

CABINET	<i>Gloucestershire County Council</i>
23 November 2022	
Minutes	

**PRESENT
MEMBERSHIP:**

Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE - Leader of Council
 Cllr Lynden Stowe – Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance and Change
 Cllr Carole Allaway Martin – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Commissioning
 Cllr Dave Norman – Cabinet Member for Fire, Community Safety and Libraries
 Cllr Phil Robinson – Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Bus Transport
 Cllr David Gray – Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning
 Cllr Stephen Davies – Cabinet Member for Children’s Safeguarding and Early Years
 Cllr Kathy Williams – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery

Apologies:

Cllr Dom Morris – Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood

1. Apologies

See above

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 21 September 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Questions at Cabinet Meetings

Six public questions were asked. No supplementary questions were asked.

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Nineteen Member questions were asked. The following supplementary questions were asked:

Question 1 – Cllr John Bloxson asked would the report author meet with parish councillors to identify how communities could apply for reduced speed limits.

Cllr Dave Norman replied he was happy to meet to see if positive progress could be made. This would need to include the local highways manager. He asked the member to formally write to him with suggestions of dates and times.

Question 7 – Cllr Roger Whyborn asked about the data and asked why did the strategic cycleway largely omit the Cotswolds given the numbers of killed and seriously injured?

Cllr Dave Norman suggested that the member put the question in writing so he could raise with officers.

Question 8 – Cllr Roger Whyborn asked what was the mechanism to engage with the council to get things done in relation to TROs.

Cllr Dave Norman replied that before any new speed limit traffic regulation order could be made there was a nationally prescribed TRO procedure, including consulting with all key stakeholders. He requested that the member contact him with more details on the issues.

5. 28-Day Emergency Fostering, PACE and Remand Beds

Cllr Stephen Davies, sought Cabinet approval to initiate a tendering process for a new contract or (as appropriate) contracts for the provision of the following three categories of service: (1) a 28-day same day/emergency placement service for Looked After Children; (2) a PACE (Police and Crime Evidence Act 1984) bed fostering service; and (3) a Remand Fostering service. This would allow a new contract or contracts to be awarded as part of Gloucestershire's Sufficiency Strategy.

There were three types of fostering identified in the report. Members noted that these were 28 Day Foster Homes for Children in Care - The aim would be to provide 12 short term foster homes within Gloucestershire, on an emergency basis for up to 28 days whilst there was a search for a permanent home. In addition there were Fostering PACE BEDs - To provide 3 Emergency PACE beds for young people who are being investigated by the Police. Finally the tender would include 3 REMAND Fostering Beds for young people who were remanded by the courts.

The 28-day window allowed appropriate long-term arrangements that might include finding permanent foster carers who were right for that child, limiting the risk of multiple placements, and causing any further unnecessary distress.

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The aim of the Strategy and this provision was to reduce the number of short term moves which would contribute to improved stability for children

Having considered all of the information, Cabinet noted the report and

RESOLVED to:

Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years to:

1. Conduct a competitive procurement process in respect of a contract or (as appropriate) contracts divided into the following lots:

Lot 1: supply of up to twelve (12) emergency/28 days or fewer foster placements; and

Lot 2: supply of up to three (3) Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) beds to meet the needs of young people who have been arrested. Additionally, this lot will include the supply of up to another three (3) Remand foster carers for young people on remand to the Police or the courts. (i.e., to supply both 3 PACE beds and 3 Remand beds) Such lots may be awarded to the same tenderer under a single contract or awarded to two separate tenderers under two separate contracts. The proposed contract(s) shall continue for an initial period of five years and include an option to extend its/their terms for a further period of not more than two years.

2. Award such contract(s) to the preferred tenderer(s); and

3. Determine whether to exercise the option to extend the term of such contract(s) for a further period of not more than two years on the expiry of the initial five-year term.

6. Children & Families Capital Programme Update

Cllr Philip Robinson asked Cabinet to approve changes to the Children & Families Capital Programme.

County Council had approved the Children & Families Capital Programme for 2022/23 on 16th February 2022. The additional / updated schemes represented the ongoing commitment to ensuring sufficient school places were available and improving facilities at schools across Gloucestershire, to enable all children and young people to benefit from high quality and accessible education provision.

The delivery and opening of the New High School Leckhampton represented a significant achievement in the Council's enduring commitment to delivering high quality school places where they are needed. The school had been built and the final cost was £34.6m, including all additional works.

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There had been some Section 106 Developer Contributions received from housing developments which would be used towards specific projects to enable schools to meet the associated demand for local places. Schemes to provide school places had been temporarily used basic need funding. By replacing the basic need grant currently allocated to the schemes, the grant could be re-allocated to support other priority capital projects for Children & Young People in Gloucestershire.

Members highlighted the importance of the Section 106 funding and the importance of ensuring that when developers brought forward new housing that a sensible settlement was in place to ensure the provision of education.

Having considered all of the information, Cabinet noted the report and

RESOLVED to:

Approve the changes to the Children & Families Capital Programme as set out in the report:

1. An addition of £4.600 million for the High School Leckhampton funded by £3.520 million from unallocated basic need and £1.080 million s106 contribution.
2. An addition of £441k developer contributions and a transfer of £441k grant to unallocated Basic Need Grant.
3. An addition of £18k s106 contribution towards the Dursley C of E Primary capital project.

7. Home to School and Social Care Transport

Cllr Philip Robinson sought Cabinet approval to reshape the management and delivery of Home to School and Adult Social Care transport service provision.

He outlined that in the previous year the budget had been £17m, with £16m of that for education transport. In March the County Councils Network outlined the challenges in this area. To help the Council manage the provision, a review of passenger transport was carried out and concluded that there was an opportunity to transform and modernise the service.

The council needed specialist support to implement a transformation programme that will enable the Council to deliver transport within budget in the coming years. The project would provide savings and cost avoidance via a number of workstreams.

The Cabinet Report outlined the request to gain approval for an external consultant (Edge Public Solutions) to come in and run a full 3-year project to reshape the management and delivery of home-to-school and adult social care transport.

The project provided an opportunity to shift to a greater performance focus, including the delivery of a number of key efficiency initiatives. It would provide bespoke travel solutions.

The total financial benefit of the entire project was forecast at £3.3m with an on-going sustainable net benefit of £2.5m. £1.57m investment would be required in the early stages of the project. This would be funded from the Corporate Transformation Budget.

Having considered all of the information, Cabinet noted the report and

RESOLVED to:

1. approves without further competition, the award of a 3 year Call-Off Contract, under an ESPO Framework Agreement, to the preferred tenderer, namely EDGE Public Solutions Ltd, under which it shall supply such management services and resources as are necessary to deliver a three-year change programme within the council's Home to School transport and Adult Social Care (ASC) transport service areas. The award shall be made in accordance with the direct contract award criteria under the ESPO Framework Agreement;
2. delegates authority to the Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Bus Transport, to:
 - a) conduct a competitive procurement process for a contract in respect of the supply of specialist software to support efficient route planning for Home to School transport and other services as appropriate and then to award such contract to the successful tenderer;
 - b) undertake a comprehensive market engagement programme with transport providers to inform a phased procurement of contracted Home to School and Adult Social Care transport provision; and
 - c) update relevant processes and Service Level Agreements between the restructured ITU and teams in the Children & Families and Adults directorates to support the new working practices with a view to ensuring effective service delivery in the long-term.

8. Support to Refugees on the Homes for Ukraine (HFU) Scheme

Cllr Kathy Williams sought Cabinet ratification of the decision taken by the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery, and the Corporate Leadership Team, to allocate Homes for Ukraine (HFU) Scheme grant funding received by the council from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in accordance with the conditions of the

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grant; and to seek delegated authority in relation to the future allocation of funding on the basis described in the report.

The Homes for Ukraine (HFU) Scheme allowed Ukrainian nationals and their immediate family members to be sponsored by individuals or organisations who could offer them a home in the UK. Ukrainian guests were able to live and work in the UK for up to three years, as well as having access to healthcare, employment, benefits and other support.

National government had provided funding of £10,500 per guest, with an additional top-up for child education. This would be paid to upper tier authorities for funding support to Ukrainian guests when they arrived in the UK. Although £200 of this funding was designated as a 'welcome' payment for newly arrived guests, the remainder was un-ringfenced.

Broadly, the costs associated with the HFU scheme fit into the following categories:

- Mandated safeguarding and accommodation checks
- Administration of the scheme including staff costs, variation to contracts, ongoing burdens to services such as fostering and incidentals such as printing, translation and car hire
- Costs associated with guest welfare and integration into the community including mental health support, transport, and payments to support groups
- Housing costs including for emergency and temporary accommodation.

On become aware that he had a disclosable pecuniary interest in this matter, Cllr Stephen Davies declared that interest and left the room for the remainder of that item.

Members commented on how well the scheme was being run and acknowledged the support provided by schools. A large amount of work had been carried out over a number of years to support individuals coming into the County away from conflict.

Having considered all of the information, Cabinet noted the report and

RESOLVED to:

a) Ratify a decision taken by the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery, and the Corporate Leadership Team, to allocate (in accordance with Government "Homes for Ukraine" guidance and UK subsidy control regime requirements) Homes for Ukraine Scheme grant funding received by the council from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Such funding was allocated during the period 28 March 2022 to 23 November 2022 to the activities described in Appendix 1 of this report in the proportions described therein.

b) Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery and the Deputy Chief Executive & Executive Director of Corporate Resources, to consider and, if appropriate, approve the allocation (in accordance with Government “Homes for Ukraine” guidance and UK subsidy control regime requirements) of future Homes for Ukraine Scheme grant funding. Such funding shall be allocated from 23 November 2022 onwards to the activities described in Appendix 1 of this report in the proportions described therein.

9. Gloucestershire Road Safety Policy

Cllr Dave Norman asked Cabinet to agree to the recommendations outlined in the report, to review feedback from the recent public consultation and agree a road safety policy to make Gloucestershire’s roads safer for all.

Cabinet understood the journey that had been taken to reach a point where a policy had been developed. The Cabinet Member gave a commitment to ensure it would not ‘gather dust’. Under the Road Traffic Act 1988, the local authority must prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety. In addition, Gloucestershire’s Local Transport Plan set out the wider role to improve safety, security and health by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport.

Gloucestershire was facing some tough challenges with the levels of killed and seriously injured casualties increasing across the network, over the last decade, following good progress and reductions in the early 2000’s. National studies showed that 5 of the 6 worse performing authorities were in the Southwest with Gloucestershire being number 6.

A draft Road Safety Policy had therefore been developed earlier in the year designed to bring a greater focus to being more data led in our investment; working in partnership; changing driver behaviour; and meeting community aspiration alongside the Community Speedwatch Fund. The draft policy proposed a focus on 9 core themes and the adoption of 6 elements of the Safe System. The policy also set an ambition to halve the current killed and seriously injured casualties over the next 10 years and to aspire to the ‘Vision Zero’ objective to eradicate killed and seriously injured casualties by 2050.

The draft policy underwent an 8-week public consultation from 18th July to 11th September 2022. 520 organisations and members of the public responded to the 34 questions formulated around the identified areas within the policy. There was strong support for the policy, and in most instances those not supporting some elements felt that the approach wasn’t going far enough. Where appropriate, consultation feedback had been incorporated into the draft policy.

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The Council could not achieve its aspirations for road safety alone and partners such as the Police, Health services, Education, Vehicle industry, Central Government etc all had a vital role to play.

A small core level of Capital and Revenue was already funded within existing base budgets, however, additional resources would be required to deliver the objectives of the policy and further work was underway to identify options to support longer-term delivery.

Members noted the important balancing act around the provision of resources to tackle the issues across the County.

Having considered all of the information, Cabinet noted the report and

RESOLVED to:

Approve and adopt the Road Safety Policy as shown at Appendix A of this report.

That funding options to deliver additional Road Safety policy elements are considered as part of the 2023/24 budget setting and MTFs through potential adjustments to the Highways Capital Programme.

10. Library Strategy 2023-2028

Cllr Dave Norman sought Cabinet approval for the new Library Strategy 2023-2028 for recommendation to County Council.

The current Library Strategy was formally adopted in 2012 and was outdated. The new Library Strategy 2023-2028 outlined the vision and aims for Gloucestershire's modern library service. Views of Gloucestershire residents were sought between 4th July and 23rd September 2022 and had been incorporated into the strategy.

The results of the public consultation were included within the report at Appendix 1. It was a very positive public response with 94.9% of people satisfied or very satisfied with their library service. Other responses of note included:

- 76.9% of respondents stated that they knew more about what the library service has to offer after reading the Strategy.
- 69.6% of respondents rated their overall opinion of the strategy as good with 19.2% rating it as excellent.
- 77% of respondents felt the strategy was easy to understand, 76% that the case studies were relevant and 75% that the core offer demonstrates what they can expect from the library service.

The Strategy had also been updated following the formal decisions taken to re-locate the libraries in Stroud & Gloucester and the announcement that Gloucestershire Libraries had been successful in their bid to become an Arts

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Council England National Portfolio Organisation. Out of 1700 applications only 990 applications were successful so that was a great achievement.

Having considered all of the information, Cabinet noted the report and

RESOLVED to:

Recommend that the Council adopt the Library Strategy 2023-2028 as part of the Council's Policy Framework

11. Financial Monitoring Report 2022/23

Cllr Lynden Stowe provided an update on the year-end forecast for the 2022/23 County Council's Revenue and Capital Budgets.

The forecast revenue year end position based on September 2022 (Period 6) forecasts for the 2022/23 financial year was an overspend of £9.930 million all of which is non Covid-19 related. A balanced position was forecast in relation to Covid-19 expenditure and income.

The largest non-Covid-19 variance was the £11.642 million forecast overspend in Children and Families and £1.35 million forecast overspend in Economy, Environment & Infrastructure, partially offset by the £3.907 million underspend in Technical & Countywide. The overspend in Children and Families continued to be primarily against the external placements budget, due to increasing numbers of children in care and the cost of placements due to limited market availability, both of which were national issues. Social care staffing and disability services were also over-spending.

The forecast outturn position for Capital 2022/23 was £151.125 million, against the budget of £163.924 million, giving a forecast in-year slippage of £12.799 million.

The 2022-23 pay awards were detailed in the report and it was explained that this would have an impact on the in-year budget, a £5.2m shortfall to be funded from general reserves.

The plan was to begin the budget consultation in early December. Given the financial uncertainty it was highly likely that the Council would be consulting on an unbalanced budget, and a range of options to balance the budget. The Leader thanked Cllr Stowe and Steve Mawson for their work on the budget given the national uncertainty in relation to the upcoming financial settlement.

Having considered all of the information, Cabinet noted the report and

RESOLVED to:

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1. Note the forecast revenue year end position based on September 2022 (Period 6) forecasts for the 2022/23 financial year, which is an overspend of £9.930 million all of which relates to non-Covid-19 expenditure. The Covid-19 related expenditure and income outturn is forecast to be a balanced position.
2. Note the action in the report to reduce the in year overspend currently identified.
3. Note the forecast capital year end position as at the end of August 2022, forecast made in September 2022 (P6) of £151.125 million against the current budget of £163.924 million.
4. Note the intention to re-profile the capital budget to reflect the current forecast.
5. Approve the £225k decrease to the capital programme and changes as detailed in Section B

Leader of Council

Meeting concluded at 10:55