judith Heathcoat
Councillor Nick Carter
Councillor Melinda Tilley
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale
Councillor David Nimmo Smith
Councillor Arash Fatemian
Councillor Louise Chapman
Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Nick Hards (Agenda Items 6, 7 & 8)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Joanna Simons (Chief Executive); Sue Whitehead (Chief Executive's Office)
Part of meeting

Item	Name
6	Stephanie Skivington (Corporate Finance)
7	Lorna Baxter, Chief Finance Officer
8	Charlotte Christie (Academies Team)

The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting, and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

135/13MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2013 were agreed and signed.

136/13QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Roz Smith had given notice of the following question to Councillor Fatemian:

"I note the balance of earmarked reserves linked to on street car parking at 31 March 2014 will be over £1.5million and that the purpose for which these monies can be used are defined by statute. Does this huge amount include monies collected from residents' permits to park on their street in a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ)?"

Councillor Fatemian replied:

"On-Street income and expenditure is considered in three areas. On Street Pay & Display, Controlled Parking Zones and Enforcement outside of Controlled Parking Zones. This is different to the finance tables that the County produces which are defined by a legislative requirement for parking account reporting which separates yellow lines from all types of parking bay (including loading and disabled bays) whether either be inside or outside of CPZ areas. The surplus of approximately £1.5 million is almost exclusively generated from pay & display income. The cost of enforcing controlled parking zones is almost exactly balanced with the income from permits and penalty charge notices issued with the zones. The costs of enforcement of restrictions outside of Controlled Parking Zones is similarly balanced with income from penalty charge notices."

137/13 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

The following requests to address the meeting had been agreed:

Item 6 – Councillor Nick Hards, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance

Item 7 – Councillor Nick Hards, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance

Item 8 – Councillor Nick Hards, local councillor for Didcot West

138/13 2013/14 FINANCIAL MONITORING & BUSINESS STRATEGY DELIVERY REPORT - OCTOBER 2013

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet considered a report that focussed on the delivery of the Directorate Business Strategies which were agreed as part of the Service and Resource Planning Process for 2013/14 – 2016/17. Parts 1 and 2 included projections for revenue, reserves and balances as at the end of October 2013. Changes to unringfenced grant funding were set out in Part 3 and Capital Programme monitoring was included at Part 4.

Councillor Hards, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, made a number of points in relation to the report. In particular he queried why there was a £1m underspend in the Direct Support Grant when schools were financially stressed at the moment; he also referred to the table on page 15 and paragraph 6 and onwards relating to the Children, Education and Families underspend commenting that the two did not appear to relate one to the other. He also made a number of other detailed queries relating to specific items including parking balances and also queried whether pooled budgets could be funded from both revenue and capital sources.

Cabinet Members responded to the individual queries. Councillor Heathcoat confirmed that the majority of equipment is returned and that they look at all possible sources of funding. Councillor Fatemian commented that schools were strongly encouraged to spend the DSG money referred to and that any encouragement that Councillors could give in their roles as School Governors would be welcomed. On the parking situation and CEF query he would provide a written reply to Councillor Hards.

Councillor Fatemian in proposing the recommendation, commented that a slight overspend was predicted and paid tribute to the Finance Team and officers across the board for achieving such a positive response with the budget variance moving in the right direction. He commented that the largest overspend was in the Social & Community Services budget and experience showed that this was normal at this time of the year with the Director not expecting the figure to grow any further and to decrease between now and the end of the year.

During discussion Cabinet noted that there were mechanisms in place to deal with the overspend and highlighted the role of Audit & Governance Committee and the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the report;
- (b) approve the virement requests set out in Annex 2a;
- (c) note the updated Treasury Management lending list at Annex 4;
- (d) approve the removal of a residual debt of £19,650 from the Council's accounts as set out in paragraph 39;
- (e) agree that the shortfall in revenue grant funding arising from recent unringfenced grant confirmations is met from the Budget Reserve in 2013/14 as set out in paragraph 53; and
- (f) approve the changes to the Capital Programme set out in Annex 7c; and
- (g) approve the addition of the project development budget for the A34 Chilton Junction scheme in the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 62.

139/13 SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING REPORT FOR 2014/15 - 2017/18 - DECEMBER 2013

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet had before them the second in a series on the Service & Resource Planning process for 2014/15 to 2017/18, providing councillors with information on budget issues for 2014/15 and the medium term. The report set out draft budget proposals to address shortfalls in funding and other emerging pressures identified over the medium term and provided an update on the latest financial position. The report also provided an update on government consultations and sets out the review of charges.

Councillor Nick Hards, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed the improved signs of growth and the improved collection fund predictions

referred to in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the report. He expressed concern over the potential impact of the 'bedroom tax' on collection rates. He felt that it was unacceptable that the RSG figures were not yet available from central Government. He highlighted the position with regard to Adult Social Care and welcomed the Corporate Charging Policy recognising the need to raise revenue wherever possible.

Cabinet Members responded to the points raised and in particular made it clear that top priorities were the care and respect for vulnerable groups including the safeguarding of children.

Councillor Fatemian introduced the contents of the report and addenda setting the current process within the context of recent year on year reductions in government grant and highlighting key areas including the impact of demographic changes on demand for services, the review of children's centres and the review of integrated transport. He referred to the Corporate Charging policy and thanked the Income Generation Cabinet Advisory Group for their work.

During discussion the Leader thanked the Cabinet Member and the Chief Finance Officer and her team for the work undertaken and recognised that it would be a challenging and difficult budget.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the report and also to note the addenda produced following the announcement of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement;
- (b) consider the pressures and savings set out in Annex 1 in forming its budget proposals in January 2014;
- (c) in relation to the review of charges:
 - 1) approve the updated Corporate Charging Policy;
 - 2) note those charges prescribed by legislation;
 - 3) approve the charges where there is local discretion as set out in Annex 2, giving flexibility to the Outdoor Education Centres to reduce the charge from the maximum rate to take account of demand and seasonal factors, and to vary the charges at Hill End to reflect market demands and any increase in costs (up to a maximum increase of 10% above the proposed rate applicable from 1 April 2014).

140/13NEW SCHOOLS FOR GREAT WESTERN PARK, DIDCOT: SHORTLIST OF ACADEMY TRUSTS

(Agenda Item. 8)

The Cabinet meeting of 18 September 2012 approved a process for the identification of sponsors for new academies to meet the needs of population growth such as this which requires 2 new primary schools and one secondary between 2015 and 2017.

Following this process providers have been identified from a group of 4 short-listed bidders which were assessed against criteria .The Cabinet

considered a report setting out options and were asked to agree one of the options which will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Education for a final decision.

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Councillor Nick Hards, speaking as a local Councillor recognised the urgent need for one of the primary schools but expressed some concern over the options presented. In response to a question he indicated that he would like to see the first primary school agreed but without a commitment to the secondary or further primary school.

Councillor Tilley, Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families in moving Option 2(b) commented that she had been very impressed by both GLF Academy Trust and GEMS Trust. Charlotte Christie, Academies and Collaborations Coordinator, added that the much of the criteria used in the evaluation came from the Department for Education (DfE) together with the County’s own specification. All those considered were approved sponsors.

During discussion Cabinet noted that the final decision would be taken by the Secretary of State for Education.

RESOLVED: to select option 2(b) set out below to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Education for final agreement:

Option 2b

To recommend GLF Academy Trust to provide the Secondary School and Primary School 2 to be run as an all through 4-16 school and to recommend GEMS Trust provides Primary School 1.

141/13 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 9)

The Cabinet considered a list of items for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet together with changes notified at the meeting.

RESOLVED: to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings, including the following changes to the Forward Plan:

Flood Management Risk Strategy to go to Cabinet on 28 January 2014;

Chipping Norton – Over Norton Road Zebra Crossing – Item no longer needed and deleted from Cabinet Member for Environment Delegated Decision session on 9 January 2014.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

2014