

Minutes of the Cabinet

Thursday, 28th October, 2021 at 6.00 pm
In Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley

Present:

Cabinet Members

Councillor P Harley (Leader - Chair)
Councillor D Vickers (Deputy Leader – Vice-Chair)
Councillors N Barlow, R Buttery, S Clark, S Keasey, I Kettle, S Phipps and L Taylor-Childs

Opposition Group Members Nominated to attend the Cabinet

Councillors S Ali, A Aston, C Barnett, C Bayton, J Foster, P Lowe, S Ridney and P Sahota

Officers

K O'Keefe – Chief Executive, I Newman – Director of Finance and Legal, P Mountford – Head of Planning and Regeneration and M Johal – Senior Democratic Services Officer

28 **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor K Shakespeare.

29 **Declarations of Interest**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

30 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September, 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

31 **Capital Programme Monitoring**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Legal on proposed amendments to the Capital Programme.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Services undertook to respond to the Opposition Spokesperson on timescales relating to the refurbishment of Jack Newell and Woodhouse Courts.

In responding to a query from the Opposition Group Spokesperson for Public Realm about the Lister Road Depot Redevelopment project and the reasons for associated delays, the Leader indicated that this was primarily due to Covid. However, further details would be provided by the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing.

Resolved

That the Council be recommended:-

- (1) That progress with the 2021/22 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendices A and B to the report submitted, be noted.
- (2) That the expenditure of £66,000 on Air Quality Monitoring Equipment be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report submitted.
- (3) That the urgent amendment to the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 7 of the report submitted, be noted.

32 **Revenue Monitoring 2021/22**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Legal on the forecast 2021/22 revenue outturn position.

Although it was appreciated that the Comprehensive Spending Review had not been published, reference was made to inequalities and the need to address difficulties encountered by people, such as the rising costs of living. It was queried how the local authority would be providing support. Clarification was also sought on associated risks going forward. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal stated that, overall, the budget was fairly positive. The main budget headline related to a 3% increase across the board as well as more money being available for people that worked. With regard to risks and spending pressures this would be analysed once the funding from Government was known.



In responding to further questions and the need to involve Ward Members, details were provided on the formulation and submission of bids for the levelling up fund and that it required approval from the relevant Member of Parliament. Efforts would be made to ensure the Black Country Local Authorities were united to maximise and benefit from all funding opportunities available.

In response to a query from the Leader, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise confirmed his acceptance of a place on the Very Light Rail Board.

Resolved

That the forecast revenue outturn position for 2021/22 and the effect on Balances at 31st March, 2022, be noted.

33 **Review of Housing Finance**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Legal presenting the latest financial forecasts for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets for 2021/22.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Services responded to a query on the timescales for completion of the internal review of garage sites and indicated that it was a transient review. There was a need to consider smaller plots of land together, as it was not viable to develop individually and that they would be progressed in line with the rest of the programme.

Resolved

- (1) That the latest HRA budget forecast for 2021/22 and the revised Public Sector Housing capital programme for 2020/21, be noted.
 - (2) That the other proposals, as outlined in paragraph 2 of the report as a basis for scrutiny, be noted.
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34 **Approving Amendments to the Black Country Executive Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement**

A report of the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive was submitted on entering into the Deed of Variation to the Black Country Executive Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement and proposed amendments highlighted in the Appendix to the report.



Resolved

- (1) That all proposed amendments to the Collaboration Agreement covering the Joint Committee Advisory Board removal, as indicated in Appendix A to the report, be approved.
- (2) That Officers be authorised to draft and enter into the appropriate Black Country Executive Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement Deed of Variation.
- (3) That the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to take part in any negotiations and to make any minor amendments prior to its sealing as a Deed.

35 **Issues Arising from Scrutiny Committees**

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee – 20th October, 2021

The outcome of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee on 20th October, 2021 concerning the ‘call-in’ of the item on Mental Health in the Community was reported.

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet formally review the structure for adult mental health services in Dudley Council and the feedback from the consultation process at its December meeting.
- (2) That no changes to mental health services in Dudley be made until further discussion by the Cabinet in the December meeting and the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee thereafter.

36 **To Consider Any Questions from Members to the Leader (Cabinet Procedure Rule 2.5)**

Pursuant to Cabinet Procedure Rule, 2.5, formal notice in writing had been given to the Monitoring Officer by Councillor S Ridley (Opposition Spokesperson for Children and Young People) to ask the Leader the following question:-



“I was prompted by your comments on the Source youth club I applaud the efforts of those involved and applaud our Children in Care are also using the facility as a base, I too have been a supporter and a mover in providing youth clubs for our young people in Coseley and as you are aware campaigned for a building to remain in Coseley after the building of Willowfields.. The youth centre on Clayton park was our achievement however it was closed along with others across the Borough with the withdrawal of Youth Services. My question is can I have your commitment to see youth clubs once again in our communities, in our wards across the Borough whether they have newly acquired Tory councillors or not. There is a need for young people to be supported in their struggle to recover from post Covid and to build resilience for our young people to move forward. This can only be achieved with positive support from the authority and working with the voluntary sector. I look forward to your support in seeing a “can do” attitude within the authority to see all of our young people able to attend a youth club in their community.”

Response from the Leader:-

Applauded efforts of various Councillors for setting up youth provision in their respective Wards and a commitment was given to pursue the issue. The Leader further commented that although youth provision in the Borough was moving in the right direction, the long-term aspiration was to have facilities similar to that of Wolverhampton.

The meeting ended at 6.35 pm

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

