

CABINET	<i>Gloucestershire County Council</i>
20 September 2023	
Minutes	

**PRESENT
MEMBERSHIP:**

Cllr Stephen Davies	- Cabinet Member for Children’s Safeguarding & Early Years
Cllr David Gray	- Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning
Cllr Philip Robinson	- Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Bus Transport
Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	- Leader of Council
Cllr Stephan Fifield	- Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care (Delivery)
Cllr Dom Morris	- Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood
Cllr Carole Allaway Martin	- Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care (Commissioning)
Cllr Dave Norman	- Cabinet Member for Fire, Community Safety and Libraries
Cllr Lynden Stowe	- Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Change

Apologies:

1. Apologies

See above.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting on 19 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

No declarations were made at the meeting.

4. Questions at Cabinet Meetings

No public or member questions were received.

5. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG)

- 5.1 Cabinet noted the report which had been received from the Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.2 At the Gloucestershire County Council meeting on 9 November 2022, members considered Motion 908 - Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The motion included a request that the Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee investigate and produce a report for Cabinet on the steps the County Council could be taking to address VAWG in the county. Following in-depth briefings and discussions at Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee meetings on 7 March, 16 May and 18 July 2023, the committee agreed the report for presentation to Cabinet at its meeting on 20 September 2023.
- 5.3 Cllr Stephan Fifield, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery, responded to the recommendations within the report thanking Cllr Spivey as chair and thanking the officers who put the report together. He indicated that Cabinet would be accepting the recommendations.

6. Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report

- 6.1 Cllr Lynden Stowe provided an update to Cabinet on the year-end forecast for the 2023/24 County Council's Revenue and Capital Budget and reported on the Council's performance and risk during Quarter 1 of 2023/24.
- 6.2 The forecast revenue year-end position for quarter 1 of the 2023/24 financial year showed a balanced position. The largest variances were the £4.970 million forecast overspend in Children and Families, offset by favourable variances of £4.557 million in Economy, Environment & Infrastructure, and £1.507 million in Technical & Countywide budgets. 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.
- 6.3 The council was forecasting delivery of £16.076 million of savings in 2023/24, against a target of £21.101 million in 2023/24 (76.18%). £5.025 million savings were at risk, predominantly within Adult Social Care.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- 6.4 With regards to Capital, the forecast outturn position for 2023/24 was £156.524 million, against the budget of £156.567 million. The overall capital programme was recommended to increase by £1.582 million, as set out in section C of the report.
- 6.5 The report showed that, despite a continued challenging context of increased demand for our services and the significant transformation or improvement work that was being undertaken across the organisation, the Council was achieving the goals it had set ourselves, and delivering the priorities set out in our Council Strategy.
- 6.6 In Quarter 1, the Council had seen workforce pressures around turnover and vacancies ease in a number of areas of the organisation. This would support the right conditions for the ongoing delivery of objectives. The majority of strategic priorities were on target, with delivery on track. For the small number of objectives rated as at risk or compromised, mitigating actions had been identified. Just over two-thirds of performance measures were performing well.
- 6.7 The report also highlighted areas of performance where the council wished to push for improvement. Road traffic incidents on the County's roads remained high. Through the new Road Safety Strategy the Council wanted to make sure it was doing all it could to prevent avoidable accidents and bring down the number of people killed and injured on our roads. There were still challenges in the number of suspensions and exclusions in our schools and school attendance for our children in care. In addition, due to significant demand for Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments, the Council continued to face pressures in completing those in a timely way and had seen an increase in complaints upheld as a result.

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

RESOLVED to:

1. Note the forecast revenue year end position based on July 2023 forecasts for the 2023/24 financial year shows a balanced position.
2. Note delivery of £16.076 million of savings against a target of £21.101 million in 2023/24 or 76.18% of target.
3. Note the forecast capital year end position as at the end of June 2023, forecast made in July 2023, of £156.524 million against a current budget of £156.567 million.
4. Approve a transfer of £9.4 million to the Rates Retention Reserve as a result of additional un-ringfenced s31 grant.
5. Approve a transfer of £8.320 million to the Pay and Prices Reserves as a result of additional electricity income from the Energy from Waste facility.
6. Approve the £1.582 million increase to the capital programme as detailed in Section C.

7. Note Section D Treasury Management Prudential Indicators - a new requirement for 2023/24

8. Consider this report of the Council's performance and risks and identify any areas of concern requiring further analysis, assurance or action.

7. Commissioning a Technology Enabled Care Service

- 7.1 Cllr Carole Allaway-Martin and Cllr Stephan Fifield, sought Cabinet approval to conduct a competitive procurement process to deliver a Technology Enabled Care Service (TEC).
- 7.2 The report set out the rationale to continue to provide a TEC service, for redesigning the model of care and a recommendation for commissioning the new service.
- 7.3 Recommendations were to conduct a competitive procurement process for the supply of a TEC service, with a proposed contract period of 5 years with an option to extend of 2 years. TEC was a wide-ranging term that covered Telecare, assistive technology and other types of technology relating to promoting wellbeing and independence including data capture and analysis through digital devices. TEC enabled the unwell, disabled, or elderly to receive care at home and continue to live independently. The current service supported around 2,500 people.
- 7.4 The new contract was required to be in place for the commencement of the new financial year 2024/2025.
- 7.5 By the end of 2025, the traditional telephone network would be switched off and replaced with digital infrastructure affecting every landline in the country. All TEC Services needed to move from analogue to digital to meet the requirements of the 'Digital Switchover'. Digital Switchover would commence in the current financial year prior to contract award; minimising the risk of vulnerable users being left without a service. From October 2023 current priority Telecare clients and new clients would be provided with digital devices.
- 7.6 It was explained that the report was about increasing the amount of people who could stay in their own homes and have greater choice regarding their care. It was emphasised that the use of technology had real social value in helping people to be more integrated in society rather than be isolated.
- 7.7 Carers would be supported through this process. This was an opportunity for service redesign, taking account of the current and future needs of people and advancements in the digital equipment, enabling a move from a reactive service to a more proactive data enabled service.
- 7.8 A full options analysis had been undertaken and the recommendation was to develop a hybrid model with elements of in-house and outsourced services (Option 4). This would enable the Council to maintain the scope and activity within the

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

contract through the assessment process and to de-risk the equipment supply by outsourcing this to a preferred provider.

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

RESOLVED to:

Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Adult Social Care Commissioning and Adult Social Care Delivery to:

1. Serve notice to the existing service provider via the Section 75 agreement of the NHS Act 2006.
2. Conduct a competitive procurement process in respect of a contract for the supply of a Technology Enabled Care Equipment Service (TEC Service). The proposed contract shall continue for an initial period of 5 years with an option to extend its term for a further period of not more than 2 years;
3. Award such a contract to the preferred provider; and
4. Determine whether to exercise the option to extend the term of such contract for a further period of 2 years on its fifth anniversary

8. Procure and Award a Contract to Deliver a Healthwatch Gloucestershire Service.

- 8.1 Cllr Carole Allaway Martin and Cllr Stephen Davies sought Cabinet approval to conduct a competitive procurement process for the delivery of a local Healthwatch Service in Gloucestershire from 1st April 2024. In addition, to delegate authority to award the contract to the preferred tenderer to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet portfolio holder for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years and the Cabinet portfolio holder for Adult Social Care Commissioning.
- 8.2 Healthwatch was the independent consumer champion for people who used health and social care. Gloucestershire County Council had a statutory duty to design and commission a local Healthwatch to perform functions that enabled local voices to influence and improve health and social care services.
- 8.3 The current contract was due to expire on 31st March 2024 and a new arrangement needed to be put in place.
- 8.4 The Cabinet paper set out two options with the preferred option being to undertake a legally compliant procurement process to find a supplier that would contract with the council to perform and develop Healthwatch Gloucestershire functions. This would be for a five year contract with the option to extend for a further two years.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- 8.5 With a view to the current contract expiring in March 2024, engagement activity had taken place throughout May/June 2023 and involved the Council engaging with service users, individuals, groups, organisations, and wider stakeholders.

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

RESOLVED to:

Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the above-mentioned Cabinet portfolio holders to:

1. Conduct a competitive procurement process in respect of a contract for the supply of a local Healthwatch service. The proposed contract shall continue for an initial period of five years and include an option to extend its term for two years.
2. Award such contract to the preferred tenderer.
3. Determine whether to exercise the option to extend the term of such contract for two years on its fifth anniversary.

9. Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP+) funding and update on Dynamic Purchasing System for Transport

- 9.1 Cllr Philip Robinson sought Cabinet approval for the allocation of BSIP+ funding for the provision of improved bus services throughout Gloucestershire during 2023/4 and 2024/5; and to authorise Officers to procure these service improvements in line with the report.
- 9.2 The DfT had provided a grant of £4.418 million over two financial years, primarily to support bus services in Gloucestershire, with the aim of increasing bus patronage and stabilising the local bus network. This Council must disburse that sum quickly, through standard procurement processes. The funding could only be used for revenue purposes and could not be used for capital projects.
- 9.3 Following conversations with operators, proposals have been drawn up shown in Appendix 1 in the report. It was proposed to secure some additional evening and weekend bus services, which provided additional opportunities for residents, whilst supporting local economies. There was also a proposal to increase the daytime frequency of some other bus services.
- 9.4 It is also planned to procure 'The Robin' demand-responsive bus services to extend this to three additional rural parts of Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury, Stroud and South Cotswolds areas, to increase the proportion of residents who have access to public transport services.
- 9.5 Receipt of most of this funding was conditional on the Council agreeing an Enhanced Partnership with Bus Operators by the end of September 2023. Good progress had been made, and no objections had been received.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- 9.6 The report also requested authority to re-procure a number of public and home-to-school transport services where the expected contract value was predicted to be in excess of £250,000. Offering longer contracts incentivises operators to procure newer vehicles and to offer lower prices. This was not related to the BSIP+ proposal.
- 9.7 It was noted that good public transport would help the council meet its targets around reducing carbon emissions. Thanks were passed on to the Integrated Transport Team.

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

RESOLVED to:

Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Economy, Environment & Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Bus Transport to:

1. Procure contracts for the supply of the bus services set out In Appendix 1 from suppliers admitted to the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), whose combined aggregate value shall not exceed £2.384m per annum for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years and
2. Procure contracts for the supply of the re-procurement of existing public bus services and home to school services set out in Appendix 2 from suppliers admitted to the DPS whose combined aggregate value shall not exceed £15.5m over their maximum contract length of 5 years.

10. The next phase of ‘Levelling Up Our Communities’

- 10.1 Cllr Mark Hawthorne sought Cabinet approval for further investment of £1,479,954 into projects and activities that will support communities to ‘level up’ in Gloucestershire. The projects and activities would include targeted interventions to address broader levelling up issues which were not necessarily geographically based.
- 10.2 The latest Council strategy (2022-26) built on the UK Government's Levelling Up White Paper (May 2022) by setting an ambition to 'level up' communities in Gloucestershire. Following the Levelling Up Our Communities Conference in May 2022, the Levelling Up Together grant scheme was developed and launched, as part of the first phase of 'levelling up work'. The Levelling Up Together grant scheme had funded 52 projects, working in the areas in Gloucestershire falling into the top 10% most deprived nationally (according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019).

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- 10.3 The next phase of 'levelling up work' sought to go further; by focusing on issues which according to national and local evidence, exacerbate inequalities regardless of where people live.
- 10.4 Approval was sought to 'top up' the Build Back Better Councillor grant scheme by £10,000 per electoral division. Members commented that the increase was welcome and outlined the positive initiatives that had been funded already through the scheme. It was important to use the money to make a difference to the most vulnerable in communities.
- 10.5 In addition, there were four areas selected for investment: digital exclusion, impact of the increase in cost of living, online harms and vulnerable young people and access to services and community transport. The report provided details on the work that would be carried out for each of those areas working in partnership.

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

RESOLVED to:

Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities to:

- 1. Allocate £949,954 from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) to fund targeted interventions (described in Appendix A of this report) whose purpose shall be to address broader levelling up issues which are not necessarily geographically based such as, but not exclusive to, digital inclusion, cost of living, online harms and community transport.
- 2. Allocate a top up of £530,000 from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) to the Build Back Better Councillor Scheme for the purposes of levelling up as part of the council's ambition to 'level up' Gloucestershire communities (giving an additional £10,000 to each County Councillor to spend in their division).

11. Gloucestershire Childcare Sufficiency Duty report 2023

- 11.1 Cllr Stephen Davies sought Cabinet approval for Gloucestershire's Childcare Sufficiency Duty report (2023).
- 11.2 There had been a 2.9% increase in overall provision. The document looked at the standard of that provision.
- 11.3 The quality of childcare in Gloucestershire was high: 88.9%% of child minders and day care providers were graded 'good' or 'outstanding'. 4% (21) were currently rated as Requires Improvement and 2.3% (12) as Inadequate.
- 11.4 Despite the challenges faced by the sector, the current assessment of Early Years and childcare provision evidence sufficient provision in most areas of the county, with some gaps and emerging concerns in specific place planning areas. These

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

were set out in the sufficiency report along with actions to mitigate any further risk to sufficiency.

- 11.5 The most significant challenge for the sector and the supporting Local Authority services would be their capacity to respond to the expansion of the Early Years and childcare offer, set out in the Chancellor's Spring Budget announcement. The Council was still waiting for DFE to provide information about additional funding to plan for and deliver the expanded offer.

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

RESOLVED to:

Approve the Childcare Sufficiency Duty report 2023 and delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years to make any final changes prior to publication.

12. Schedule of Proposed Disposals

- 12.1 Cllr Lynden Stowe sought Cabinet approval for the proposed Schedule of Disposals in order to meet capital receipts targets.
- 12.2 Prior to the discussion, members were advised that, should Cabinet wish to discuss the contents of the exempt information reported at Appendix A of the report, consideration would need to be given as to whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Regulation 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 12.3 Cabinet agreed to consider this item without having to refer to the exempt information.
- 12.4 Approval of both Schedules of Disposals and the declaration of those sites as surplus to requirements, would deliver future capital receipts. For 2022/23, AMPS achieved £2.092 million in capital receipts. Capital receipts received and sales agreed to date for 2023/24 currently totalled £12.878 million.

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

RESOLVED to:

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

1. Approve that those sites described in Appendix A (Exempt) which have previously been declared surplus by Cabinet in March 2023 and not yet disposed of, continue to be declared surplus to requirements.
2. Approve the sites listed on the proposed Schedule of Disposals Appendix B (Exempt) surplus to the Council's land and property requirements.
3. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Asset Management and Property Services to dispose of these sites in consultation with the Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Finance and Change and Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director for Corporate Resources.

Leader of Council

Meeting concluded at 10:55