

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET
HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 2.00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WOODHATCH PLACE, 11 COCKSHOT HILL,
REIGATE, SURREY, RH2 8EF.**

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Cabinet at its next meeting.

Members: *=present

- *Tim Oliver (Chairman)
- *Natalie Bramhall
- *Clare Curran
- *Matt Furniss
- *David Lewis
- *Mark Nuti
- *Denise Turner-Stewart
- *Sinead Mooney
- *Marisa Heath
- *Kevin Deanus

Deputy Cabinet Members:

- *Maureen Attewell
- *Paul Deach
- *Jordan Beech
- *Steve Bax

Members in attendance:

Catherine Baart, Member for Earlswood and Reigate South (joined the meeting virtually)

**PART ONE
IN PUBLIC**

168/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

There were no apologies.

169/23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 31 OCTOBER 2023 [Item 2]

These were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

170/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

171/23 PROCEDURAL MATTERS [Item 4]

There were none.

172/23 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS [Item 4a]

There were six member questions. The questions and responses were published in a supplement to the agenda.

With regard to her first question (part a), Catherine Baart asked for information on what expectations had been set for officers in senior positions to undertake Carbon Literacy Training. The Member also asked for clarification on whether the goal was to have 200 additional officers complete the training by 2024/25, or 200 in total. The Cabinet Member for Environment explained that it was not a requirement for officers to complete the training as it was possible that their knowledge of the subject proceeded the training material included. The Cabinet Member further added that other different training opportunities were being explored to potentially provide a more advanced overview of the subject. The Cabinet Member further added that she believed the goal was to have an additional 200 officers attend the training by 2024/25.

In regard to her first question (part b), Catherine Baart asked for detail on actions and timelines for Project 50. The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written response outside the meeting.

173/23 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4b]

There were no public questions.

174/23 PETITIONS [Item 4c]

There were none.

175/23 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED ON REPORTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE [Item 4d]

There were none.

176/23 REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES , TASK GROUPS AND OTHER COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL [Item 5]

There were none.

177/23 LEADER / DEPUTY LEADER / CABINET MEMBER/ STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BOARD DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST CABINET MEETING [Item 6]

There were six decisions for noting.

RESOLVED:

That the decisions taken since the last Cabinet meeting be noted.

178/23 CABINET MEMBER OF THE MONTH [Item 7]

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning provided the Cabinet with an update on the work she, and the services she supports, had been undertaking. The following topics were highlighted and full details could be found within the published report.

- Children's safeguarding
- Children with Disabilities
- Corporate Parenting (including fostering and adoption)
- Children's Integrated Commissioning
- Relationships with Surrey schools
- Surrey Adult Learning (SAL)
- Home to School Travel Assistance
- The School Admissions
- Place planning
- SEND Inspection

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member of the Month update be noted.

179/23 CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS ASSESSMENT 2022/23 [Item 11]

The Leader of the Council agreed to consider this item earlier on the agenda.

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Environment who explained that Cabinet was being asked to note the findings within the assessment and approve the key areas of focus for next year as well as the approach to mitigate the evident shortfalls as set out in the conclusions. The Cabinet Member noted that It had been two years since the publication of the Delivery Plan [2] which set out to reduce between 1.2 and 2.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions by 2025, in line with Surrey's Climate Change Strategy [3]. The Cabinet Member said that, with a 34% reduction in emissions being achieved since 2019, the Council was on track to meet its 2030 net zero target. Further to this, the Council had reduced carbon emissions by 1 kilotonne through estate rationalisation and 6 kilotonnes from carbon reduction measures by March 2023. It had also delivered £2.8 M of annual bill savings, nearly £3.6 M of additional funding and 0.3 MW of solar

power. The Cabinet Member noted the key successes, as outlined in the report, and noted that the focus for next year was on solar energy.

The Cabinet Member concluded by stated that by working with multi-agency partners, across sectors, and with the council's own suppliers, the council would continue to use action on climate change and environment to deliver multiple benefits for the most vulnerable residents, Further to this the Cabinet noted the success of eco-schools in the county. The Leader added that there was a need for a clear and funded plan from central government to meet the target of net-zero by 2050.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet note the findings and approve the key areas of focus for next year as well as the approach to mitigate the evident shortfalls as set out in the conclusions.

Reasons for Decisions:

Part of the council's net-zero commitments is to produce an annual report [1]; synthesising a substantial amount of national and local data to ensure we understand if carbon emissions are reducing in line with the net-zero targets. Whilst the scope has not changed, the progress report identifies where we need to focus our attention to address the most challenging areas and ensure the Delivery Plan is as impactful and cost effective as possible.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee)

180/23 2024/25 DRAFT BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2028/29 [Item 8]

The report was introduced by the Leader of the Council who explained that the final Budget for 2024/25 would be presented to Cabinet in January 2024 and then Full Council in February 2024. Members noted that the overall outlook for 2024/25 was challenging as while budget envelopes were increasing, in line with projected funding levels, substantial increases in the cost of maintaining current service provision and increased demand were resulting in pressures increasing at a significantly higher rate than forecasted funding. The Leader outlined a number of spending efficiencies in place however noted that there was still a provisional budget gap of £13.5m for 2024/25 which would need to be closed before the budget was considered by Full Council. The Leader went on to highlight that there was financial pressure specifically in children's social care placements and Home to School Travel Assistance due to significant cost increases.

With regards to the capital budget, the Leader highlighted that aspirations remained high and that the Draft Capital Programme for 2024/25 – 2028/29 proposed ongoing investment in priority areas such as highways infrastructure, improving the condition of the council's property estate, creating additional school places which included for children with special educational needs and disabilities, the green agenda, transforming libraries and investing in adult social care accommodation with care and support. The Leader concluded by stating that the budget allowed the county council to be

fit for the future and supported and protected the county's most vulnerable residents.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources commented that it was important to recognise the challenges but also to recognise that the budget would deliver positive improvements which would benefit residents, deliver statutory services, protect frontline services, and meet the objectives of the council to ensure that no one was left behind. The Cabinet Member also highlighted the significant engagement exercises which had taken place.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet note the 2024/25 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2028/29, including progress to date in setting out spending pressures and efficiencies, as set out in Annex A.
2. That Cabinet note the provisional budget gap of £13.5m for 2024/25 and the next steps required to close the gap.
3. That Cabinet note the proposed Draft Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29 of £1.9bn set out in Section 6 of the report and Annex B
4. That Cabinet note the summary of Resident Engagement and next steps set out in Section 9 of the report.

Reasons for Decisions:

In January 2024, Cabinet will be asked to recommend a Final Budget for 2024/25 to full Council for approval in February. The draft budget sets out proposals to direct available resources to support the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities, balanced against a challenging financial environment, giving Cabinet the opportunity to comment on the proposals and next steps.

The draft budget also provides an update on the Council's SWITCH (Surrey Way, Innovation, Transformation and Change) programme, setting out the medium to long term portfolio of redesign and transformational change that will enable greater financial sustainability for the Council.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Resources and Performance Select Committee)

181/23 SURREY SCHOOLS FUNDING 2024-25 [Item 9]

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong learning who explained that the funding of all Surrey schools and the free entitlement to early years nursery provision was provided from the council's allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Each local authority was required to consult on and maintain local formula arrangements to allocate DSG to mainstream schools and early years providers. The Cabinet Member further highlighted that, in regard to Early Years, the proposals for principles to be adopted in the funding of early years in 2024/25 would be reported to Cabinet at a later date.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that the Safety Valve agreement included a 1% block transfer from the Schools' block DSG to the High Needs block in each year of the five-year term of the agreement. Although schools did not

have formal approval over the request, the Council was required to consult and share the outcome with the Secretary of State.

The Cabinet Member further noted that, following the Department for Education's (DfE) announcement that there had been an error in estimating the national total of 2024/25 pupil numbers in schools, resulting in lower formula rates, schools were advised that the council proposed to maintain the principles set out in the September consultation paper, but with a smaller increase in formula funding rates, in line with the changes made by DfE.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council implements the Department for Education's (DfE) recommended Minimum Per Pupil funding Level in full;
2. That Cabinet approves the Schools Forum's formula recommendations for schools as set out in Annex 3, be approved; and the decisions in Annex 4 implemented;
3. That Cabinet approves the transfer of 1.0% (estimated at £8.2m) from the Schools' block DSG to the High Needs DSG (subject to approval by Secretary of State).
4. That delegated authority is given to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning in consultation with the Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning and the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to approve amendments to the funding rates in the schools formula as appropriate, following receipt of the DSG settlement and DfE pupil data in December 2023. This is to ensure that total allocations to schools under this formula remain affordable within the council's DSG settlement.

Reasons for Decisions:

To comply with DfE regulations requiring formal council approval of the local funding formula for Surrey's primary and secondary schools.

(The decisions on this item can be called in by the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee)

182/23 COORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME FOR SEPTEMBER 2025 [Item 10]

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong learning who explained that the report was to ensure Surrey determined and published its coordinated admissions scheme for 2025 in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations and the School Admissions Code. The Cabinet Member stated that the report was essentially unchanged from the previous year apart from a small point of clarification within Annex 1.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet recommends that County Council approves the coordinated admissions scheme for 2025 in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations and the School Admissions Code at its meeting on 12 December 2023.

Reasons for Decisions:

- The coordinated admissions scheme for 2025 is essentially the same as 2024 with dates updated
- There is just one point of clarification in paragraph 3 of the primary and secondary scheme (pages 3 and 9 of Annex 1), but this does not alter current practice
- The coordinated admissions scheme will enable the County Council to meet its statutory duties regarding school admissions
- The coordinated admissions scheme is working well
- The Local Authority has a statutory duty to publish its coordinated admissions scheme for 2025 by 1 January 2024
- The proposed scheme meets the statutory requirements of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 and the School Admissions Code

(The decisions on this item can be called in by the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee)

183/23 APPROVAL TO PROCURE: SKILLS BOOTCAMPS [Item 12]

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth who explained that the skills Bootcamps helped Surrey County Council meet its strategic priority of 'Growing A Sustainable Economy So Everyone Can Benefit' and guiding mission 'No One Left Behind' through providing skills training to enable residents to access careers in sectors of the economy where there were skills gaps. Skills Bootcamps were an established model of addressing skills gaps in priority areas of the economy where there are recognised skills challenges and were funded by the Department for Education.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet gives 'Approval to Procure' for the commissioning of Skills Bootcamps in Surrey up to the value of £2.325m for financial year 2024-25 in the priority sectors identified, should SCC be successful in its bid for Bootcamps.
2. That Cabinet approves the delegation of the appropriate procurement route to market and any contract award decisions to the Executive Director responsible for Economic Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth.

Reasons for Decisions:

Skills Bootcamps are an established mechanism for addressing skills gaps in key sectors of the economy. There is funding available from the Department for Education to cover the costs of delivery of Skills Bootcamps by local FE colleges and training providers, as well as Surrey County Council's setup and contract management costs.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee)

184/23 2023/24 MONTH 6 (SEPTEMBER) FINANCIAL REPORT [Item 13]

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources who provided the Cabinet with an update on the County Council's 2023/24 financial position, for revenue and capital budgets, as at 30th September 2023 (M6) and the expected outlook for the remainder of the financial year.

With regard to the revenue budget, local government continued to work in a challenging environment of sustained and significant pressures. At M6, the Council was forecasting an overspend of £0.9m against the 2023/24 revenue budget, after the application of the contingency budget. In addition to the residual overspend, £15.5m of net risks to the forecast position had been quantified, a reduction since month 5. The application of the contingency reduced the overall net forecast overspend position and enabled Directorates to focus on maximising the opportunities to offset further risks of overspends, in order to contain costs within available budget envelopes. Alongside this, the identification of these areas of focus, the Council had assessed the level of reserves, balancing the need to ensure ongoing financial resilience with the need to ensure funds were put to best use. The level of reserves held by the Council provided additional financial resilience should the residual forecast overspend not be effectively mitigated.

With regard to the capital budget, a capital budget reset was approved by Cabinet on 31 October 2023, to ensure that the budget reflected spend profiles more accurately, taking into account known delays, additional in-year approvals and reflecting the current supplier market and wider economic conditions impacting on programme delivery. At month 6, capital expenditure of £267.7m is forecast for 2023/24, a variance of £0.4m to the re-set budget of £267.3m.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet notes the Council's forecast revenue budget (after the application of the full contingency budget) and capital budget positions for the year.

Reasons for Decisions:

This report is to comply with the agreed policy of providing a monthly budget monitoring report to Cabinet for approval of any necessary actions.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Resources and Performance Select Committee)

Meeting closed at 3.30 pm

Chairman

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