

CABINET

THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Simon Dudley (Chairman), Phillip Bicknell, Carwyn Cox, Geoff Hill, Derek Wilson, Natasha Airey, MJ Saunders, Samantha Rayner, Jack Rankin

Principal Members and Deputy Lead Members also in attendance: Christine Bateson, Lisa Targowska, David Evans, Stuart Carroll and David Hilton

Also in attendance: Councillor Malcolm Beer, Councillor Edward Wilson and Councillor Lynne Jones

Officers: Rob Stubbs, Alison Alexander, Louisa Dean, Russell O'Keefe, David Scott, Karen Shepherd and Andy Jeffs

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Coppinger

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bateson declared an Interest in the item 'Providing Safer Routes to Charters School' as a Governor of Charter School, which was located in her ward. She remained in the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That:

- i) The Part I minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2016 be approved.**
- ii) The Part I minutes of the Cabinet Local Authority Governors Appointments Sub Committee held on 24 November 2016 be noted.**

APPOINTMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Andy Jeffs, who had recently been appointed as Interim Strategic Director of Operations and Customer Services.

The Chairman commented that he had spent the day visiting staff in various council buildings. He placed on record his thanks, on behalf of all councillors, to all staff for their hard work in 2016.

FORWARD PLAN

Cabinet considered the contents of the Forward Plan for the next four months and noted the changes that had been made to the plan since the last meeting. In addition it was noted that:

- The item 'Review of Participatory Budgeting,' scheduled for January 2017 was no longer required following a decision taken at Full Council on 13 December 2016.

- The item 'Children's Services Improvement Plan,' scheduled for January 2017 would be incorporated into a report in March entitled 'Children's Services Business Plan'

CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS

A) DELIVERY OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Members considered the progress of the workstreams relating to Delivery of Children's Services, including identification of support service functions. The Lead Member reminded Cabinet that at its meeting on 29 September 2016, approval was given to enter in partnership with Richmond and Kingston councils for the delivery of children's services through Achieving for Children. The report set out the progress on implementation, leading to a 1 April 2017 transfer, together with an update on the matters reserved to the councils to agree and the volume and value of the Royal Borough's shareholding in the company.

There has been considerable progress on implementation across the three councils and nine workstreams, including communications, finance and HR. In addition, officers had been working through the level of resource required for support functions to support children's services when transferred into Achieving for Children. A consistent methodology had been applied across the council to ensure that the appropriate resources, whether staff or cash equivalent, were transferred as well as to secure the right level of support services retained in the local authority.

There were currently 16 reserved matters for the owners of Achieving for Children. The Royal Borough would adopt the same reserved matters but had requested additional reserved matters for any developments which may impact on existing pan-Berkshire or East Berkshire arrangements or decisions significantly affecting two or more wards.

Richmond and Kingston had agreed that the Royal Borough could join the partnership taking a 20% shareholding, on the basis that they wanted to grow the company to include five local authorities. Each new partner would take a 20% shareholding until all five partners, including the founding councils, owned 20% each. If it proved impossible to grow the company to five local authorities, the Royal Borough would be given the opportunity to increase its shareholding to 33%. The timeframe for this expansion was likely to be over the next three to five years. The report requested Cabinet to delegate authority to the Leader, Lead Member for Finance and Managing Director/Strategic Director Adult, Children and Health Services to negotiate and agree the value of the shares.

In relation to the statutory function of the Director of Children's Services, it was proposed that recruitment to this post should take place in February/March 2017 from an internal pool of the Deputy Director Health, Early Help and Safeguarding and the Head of Schools and Educational Services. The Managing Director/Strategic Director Adult, Children and Health Services would continue to deliver the statutory function of Director of Children's Services until the end of June 2017 to enable a three month handover and ensure stability.

The Chairman referred to a decision taken earlier in the week in relation to York House which, subject to planning permission, agreed to refurbish and expand the building for completion in mid 2018. Royal Borough, AfC and Optalis staff would be located there once works were complete, with offices and IT facilities befitting their

importance. The Lead Member for Highways and Transport commented that he had this week heard positive news from the Crown Estate which would increase parking in the town centre.

The Lead Member for Finance commented that the transformation required to bring three organisations together needed to be handled with extreme care. Transformational risks were often underestimated. Focus would ensure improved resilience once the destination was reached, and no loss of resilience during the journey.

The Chairman congratulated both officers and the Lead Member. Councillor Jones echoed these comments and commented that reports coming through gave evidence and reasoning.

The Lead Member commented that an LGA peer review had been undertaken the previous week. She reassured residents that the move to AfC was not a handover; the borough would be equal partners and would take its learning with it. The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel would continue to receive a report on the peer review in January 2017.

The Managing Director was asked to send a letter to Richmond, Kingston and AfC explaining the decisions taken at the meeting.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:

- i. Notes the progress on workstreams and high level implementation plan.**
- ii. Notes the progress on identification of the level of resource required for support functions to support Children's Services within Achieving for Children.**
- iii. Approves the reserved matters in the Inter-Authority and Members' Agreement with London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames and The Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames, the co-owners of Achieving for Children.**
- iv. Approves the consideration for purchase of shareholding a 20% stake in Achieving for Children and recommends to Council that this is funded from the 2016/17 capital programme, delegating authority to the Leader, Lead Member for Finance and Managing Director/Strategic Director Adult Children and Health Services to negotiate and agree the value of the shares.**
- v. Confirms that the current Managing Director/Strategic Director Adult, Children & Health Services will continue to deliver the statutory function of Director of Children's Services for a three month period to 30 June 2017.**
- vi. Approves the recruitment of a Director of Children's Services to take effect from 1 July 2017 from the internal pool of Deputy Director Health, Early Help and Safeguarding and Head of Schools and Educational Services.**

B) DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY IN OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES - HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SERVICES

Members considered a new operating model for Highways & Transport and the award of two new contracts for highway and transport services and works.

Members had received a revised report.

The Lead Member explained that the report covered three lots. Lot 2 was intended to remain in-house. Lot 3 would involve the transfer of 31 staff to the Project Centre Ltd or Volker Ltd under TUPE conditions. Overview and Scrutiny had asked about legal costs; it was confirmed that these would be expended through Shared Legal Solutions within the current contract. The like-for-like savings were approximately £90,000 per annum along with £300,000 from optimisation savings. Approximately 80,000 highway trees required inspection; there was a backlog. A new recommendation had been included in the revised report to take this into account. At a cost of £100,000 per annum, 20,000 trees would be inspected.

The Lead Member explained that senior officers believed the proposals would work in a similar way to the Veolia contract. To say there would be no risks would be wrong but the proposals would improve resilience. The council would retain day to day control. The Managing Director explained that a report would be submitted to Employment Panel in January 2017 on the new structure. It was clear that the identification of staff to transfer and those to be retained to deliver contractual arrangements and maintain services was key. The Interim Strategic Director of Operations and Customer Services commented that a lot of work had been undertaken to ensure any risks were mitigated and the savings highlighted would be fully achievable.

The Lead Member for Finance commented that the services under discussion were ones that had an extraordinarily high profile with residents. It was therefore important that an innovative, creative and focussed approach was taken to ensure services continued to be delivered at commercially focussed rates.

Councillor Jones highlighted that she had raised concerns at the Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting about the report, which was published just 24 hours before the meeting. The proposals represented a fundamental change in the way a range of services were delivered and was an area that had its own way of working with residents and councillors. Unfortunately the report did not set out how the service would operate in the future. The council had seen the success of the Veolia contract, however this area was routine; it could not be said the same for the departments affected. There was no evidence in the report to convince her of the viability of the proposal. A case study of another council that had successfully outsourced the service would have been useful. Some councils had since returned services in house – why? Councillor Mrs Jones acknowledged the benefit of resilience but questioned the risk of losing knowledge bases. She had not seen a business case for the proposal, or any service specifications. Outsourcing gave little or no savings but increased risks. There was no detail to allow proper scrutiny to take place and she felt this made a mockery of the system.

The Chairman stated that he had confidence in the proposals. Senior officers had undertaken the necessary work. He agreed that a case study would have been useful.

Control would be dealt with in the contractual terms and be dealt with through the legal process.

Councillor Beer referred to a lengthy statement he had made at the Overview and Scrutiny Panel about the process not working. The concept of Cabinet was backed up and supported by Panels with the time to scrutinise. He shared the concerns of Councillor Jones in relation to the loss of expertise, particularly in areas such as flooding. He highlighted that an ongoing tree inspection regime was needed and asked what happened after two years?

The Chairman confirmed that the recommendation was for £100,000 to be spent per annum and was baked into budgets. After four years when all trees would have been inspected, a review would be undertaken. He highlighted that staff employed by the borough could leave at any point, but the proposal would put in place contractual arrangements that would have to be fulfilled, therefore the certainty of services was improved. The Lead Member commented that a former employee of 20 years standing with great knowledge of flooding issues in the borough had been involved in the presentation on the contract. It was noted that the Highways, Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel had been fully supportive of the proposals. The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel had not; the Lead Member had not been present. Officers were requested to ensure Lead Members were invited to all relevant Panels.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That:

- i. Volker Highways Ltd is awarded the contract to provide Lot 1: Highways Management & Maintenance for a period of five years with the option of an extension for two further years subject to satisfactory performance each year.**
- ii. The Traffic Management and ancillary services contract, Lot 2, is deferred, until January 2017 pending further review of required services and costs.**
- iii. Project Centre Ltd is awarded the contract to provide Lot 3: Highway & Transport Professional Services for a period of five years with the option of an extension for two further years subject to satisfactory performance each year.**
- iv. The Strategic Director of Operations and Customer Services and Head of Legal Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Highways and Transport is authorised to complete the appointment process in accordance with Council Contract Rules.**
- v. The Strategic Director of Operations and Customer Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Highways and Transport is authorised to restructure the Highways & Transport service to support the new operating model, subject to approval from Employment Panel in January 2017.**
- vi. Cabinet awards the tree inspection work, to Volker Highways Ltd. to the value of £100,000 per year**

c) DELIVERY OF ADULT SERVICES

Members considered the business case relating to the Delivery of Adult Services, the progress on implementation and the identification of the level of support services functions that should transfer to Optalis by April 2018.

The Principal Member for Public Health and Communications presented the report. The proposal to transfer to Optalis would bring benefits of scale to residents in terms of service delivery, and staff in terms of career opportunities. It would also give the borough the opportunity to sell its services in return for profit. All staff directly affected would be TUPE transferred, including pension rights. The current management structure would be retained and staff would remain located at current sites. There would be two operating companies, one for the local authority work and one to operate as a trading company. A board with an independent Chairman would sit above the two companies. A Shareholder Board would also be set up, including borough representatives Councillors Quick, Story and Saunders.

Member noted that work was being undertaken in relation to support staff. Optalis would purchase services from the borough, for example IT, for one year while the situation was reviewed.

The Lead Member for Finance commented that he had been heavily involved in transformation projects in his own career. He was pleased to be able to play a role in the governance aspects. The complex and regulatory nature of the services meant that it was appropriate to have two separate companies to undertake the work and ensure a clear focus. This was not an over-complication, nor did it undermine transparency.

The Principal Member for Maidenhead Regeneration and Maidenhead commented that he had been affected by a number of mergers in his personal life. Each one had opened up opportunities for staff in a larger organisation.

The Principal Member highlighted that, in relation to the comments from Overview and Scrutiny, the nominated councillors had been chosen because of their skills and expertise and also their availability. The comments from the co-optee Sheila Holmes would be taken on board and fed into future versions.

The Managing Director explained that staff at a management level had been involved at the initial stages to design the proposal, then further consultation had take place at lower levels. Large sessions had been held, followed by bi-weekly open door sessions.

The Chairman thanked Sheila Holmes for her involvement, particularly in the scrutiny process; she was a great advocate.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:

- i. **Notes the content of the full business case and implementation timelines to enable safe transfer of adult social care services to Optalis Limited on 1 April 2017.**
- ii. **Approves the Council representatives on the Optalis Holding Limited Board as Cllr Quick, Cllr Saunders and Cllr Story.**

iii. Notes the progress on identification of the level of resource required for support functions to support Adult Services within Optalis Limited.

D) ADOPTION OF THE INDOOR SPORT & LEISURE STRATEGY AND THE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Members considered approval for the adoption of the Indoor Sport and Leisure Facility Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy as documents which in planning terms formed part of the evidence base for the Borough Local Plan.

The Lead Member explained that 42.3% of residents in the borough took part in 30 minutes of moderate sporting activity every week, compared to a national average of 35.8%. The borough had exceptional sporting facilities including Bisham Abbey, TVAC and Eton College. The recommendations included more investment in Windsor Leisure Centre, improvements at Charters Leisure Centre and upgrades at Cox Green and Furze Platt. The strategy also included the replacement of the Magnet Leisure Centre with a new facility at Braywick. The Playing Pitch Strategy explained that current demand was being met but future demand should be further investigated.

The Lead Member for Planning endorsed the proposals, which would provide vital evidence for the Borough Local Plan.

The Lead Member confirmed that aspirations to develop Charters Leisure Centre were included in the strategy.

Councillor Ed Wilson commented that the report focussed on providing new pitches in schools even though schools sometimes found it difficult to let them out for community use. Nothing was said about expanding community playing fields. He asked whether the council was happy to have children playing on boggy, muddy fields when shiny new pitches were inaccessible at local schools. He also asked what happened when a school became an Academy and referred to the situation at the Durand School in London where community facilities were transferred to a private company. There was a need for Academies to manage conflicts of interest, for formalised leases to be in place and all transactions to be within the law. He was concerned that current agreements in the borough were out of date, signed by the school rather than the Academy or its Trustees, and in some cases were incomplete or unsigned. He asked for an independent review to be undertaken and clear advice be issued to headteachers and Academy Trustees.

The Chairman commented that the Durand Academy was a case study in the way things should not be done. The Lead Member explained that money was spent on pitches if issues were raised by ward councillors; £50,000 was being spent on drainage issue at the Broom Farm playing field, the council had recently purchased Thriftwood Farm. In relation to leases, the Lead Member explained that Academies were subject to 125 year leases. The freehold was not transferred so the borough kept control. This required an Academy to seek permission to do anything significant and apply to the Secretary of State if they wanted to sell land. Each academy was a one-off transfer so a standard could not be applied in lease agreements.

The headteacher at Dedworth, where £250,000 had been invested on a new all-weather pitch, had confirmed that the pitch was used during the daytime for PE lessons, and for after school and lunchtime practices. He had reported that pupils were more engaged in lessons and keen to develop their skills more quickly. The Site

Manager had confirmed there was a mutual respect for the pitch by outside users. Both pupils and the community therefore benefitted.

Councillor Beer commented that TVAC had been well used in the first few years but little had been heard once it transferred to a management company. Unfortunately schools had been unable to release pupils to use the facility because of a number of issues including travelling times. He was aware via a former councillor that the pitch at the Windsor Boys' School had a fund to ensure ongoing maintenance could be undertaken.

The Principal Member for Neighbourhood Plans and Ascot & the Sunnings commented that Charters, which had become an Academy three years previously, opened its pitches to the community in the evenings and weekends, which worked very well.

The Chairman suggested an additional recommendation in light of the discussion about current agreements.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:

i. Adopt the Indoor Sport and Leisure Facility Strategy 2016-2021.

ii. Adopt the Playing Pitch Strategy 2016-2021.

iii. Request the Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel establish a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review of all legal agreements and finances of school-located playing fields subject to community use agreements.

E) DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY IN OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES - CIVIL ENFORCEMENT OFFICER AND COMMUNITY WARDEN SERVICES

Members considered third party service provision for Civil Enforcement services.

The Lead Member explained that after consideration of concerns raised by other Members, research and visits to Westminster, it was proposed that Community Wardens be removed from the scope of the proposal. The proposal was therefore to conduct a procurement exercise for third party provision of Civil Enforcement Services. A pilot exercise had been undertaken since August 2016 with a private contractor working alongside borough officers. There had been some complaints but this was the nature of the beast in parking enforcement. Up to 50 requests for parking permit schemes were made each year; the borough could only provide 10. Once a scheme was put in there was then a reasonable expectation for it to be enforced.

The Principal Member for HR and Legal commended officers and the Lead Member; it was a credit to all involved that they held their hands up to amending what had originally been planned. This should provide confidence that all views were taken into account. The Chairman commented that he had met with a number of Community Wardens earlier in the day who were completely focussed on providing a bridge between the council and residents. He was concerned that parking enforcement could be too zealous; it was not acceptable to be ticketed if a car was just inches out of a bay. He asked for safeguards to be put in to whatever proposal was brought back in April 2017. In relation to licensing he also had concerns that residents, in particular young people, were being ripped off by Hackney Carriage drivers refusing to give metered fares. More enforcement was required.

The Lead Member for Finance commented that he was hugely sympathetic with those that undertook the role of parking enforcement. He had seen officers treated inappropriately, including racial abuse. The Lead Member had received three parking tickets in the borough, one of which had been withdrawn on appeal. He had paid both the others. Despite recent reports in the press he was confident that officers were hard working people doing their job and when mistakes were made, they were put right.

Councillor Jones echoed the comments of the Principal Member for HR and Legal, it was a process that had gone through review and reflection and come out with the right reasoning. The Lead Member for Highways and Transport commented that test purchasing of Hackney Carriage fares would be undertaken in the coming months. It was suggested that feedback should be sought from young people via social media.

The Lead Member for Economic Development and Property commented that when he had presented the savings report at Council on 13 December 2016 he had highlighted that savings had not simply been plucked out of the air. Delivering Differently meant looking at alternative approaches.

The Chairman requested that the Managing Director write to each community Warden explaining that the council had amended its proposals for their role and thanking them for their services to residents.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:

- i. Agrees the amendment of the ‘in principle’ approval given by Cabinet on June 30, 2016, removing Community Warden services from the scope of the proposal and that third party service providers now be considered for Civil Enforcement services only**
- ii. Delegates authority to the Strategic Director of Operations & Customer Services in conjunction with the Lead Member for Environmental Services to conclude a competitive procurement process for the provision of Civil Enforcement services within the Royal Borough.**
- iii. Requests a further report be submitted to Cabinet in April 2017 detailing the outcome of the competitive procurement process and if appropriate seeking authority to award a contract to the preferred bidder**

F) PROVIDING SAFER ROUTES TO CHARTERS SCHOOL

Members considered four actions, at a cost of £120,000, to improve walking and cycle routes.

Cabinet was addressed by Jo Smith. Ms Smith explained that she was the mother of two children at Furze Platt Infant and Junior Schools. The route to school included Oaken Grove, a long and straight road that cars raced down. During school hours cars parked on either side and there was only space for one car to drive down. Her child did not know if cars flashing their lights were to let him cross or not. A crossing had been put in place outside Courthouse School two years previously. In the consultation 87% of respondents had said yes; 37 people had said no. Parents did not give up despite resident complaints that a crossing would cause excessive noise, vibration

and have a visual impact. Parents still did not give up and eventually a phased implementation was agreed including bollards on grass verges, A-boards and repainted lines. There was a resident's consultation in spring 2016 about yellow lines as part of the phased approach. Officers felt that the mandate – 23 in favour, 21 against – was not strong enough to proceed. A second consultation, due to be held over the summer had still not been actioned. She had heard that there were 300 outstanding consultations across the borough. They may be in a queue, but they would not give up. Two years had elapsed, she asked that it did not become three.

The Chairman commented that the council needed to ensure important consultations were undertaken in a timely fashion. It was confirmed that the team that undertook the consultations would be one of the teams moving to the new external service provider. The Chairman highlighted that this third party would be contractually obliged to provide the service within a certain time period.

The Lead Member confirmed he would make enquiries with officers to see why the process had taken so long, and respond to Ms Smith in writing. He explained that the report before Members was instigated by the Cabinet meeting held at Charters School in September 2016, where pupils had raised questions about safe routes to the school. Two physical changes were proposed: traffic signals at Dry Arch Road and a new footbridge at Devenish Road.

In relation to option 1 the Lead Member advised that the comments were to be amended to state that neighbouring properties including Sunningdale School would be consulted on the proposed design. In relation to option 12, this would be amended at the request of the headteacher of Charters School to read:

This would provide a traffic-free route to Sunninghill. An informal approach to the owners of the Charters estate by a third party suggested that they would not be prepared to allow such a route to be constructed, since residents are concerned about the impact on their privacy. The Royal Borough will make a formal approach to see if a scheme can be achieved that would address their concerns

Two other actions were: to look into options for a wider footpath outside Heathermount School and that planning applications from private properties along Devenish Road would be monitored as the council did not own the frontage. Outside of the report, a shared cycle path was being designed from Bracknell, the existing crossing at the racecourse was being upgraded to a toucan crossing and further upgrades were being made at Wells Lane. It was confirmed that the difference between a pelican crossing and a toucan crossing was that it could be used by both pedestrians and mounted cyclists.

Councillor Beer stated he was very supportive of the report. However he was concerned that costs of individual schemes had not been given therefore it had been difficult for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to see if appropriate weight had been given to the different options. One of the proposals was on the A330 in an area with few houses and few children; this may not represent value for money. The idea of approaching individual properties through planning applications could be dangerous if children had to move between paved and unpaved areas along the road.

The Chairman asked Ms Smith to send him an email directly about the issues she had raised and he would take it up personally to ensure it moved through the system.

The Principal Member for Neighbourhood Planning and Ascot & the Sunnings commented that Dry Arch Road was very dangerous, she was pleased it was being addressed. The new footway on Elm Park would be worthwhile; the houses were varied inside but many were occupied by families. The A330 was one of the narrowest A roads in the country; at one point the footpath was just 18 inches wide.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:

i. Approves through the Local Transport Plan capital programme:

- **Installation of traffic signals at Dry Arch Road rail bridge incorporating a pedestrian phase.**
- **Construction of a new footbridge on the western side of Devenish Road to the north of Elm Park.**
- **Discussion with Heathermount School to explore options for improving the narrow footway across their frontage.**
- **Seek to secure a strip of land to the rear of the existing footway across the front of properties on Devenish Road that come forward for planning permission.**

ii. Approves allocation of £50,000 from the 2017/18 Safer Routes to Schools budget and £70,000 from the 2018/19 budget for the four pieces of work.

G) SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017-18

Members considered schemes in schools to be funded through the 'Basic Need' grant in 2017/18.

The Lead Member explained that the annual report set out the proposed capital spend ahead of February budget setting so that officers had the opportunity to tender for projects in good time. This enabled work in the summer holidays at the most competitive prices with least disruption to schools. In the past this approach had enabled the council to successfully deliver the relocation of Oldfield Primary school, the expansion at Riverside primary and smaller projects such as the conversion of the residence building at Manor Green special school. The report sought approval for £60,000 to start feasibility work on the higher priority schemes in the programme. The schemes set out in Appendix A had been prioritised to ensure that the Royal Borough met its statutory duties: namely the provision of sufficient school places and ensuring those spaces, where the council was responsible for the buildings, keeping the pupils safe, dry and warm so that they could learn effectively.

It was noted that the first ten schemes related to the previously approved expansion projects to ensure sufficient school places across the borough subject to approval by Council.

The schemes from 12 onwards had been prioritised with safeguarding, health and safety, water resistance and heating considerations in mind, based on the individual site maintenance assessments. The proactive approach would, as far as possible, avoid unexpected school closures or emergency repair costs. For example in recent years the council had planned the replacement of boilers for the Furze Platt schools: the Junior school was completed last year and it was recommended the Infant school boiler replacement in the coming year to complete the work on that campus. Managing health and safety risks was important approval was requested to ensure that the highest priority fire-risk and asbestos-risk projects were dealt with.

Expansion projects were funded through a mixture of Basic Need Grant and council funding which included section 106 contributions, while maintenance projects were funded by Schools Condition Grant from the Department for Education. The prioritised list in Appendix A totalled almost £1.2m and the council would not actually know the level of grant until the spring of 2017. It was expected that the grant would be about £1m and therefore some schemes towards the end of the list may be postponed into later years when they would be considered again with a higher priority where appropriate.

There were no Academy schools listed for maintenance work as that responsibility now sat with the Education Funding Agency and Academies had to bid to the Condition Improvement Fund. The most recent round closed on the 9 December 2016 with decisions due in the Spring.

Councillor Beer highlighted that the ward listed for The Windsor Boy's School was incorrect in the appendix. It was also noted that the line relating to school kitchen refurbishment related to a number of schools rather than just one.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet approves:

- i. The Children's Services 2017-18 capital bids, including them in the overall 2017-18 capital programme, subject to any changes that may be required to the Condition list of schemes following the grant allocation announcement and final approval at Council.**
- ii. The listed schemes being put out to tender.**
- iii. Variations to the list of condition schemes based on DfE grant allocation and requests the final allocation and schemes are reported to Cabinet in February 2017.**
- iv. £60,000 for feasibility work on schemes.**

H) COUNCIL TAX BASE 2017-18

Members considered the statutory requirement to set the council's tax base for Council Tax for 2017-18. The tax base was used by Thames Valley Police, Berkshire Fire & Rescue Authority, local parish councils as well as the borough for setting precepts and Council Tax next year.

The Lead Member explained that local council tax support, where the council provided 100% exemption for approximately 3700 properties was on a downward trend, it was therefore anticipated that it would cost £60,000 less in the coming year. The council was choosing to fully assist all parish councils who would otherwise lose out by receiving Rate Support Grant. The subsidy amounted to £64,000.

It was expected that 850 additional properties would be recorded in the borough. Officers had done an outstanding job in so many areas of transaction processing that the council was confident it would collect 99.5% of council tax.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:

- (i) Approves the council tax base for the whole of the Borough area, for the year 2017-18 at 66,709.64 as detailed in this report and appendices.
- (ii) Approves a grant to Parishes to compensate them for the loss of tax base due to the delivery of Council Tax Support as a discount (see paragraph 3.2).

1) FINANCIAL UPDATE

Members considered the latest financial update.

The Lead Member stated that there were no material variations from the last report. It was expected that reserves at year end would be £1.2m above the required level. Overall, in comparison to challenging budgets that had been set, officers and Lead Members expected an outturn £435,000 better than the target.

The Adult, Children and Health budget totalled £57.2m. A net overspend of just under £200,000 was projected, a very small percentage in the face of a variety of challenges including Home to School charges and increasing demand for temporary accommodation.

Operations and customer services were reporting a projected underspend of £600,000 from a budget of £21.7m, due to a range of highly efficient transformation activities including raising revenue.

The Chairman highlighted that the borough had been commended by the Prime Minister and local MP for reducing council tax six years in a row, at Prime Minister's Question Time that week.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:

- i) Notes the Council's projected outturn position**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on items 9-10 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act

The meeting, which began at 7.30 pm, finished at 9.26 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....