

## CABINET

THURSDAY, 30 JULY 2020

**PRESENT:** Councillors David Cannon, Andrew Johnson (Chairman), David Coppinger, Samantha Rayner, Stuart Carroll (Vice-Chairman), David Hilton, Gerry Clark, Donna Stimson and Ross McWilliams

Also in attendance: Councillors Taylor, Jones, Price, Bhangra, Baldwin, Singh, Sharpe, Bateson, Brar, Tisi, Knowles, Davies, Story, Shelim, Bhangra, Del Campo, C Da Costa, Larcombe and Taylor. Mrs Barbara Richardson (RBWM Property Company)

Officers: Russell O'Keefe, Adele Taylor, Louisa Dean, Kevin McDaniel, Hillary Hall, Nikki Craig, Louise Freeth, Duncan Sharkey, Andrew Valance, Shilpa Manek and David Cook.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

### MINUTES

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Part I minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2020 were approved.

### APPOINTMENTS

No appointments were required.

The Leader asked the Deputy Leader of the Council, Resident & Leisure Services, HR, IT, Legal, Performance Management & Windsor who was the Armed Forces Champion to make an important statement.

The Lead Member informed that RBWM had been recognised as a supporter of the British Armed Forces by being awarded Gold in the U.K. Employer Armed Forces Recognition Scheme. The Council has added this to its Bronze and Silver Awards. She thanked officers for all their work.

Cllr Knowles thanked everyone including officers, partnership agencies and support services throughout the borough as a whole, being able to achieve this with Cllr Raynor's leadership. Not many Gold have been awarded. Bravo November – Well done!

### FORWARD PLAN

Cabinet considered the contents of the Forward Plan for the next four months and noted the changes made since last published.

### CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS

G) RBWM OUTBREAK CONTROL PLAN

Cabinet considered the report that informed about the local outbreak control plan that had been introduced.

The Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health informed that the plan had been put together as part of the response to the pandemic as all local authorities had been requested to have a localised outbreak plan. This had been produced in collaboration with the NHS, public health and the local authority.

Local Directors of Public Health are responsible for producing the plans, working through Covid-19 Health Protection Boards. Local authorities also have a role to set-up Local Outbreak Engagement Boards which will provide political ownership and public-facing engagement and communication for outbreak response. The Engagement Board would be Chaired by Hilary Hall as Cllr Carroll was Chairing the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Leader of Council said that it was important to show leadership across organisations and parties, they had all come together as one to deal with the pandemic and keep residents safe. He asked the Lead Member that given his professional background if he could contextualise the importance of the plan.

The Lead Member informed that data was being analysed day by day and that the challenge was that there was currently no vaccine. We are reliant on policies to contain the spread of the virus until a vaccine was in place. It was expected that there would be a difficult winter with C-19, influenza and the usual winter pressures on the NHS. He had therefore been in contact with NHS colleagues for an elevated winter plan. There may be further lockdowns but we now had a better understanding of the disease and protocols.

The Leader thanked the Lead Member and said that this showed the importance of the next agenda item; the Interim Council Strategy in helping plan ahead.

Cllr Price said she was a member of the Outbreak Board and welcomed cross party working. This gives a lot of confidence with the plan and for residents.

Cllr Davey questioned the equalities element and asked why faith groups had been included. He was informed that this was in Government guidance, there were issues with clothing and the ability to wear face masks and there were issues with social distancing within buildings of worship.

Cllr Werner said that the Lead Member was ideally placed to cope with C-19. He questioned why the full plan had not been published with names redacted. He was informed that the final details of the plan were being worked through and a final version with redacted names would be published.

Cllr Bond mentioned that there could also be an issue with faith groups wishing to sing enthusiastically.

**Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet notes the report.**

F) INTERIM COUNCIL STRATEGY 2020-21

Cabinet considered the report regarding the proposed Interim Council Strategy 2020-21.

The Leader of the Council and Chairman of Cabinet, Business, Economic Development and Property informed that he wished to clarify something within the proposed strategy. With regards to the Windsor Museum he would ask the report to be amended to say that we would not be currently reopening the museum instead of saying the museum would be

closed. This was a working document showing a direction of strategy given the current situation. We needed to be flexible, nimble and responsive to changing needs. The council also needed to maintain focus on core critical services.

The current Corporate Plan was due to expire next year and was a strategy developed for different times. There was a new medium term financial strategy and thus a new strategy was required to meet these needs and the demands of the pandemic and future financial management. This interim strategy was required to help with the current position before a new strategy was developed. This was a statement of intention with any implemented actions requiring a review and for reports back to Cabinet as required.

A member of the public Alice Le Page had registered to speak on this item. She questioned why it was planned to close the museum as it seemed an opportunistic amendments to the papers. There had been no consultation with staff, no members of staff had been shielded and government guidance did not require shielding. Looking for others to take over the management of the establishment contradicted the statement that this was a temporary position. There would be no meaningful savings as the collection would need to be stored. There would need to be a cultural recovery and the government had announced emergency funds being available. It was premature to close the museum before all avenues had been explored. She felt that removing a learning resource was short sighted and how was it justified closing a beneficial community educational resource when the town needs it the most.

The Leader reiterated that it was proposed to delay the re-opening of the museum and that a further more detailed report would be brought forward before any final decision was made. All suitable options would be considered and that he had already been contacted by a number of parties.

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Resident & Leisure Services, HR, IT, Legal, Performance Management & Windsor informed that the library services had to close due to C-19. The team had been fantastic in their response and providing services to the public. A digital service was provided along with collection. The service will be reviewed due to the impact of C-19 and financial pressures. With regards to the museum it was much loved, 70 years old had 13,000 objects and had 65,000 visits with 100 events. It was supported by the Friends of Museum Group. The tourism information office was in the Royal Windsor Station and valued by tourists, shops and businesses. Tourism was important to Windsor and this was an opportunity to look at the offer.

The Lead Member for Finance and Ascot informed that the financial monitoring report being considered later in the report would provide some context to this item and the financial impact of C-19. It would be remiss that not to look at every service. The budget talks about transformation and transformation of services to provide valued services and balanced budget.

The Leader said that he had been clear at the start of the pandemic that not all services would re-open as they once were, the world had changed and services would be subject to an options review.

Cllr Knowles reported that things may be different but there still remained a need for tourism in Windsor and tourists needed an offer and guidance. With regards to the tourism information office there were overheads and thus it could move to the Guildhall as a better location or temporarily have a stall in the covered market. Being in the Guildhall would be more visible and bring visitors to the area.

Cllr Bowden reported that the library was very important to Windsor; students and the elderly used the internet access on offer. Council services had successfully been delivered in the library before moving back to York House. The museum may need to stay closed but it remained important to Windsor, it could be run by a CIC. With regards to the information centre it was currently in a listed building, however moving to the Guildhall could raise difficulty

due to opening hours. Buckingham Palace was due to close for refurbishment and the royal family would move to Windsor.

Cllr Davey asked what the cost of keeping the museum was and how long it was expected to be closed. He felt the needs of pensioners were being ignored. He asked for the cultural heritage fund to be explored and he suggested that the Windsor Local Heritage Group could have a role to play.

Cllr Davies said that the re-opening of the museum and tourist information office needed a full review with lead member, staff and volunteers being included. It was expected that the final decision would come back to Cabinet.

Cllr W Da Costa said that there were more than 65,000 visitors to the museum and 630 trips to the Guildhall. The Royal Family would be re-locating to Windsor and thus there was a need of a quality service for tourism. The museum needed to be kept going and if RBWM could not do this then the Windsor Town Council needed to be established as soon as possible.

Cllr Singh raised concern that temporary closure of libraries may become permanent

Cllr Rayner informed that the NET cost of running the museum was £130k and she would revisit moving the information centre to the Guildhall.

Cllr Price raised the equalities impact assessment and asked if the impact of C-19 on multiple areas of deprivation and those with existing health conditions. She said that local data and evidence should be considered. She also mentioned that the 10 characteristics of equality should always be considered.

**Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet notes the report and:**

- i) Approves the Interim Council Strategy 2020-21 as amended to say museum will not be currently opened; and**
- ii) Requests Officers to develop reports for relevant decision making bodies to progress the objectives therein.**

A) INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

Cabinet considered the report regarding the introduction of a new set of organisation values and their implementation.

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Resident & Leisure Services, HR, IT, Legal, Performance Management & Windsor informed that in December 2019 work began on setting a new set of values for the organisation. Discussions began with CLT and there were a number of workshops that were attended by 83% of the organisations employees. Workshops were also held with Members and CLT. Over 1400 behaviour statements and nearly 200 values statements were collected.

The outcome of the activity is a proposed group of 4 new values, which are:

- Invest in strong foundations.
- Empowered to improve.
- One team and vision.
- Respect and openness.

These were supported by a number of sub statements and an action plan attached as appendix B.

The Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change, Sustainability, Parks and Countryside said she had worked in organisations on organisation change and that she

supported the proposed new values and that the headlines being clearly seen on the two page plan.

Cllr Jones reported that she welcomed the paper and that it was well thought out. It had been a while coming since the peer review. Members had also taken part and the proposals had been discussed at Corporate O&S Panel. The values should also apply to elected members and she mentioned that the LGA had set out a new code of conduct for consultation. The Leader agreed with extending the values to Members and he would look at additional training for Members by the LGA. Members should have the highest standards for all values.

Cllr Werner welcomed the paper and the inclusion of staff. He highlighted that you can have an excellent document but it was important to deliver and imbed within the organisation. He also mentioned that it would be good for new Members to get raining when they are elected.

The Leader said that as a Group leader he would hope all Group leaders would endorse the ethics and they should transcend party politics.

**Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet notes the report and:**

- **endorses the new values and supports their implementation.**

B) OUTCOME OF REVIEWS OF ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN AND OPTALIS DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

Cabinet considered the report regarding the CIPFA reviews of Optalis and Achieving for Children (AFC).

The Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health informed that as part of the budget setting process for 2020-2021, it was recommended that the arrangements that the Royal Borough had through AFC and Optalis for the delivery of children's and adult services respectively should be reviewed to ensure that they were fit for purpose.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) was commissioned in April 2020 to undertake the review. The aim of the review was to understand whether the current arrangements, which have been in place since 2017, were still the appropriate models to deliver the Council's ongoing strategic transformation objectives for adult and children's services.

With regards to Optalis the CIPFA report noted that Optalis had brought considerable benefits to the Royal Borough in terms of service improvement, which justifies the original decision to transfer services into the company. However, the Royal Borough as the minority shareholder (45%) did not have sufficient control over major service transformation for Optalis. There was tension between the Council and Wokingham that was impacting organisation development.

With regards to AFC children's services have improved considerably, now rated as good by Ofsted. This is an enormous achievement in a relatively short time and reflects extremely well on AFC and its staff. There had been few financial savings and costs had risen, in part, are reflected nationally. Plans to expand the company are on hold, which leaves little scope for further costs savings.

The Lead Member for Finance and Ascot informed that this was a very timely report detailing reasons why we should remain with these companies and some sensible thoughts on how best to achieve our objectives. In both cases the boards need to come together to revise and agree clear longer-term objectives to allow AfC and Optalis to develop their own business plans and financial strategies.

When we joined AfC cost savings were not the driving force but service improvement was and there has been real success with our Children's services now rated as good. He had no visibility as to the objectives of Richmond and Kingston but evidence suggests that the cost of provision of children's services was increasing and inevitably both Council's would be looking to deliver their excellent services at lower cost. This should assist RBWM to create a greater focus on driving costs down.

The report recommended a service level agreement to ensure the delivery of our priorities. In the CIPFA report there were 9 separate recommendations all very sensible. In relation to finance I hold the view that AfC's business plan 2020/2024, which is devoid of financial information, is not adopted until cost and service pressures are clarified in a medium-term financial strategy.

He felt that relationships between Wokingham and RBWM must improve and was sure that the Leader and the Managing Director were committed to achieving this. It was anomalous that Optalis manages £36M of RBWM's social care and £10M of Wokingham's but we were a minority shareholder with 45% of the shares. It was recommended that the shareholder agreement should be changed so that the respective councils have greater control of the service areas that apply specifically to them.

He informed Cabinet that this was essential if the arrangement is going to work for us, as last year it was input from RBWM that prompted changes in operations at Optalis and helped to recover an adverse financial variance. CIPFA's 4<sup>th</sup> recommendation that RBWM should challenge Optalis to demonstrate that it provides added value over and above delivering the day to day service is not necessary as the Council and its transformation team are already working in partnership with Optalis to develop this capability.

The Lead Member for Planning and Maidenhead informed that he had been Lead Member responsible for moving services to Optalis and was a member of the Holdings Board. He was delighted to see an excellent offer for residents that was above the services provided by most council's. There was no concern about the service provision just the finances.

Cllr Knowles informed that there was no doubt that joining the organisations was the right thing to do at the time and no other model would have provided the improvements seen. He was however concerned about the nature of the contracts. Optalis' risk register had the relationship with Wokingham going from high to medium. CIPFA had raised this relationship as an issue so it should remain high on the risk register. The contract was three years in and Wokingham had not met its obligations so there could be a breach of contract, break clauses and a plan B should be considered. With regards to AFC he was concerned that the agreement that the share of ownership had not been fulfilled leaving RBWM still with 20%, CIPFA felt this should be reviewed.

(Cllr Johnson lost connectivity and left the meeting, Cllr Carroll took the Chair).

Cllr Bond mentioned that the report said that costs were under review but with no timescale and that he had first heard about the concern with the relationship with Wokingham a year ago. The report into AFC mentioned had a line about an issue regarding the pension transfer and this was still ongoing. With regards to Optalis he questioned why Wokingham saw the service differently to RBWM.

The Lead Member for Planning and Maidenhead reported that there was a difference in how both authorities viewed shared services, however this disagreement was not impacting services.

With regards to AFC and pension the Director reported that this formed part of the transfer of staff to AFC and the sharing of pension risks. AFC were working on their MTFS and pensions would be included.

Cllr Sharpe reported that these types of issues often arose in these types of relationships. Partners need to work together as they both had a share in Optalis.

**Resolved unanimously: That Cabinet notes the report and:**

**a) Delegates authority to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance and Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health, to implement the recommendations set out in the two respective CIPFA reports annexed to this report.**

c) CIPFA REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE RESPONSE TO THE FINAL REPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN

Cabinet considered the report regarding the proposed action plan following the CIPFA review of governance.

The Lead Member for Finance and Ascot informed that his direct involvement with CIPFA started at a meeting with them on the 29th July 2019, so yesterday was the first anniversary. One year on, a big chunk of his life and an interesting learning process, we have reached the beginning of the end of the review. Legislation and best practice continued to change so he will never stop work to improve all aspects of governance.

He informed that at the June cabinet that timely and accurate financial information was essential to enable the Council to properly manage its business and to facilitate appropriate decision making. He also said, and repeated now, that on becoming Lead Member, frustratingly and unacceptably, this was not made available to me or Cabinet, leaving us exposed.

He had discussions with the Managing Director and supported his decision for an internal investigation of Financial Governance by CIPFA and took part in meetings with CIPFA to establish a structured work programme. This administration invited the review, has accepted the finding, has already acted on many of the recommendations and this evening Cabinet considered an action plan developed by our Director of Resources to address a number of outstanding issues.

There were two appendices to the report, Appendix 1 covered actions that were addressed by the interim CIPFA accountants during the 2020/21 budget build and appendix 2 was the action plan developed by the Director of Resources to resolve the outstanding issues. The action plan identified the issues, the proposed actions, when these will be completed, who will be responsible and what success would look like.

The report was robustly debated by Corporate O&S on Monday and they proposed that the wording in the MTFs section on page 116 under the column headed, "what does success look like" should be changed to, "A clear and timely understanding of the resources the Council has to manage its services and address its priorities". It was agreed to add the word 'Timely'. The action plan which is proposed to be reviewed by Overview and scrutiny quarterly.

The Director of Resources informed Cabinet that the report had been considered by O&S and their one recommendation had already been mentioned. There was another of concern raised and this was around Clewer and Dedworth where the report mentions concerns about ward members at the time. It was important to remind this meeting that that comment related to ward councillors who were no longer the ward councillors. With regards to the proposed action plans appendix two timelines were questions and O&S were informed that they were realistic and would be delivered to.

The Lead Member for Transport and Infrastructure informed that this had been a robust evaluation and investigation by CIPFA and has resulted in firm recommendations that were

the right way forward. The problems of the past had to be put behind us and we must move forward dealing with the current difficult position facing the country.

The Lead Member for Public Protection and Parking reiterated that his was a forward looking documents identifies what we need to do to move forward and what has already been done to move forward. A positive and constructive report.

Cllr Jones reported that she was happy that her suggested amendment had been accepted. She also saw this as a constructive paper but just wanted to highlight Member oversight and Member training. As per the peer review Member training on scrutiny was important, there needed to be challenge to Cabinet. She gave the example of an O&S Chairman who did not accept a report going to O&S and said Members could go to Cabinet to discuss the report. We needed friendly critical challenge.

Cllr Price informed that she welcomed the Director of Resources comments about past Ward Councillors as she felt this had not been reflected in the O&S minutes. The CIPFA comments did not relate to the current 6 ward councillors.

Cllr Larcombe said he found the CIPFA report shocking and incomplete as it concentrated on finance and governance. The organisation had not been funded sufficiently and had been weakened by lack of resources. The Leader had given his apologies and talks about a new way and people working together. He said he still had issues such as the lack of organisation loss of memory and issues will not be fixed. It has been expensive to have CIPFA do the review and issues such as flooding have still not been addressed. His ward floods regularly and has not been addressed as the culture fails to perform. Drainage infrastructure not being looked at and fixed. Where is the £43 million for the river Thames that was agreed by Cabinet three years ago.

The Lead Member for Public Protection and Parking said that the issue of flooding was being taken seriously but was not an issue for the CIPFA report.

Cllr Sharpe said that the report was comprehensive, actions have been taken to address errors and there was a change in the way the council now operated.

Cllr Baldwin mentioned that he needed to discuss the historical record, Cabinet had discussed forward looking and how the past was the result of previous leader and administration. He mentioned that Cllr Coppinger, Cllr Hilton, Cllr Carroll and Cllr McWilliams had failed to point out that they had all been appointed to Cabinet by the then leader and that they had failed to vote against him in a vote of no confidence at Council. He said that if they wanted to make a fresh start they should be honest about their past records.

The Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health informed a factual inaccuracy by Cllr Baldwin as it has been recorded that he did offer criticism at the time.

The Lead Member for Housing, Communications and Youth Engagement said that Cabinet took a view that the authority would advance by understanding mistakes made and addressing the problems. The new administration investigated the concerns and sought to address them. 'I told you so' argument was not helpful and was trying to be right rather than constructive. He made reference to his own experience of being removed from Cabinet and how this made him aware of actions and behaviours.

Cllr Davey said that he was saddened that it had not been mentioned that these issues had been brought up back in June that lead to the CIPFA review.

Cllr Jones reiterated that there was a need for scrutiny training for current and future members and chairman of panels.



The Lead Member for Finance and Ascot said that he thanked Cllr Davey for raising the Clewer and Dedworth problem as this and other concerns helped spark the review. Cllr Baldwin seemed to have forgotten that the administration started the review and accepted the findings. With regards to culture he refereed to items 3.8 and 3.9 on page 109 as this action states that values and behaviours were to be developed so we had a strong culture. There had been cultural change as seen in the Financial Update report. With regards to O&S training this had been covered in the Council meeting.

(the Leader of the Council and Chairman of Cabinet, Business, Economic Development and Property re-joined the meeting but due to his connectivity issues he said Cllr Carroll should remain in the Chair)

**Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet reviews the report and:**

- i) Approves the implementation of the proposed action plan**
- ii) Agrees that a quarterly progress report be considered by the appropriate committee or panel**

**D) CONTRACT AWARD FOR EMERGENCY DUTY SERVICE**

Cabinet considered the report regarding the award of contract for the emergency duty service.

The Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health informed that the report sought approval to let a direct award contract for an Emergency Duty Service (EDS) with Bracknell Forest Council. The service provides out of hours emergency social care for adults and children and emergency homelessness support. The contract, if approved, will commence 11 August 2020 for seven years with the option to give 12 months' notice at any time and for any reason. Cost would be £228k per year, which was within budget. All Berkshire authorities commissioned this service which provided economy of scale and better service delivery.

Cllr Price asked if this service was the same as the normal out of hours service or was this an additional service. She was informed that this was a specialist service for Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Homelessness. There was a separate out of hours service run by the council.

**Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet notes the report and:**

- i) Approves a direct award contract for an Emergency Duty Service between The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Bracknell Forest Council from 11 August 2020 for seven years.**

**E) FINANCE UPDATE: JULY 2020**

Cabinet considered the latest Financial Update report.

The Lead Member for Finance and Ascot reported that he propose to say a few words and ask The Director of Resources, who was the architect of this report to explain her reporting strategy. He also asked Cllr. Carroll to comment on Adult Social Care and Children's Service as well as the fully funded capital budget addition of £500K for SEND Special Provision.

The new format for the Finance monitoring provides more detail and is more transparent than any reported in the past. He asked if publishing Finance update reports was enshrined in legislation, to his surprise, apart from the annual outturn report there was no legal obligation.

He said that the administration absolutely get that they are spending public money and it is important for those who have an interest, from councillors to residents and the local press that finance papers are regularly published, are clear, easy to read and carry a strong narrative.

The CIPFA consultants who worked on the 2020/21 budget suggested just four reports a year but the Director of Resources shared his view that this was too few and reports would be published bimonthly starting from this report in July.

A summary of the budget was shown in table 2 on page 196 which forecasts an adverse variance of £4.1M which will need to be supported from reserves, leaving just £1.85M which was below the minimum level.

Government had announced that it would refund Councils up to 75% of 95% of lost income and lost income is by far the most significant issue that we face. Very recent guidance advises that we will be able to include lost income associated with the schedule of fees and charges as published in the 2020/21 budget booklet. This excludes income from commercial properties and our Leisure offer which is managed by a charitable trust. Many other Council's Leisure facilities are managed in the same way and we are hopeful that our Leisure losses will be included. Whatever we receive from Government will be used to increase the level of reserves.

Had COVID 19 not happened, at the end of month 2 we would be reporting a favourable variance of £2.7 million. When this is added to the £1.7m reduction in the 2019/20 overspend reported in the Outturn report, we would be well on track not only to deliver a balance budget this year but with current savings of £4.4 million, exactly what the MTFS said we needed, to deliver a balance budget next year too. The clear message is that like Councils up and down the country our financial position has been derailed by Covid 19.

Finance monitoring is a best estimate of the outturn of the budget. Budget setting and finance monitoring is a shared responsibility between services and finance and robust finances depends upon strong working relationships.

The close monitoring of Adult Social care costs is shown in Charts 1 and 2 on pages 201 and 202 which includes the detail maintained on the number of spot nursing placements for older people and the daily expenditure on homecare including the impact of COVID on the numbers and costs.

Parking revenue will be significantly hit by COVID 19. The use of modelling by the team is based on past experience, income to date, the anticipated changes in demand as lockdown eases and the nature of past demand, which is a very solid approach to forecasting income. Charts 3 and 4 on page 205 show income loss and revenue growth for Windsor and Maidenhead. These charts reflect the fact that Windsor is driven by tourism and Maidenhead by commuters.

The impact of Covid 19 on our Leisure Centre income is profound and the Place Directorate forecasts no income in the present year and not to return to pre-covid income levels until beyond 2022/23. Table 11 on page 211 shows how this will significantly impact our MTFS.

Revenues & Benefits rightly feature more prominently in the report as CT and Business rates account for around £89M of our income. Despite COVID the collection rates are holding up quite well, surprisingly and inexplicable Business rate collection is 4% ahead of target at the end of June.

Managed by Louise Freeth, Head of Revenues & Benefits, Library and residential services, in the past months the Revenues and benefits team, have been under pressure as they administered £26M of Government grants to businesses, dealt with challenge from those businesses that did not qualify and managed four times the number of changes of circumstances for housing benefits. These staff deserve our special thanks.

Continuing Health Care is an ever-present risk. Fairly regularly the Council will propose that a resident in Adult Social Care should be managed by Health and the CCG at their cost or the CCG asserts a resident is no longer eligible for CHC and the cost of their support package should be borne by the Council. On page 203 the Director of Resource has included a section on CHC that clearly indicates the number of cases under review, explains the risks and importantly ensures that those risks remain very visible.

On Capital, a Capital Programme Review Board has been established and their first meeting led to the crystallisation of savings of over £2.4 M on the capital programme with the detail shown in appendix D on page 240.

A RAG rated savings report is included at appendix B, page 233. A narrative is provided where savings can no longer be made including remedial action planned to address underperformance and Mitigation Strategies. A shortfall in savings of £1.7M is anticipated which prompted the Director of Resources to release the £1.3 Million savings contingency.

The Director of Resources said that with regards to the key headlines it was important that this report showed the position as of month two and thus was forecasted on information then. £8.1 million Covid funding had been included but some of this would have been for the previous financial year. We are still awaiting full guidance on any claims for losses and she would be making this claim and signing it off so only legitimate claims would be made.

The Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health said that with regards to his area of responsibility he was please more detail had been included so demand could be tracked, especially in adult social care where there would be a lot more demand management. For children's services a lot had been done on commissioning on high cost placements to ensure vulnerable children getting stable care with more permanent social workers. With regard to SEND there would be a report coming forward to Cabinet.

The Leader reiterated that had it not been for C-19 the budget strategy would be on track. We still continue to lobby Government for resources for long term stability.

Cllr Jones reported that this was a much better report and detailed. She felt that some of the detail was not appropriate for Cabinet and could be better discussed at O&S. she asked if it was possible to have an overview of borrowing going forward and asked why the magnet development did not cover the cost of the Braywick LC as previously informed.

The Lead Member of Finance said that the Magnet LC had included all the land originally included it would have cover the new LC.

The Director of Resource said that in terms of borrowing some detail had been provided but this area will be covered by the new audit panel in the treasury management reports.

**Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet notes the report and:**

- i) Notes the council's projected revenue & capital position for 2020/21.**
- ii) Notes the budget movements;**
- iii) Approves the Capital variances and slippage.**
- iv) Approves a fully funded capital budget addition of £500,000 for SEND Special Provision. See 11.2 for further information.**
- v) Approves a virement of £200,000 from the Secondary Expansions Risk Contingency to Bisham General Refurbishment. See 11.3 for further information.**

- vi) Approves a fully funded capital budget addition of £87,000 for a Wider Area Growth Study. See 11.4 for further information.
- vii) Approves a fully funded capital budget addition of £140,000 for the Emergency Active Travel Fund. See 11.5 for further information.
- viii) Approves a fully funded capital budget addition of £381,000 for design and construction changes to Braywick Leisure Centre. See 11.6 for further information.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion took place on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The meeting, which began at 6.15 pm, finished at 10.05 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....