



Rutland County Council

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RECORD OF DECISIONS AT A MEETING OF THE CABINET

Thursday, 11th January, 2024 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillor G Waller (Chair) Councillor A Johnson (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P Browne Councillor D Ellison
Councillor T Smith Councillor C Wise

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mark Andrews Chief Executive
Angela Wakefield Strategic Director for Law and Governance
Dawn Godfrey Strategic Director for Children's Services
Kim Sorsky Strategic Director for Adult Services and Health
Kirsty Nutton Strategic Director for Resources
David Ebbage Democratic Services Officer

Decisions published on 12 January 2024.

Decisions will be implemented on 22nd January 2024 unless the Call-in Procedure as outlined in Procedure Rule 149 is invoked. (5 working days after publication)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF THE PAID SERVICE

There were no announcements from the Chairman or Head of Paid Service.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023.

RESOLVED

- a) That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023 be **APPROVED**.

5 ITEMS RAISED BY SCRUTINY

No items were raised.

6 FUTURE OF THE PARKS SPECIAL SCHOOL

Report No.02/2024 was introduced by Councillor T Smith, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families.

He informed Members that it was agreed at Cabinet on 12th September 2023 to go out to consultation on the future of The Parks provision, following the process set out in the Department for Education (DfE) guidance 'Opening and Closing Maintained Schools - Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers' (January 2023). Consultation opened following the public launch on November 1st and closed at midnight on Sunday 3rd December.

Councillor Smith also highlighted that 80 individual people submitted a response through the dedicated parks consultation inbox over the consultation period. These were reviewed by an independent reviewer and, whilst all respondents raised some concern related to the proposal to close the Parks, there were no representations which offered any viable alternatives to closure.

Following the independent review of the Parks, it was identified that the current arrangement was expensive and did not reflect the national and local aim for more children with special educational needs to be educated within their local mainstream early education or school setting.

Members understood the emotion over this item, but the Council had to be sensible with the use of public money and redirecting resources to be more effective. There was evidence within the report that children do succeed when they are in mainstream education.

It was moved by Councillor T Smith and seconded that the recommendations of Report No.02/2024 be approved. Upon being put to the vote, with six votes in favour the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- a) **CONSIDERED** the outcome of the consultation and the feedback from the independent reviewer and **APPROVED** the closure of the Parks Special Nursery School with effect from the end of the academic year, August 2024.

7 CORPORATE STRATEGY REFRESH

Report No.03/2024 was introduced by Councillor G Waller, Leader of the Council.

The report provided Council with a refresh of the Corporate Strategy priorities and objectives covering the period 2024-2026.

Revision of the strategic priorities was part of the on-going review cycle built into the Corporate Strategy which sets out a revision every two years. This allowed the Council to reflect any changes in landscape including, for example, the priorities of the new Cabinet following the election in May.

Members were pleased to see climate change was included within the Council's priorities with the recent floods from Storm Henk.

It was moved by Councillor G Waller and seconded that the recommendations of Report No.03/2024 be approved. Upon being put to the vote, with six votes in favour the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- a) **RECOMMENDED** to Council to approve the adoption of the Corporate Strategy Refresh 2024-26.

8 INTEGRATED BUDGET PLAN AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25 TO 2027/28

Report No.04/2024 was introduced by Councillor A Johnson, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Governance and Resources.

The report to Cabinet formed part of the Council's formal Budget Framework. It required Cabinet to initiate and make proposals and update assumptions to set a balanced budget for the financial years 2024/25 - 2027/28. There was a legal requirement to set a balanced budget for 2024/25.

Proposals agreed by Cabinet on 11 January 2024, would be approved for consultation, with responses received considered at Cabinet on 13 February with final proposals recommended to Council on 26 February 2024 for approval.

Councillor Johnson explained the different process which had been adopted this year with the use of cash limits. Initial Cash Limits were allocated to Directors and in turn Heads of Service to enable services to be designed within an affordability envelope across the MTFs period to ensure financial sustainability was a focus.

Officers found the cash limits structure approach had been successful and a positive experience as budget holders worked together to look at transformation and delivery of services could be worked within that limit.

It was moved by Councillor A Johnson and seconded that the recommendations of Report No.04/2024 be approved. Upon being put to the vote, with six votes in favour the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. **APPROVED** as the basis for public consultation:

- a) The proposed budget including a Council Tax increase of 4.99% (2.99% general Council Tax and 2.0% Adult Social Care precept), as outlined in section 5.1.2 and Appendix F.
- b) The budget proposals as outlined in Appendix B and C as the basis for public consultation.
- c) The updated revenue budget assumptions, to be incorporated in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 – 2027/28. These are outlined in sections 5 and 6.
- d) The grant funding receipts estimated across the MTFS as contained in Appendix D.
- e) The Fees and Charges Strategy that details the approach to be adopted by directorates when setting and updating fees and charges as provided in Appendix E.
- f) The revised capital programme and schemes outlined in section 6.5 and referencing Appendix K and M.
- g) The funding of the capital programme as detailed in the treasury management and capital strategies in Appendices L and M.
- h) The updated Reserves Strategy and forecast reserve commitments to fund the cost of transformational investment and previously identified departmental commitments as outlined in section 7.4, and Appendices B, C and I.
- i) The Education budget as outlined in section 6.6 and Appendix N.
- j) The budget virement limits as outlined in section 9.
- k) The Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2027/28 as set out in the body of the report and following appendices:

Appendix A – 2024/25 – 2027/28 MTFS detailed budget position

Appendix B – Budget proposals tables (pressures / savings / investments)

Appendix C – Directorates Overview, Service Ambitions and Budget Variation Statements

Appendix D – Grant Register

Appendix E – Fees & Charges Strategy / Policy & Schedule

Appendix F – Funding strategy

Appendix G – Financial Health Indicators

Appendix H – Financial Risk Register

Appendix I – Reserve Strategy

Appendix J – Consultation document

Appendix K – Capital Programme Schemes 2024/25 – 2027/28

Appendix L – Treasury Management Strategy & Annual Investment Strategy

Appendix M – Capital Strategy

Appendix N – Dedicated Schools Grant and the Schools budget

Appendix O – Carbon Impact Assessment

(Appendix P – Council Tax Resolution – to follow for Full Council only)

2. NOTED

- a) The strategic financial approach taken by the Council outlined in section 3 of this report.
- b) The Council's core funding position following the provisional Local Government Settlement outlined in section 5.
- c) The forecast reserves position and the statutory advice of the Chief Finance Officer outlined in section 7 'The Robustness (Section 25) Statement'
- d) The financial health indicators which consider the key financial considerations of revenue and balance sheet performance, and that capital investment is not resulting in undue burden on future funding, section 8.

9 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Leader of the Council felt that the meeting would be able to remain in a public session.

10 CONTRACT AWARD FOR PURCHASE OF THE REQUIRED VEHICLES AND ASSOCIATED TRANSPORT INFRA-STRUCTURE DETAILED WITHIN THE LEVELLING UP FUND BID

Report No.05/2024 was introduced by Councillor C Wise, Portfolio Holder for Transport, Environment and Communities.

Councillor Wise highlighted that a procurement process to purchase vehicles to deliver a new public bus service had been undertaken via the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) specialist vehicle framework 215-20.

On 12th September 2023, Cabinet approved the procurement of vehicles and associated transport infra-structure as set out in the Levelling Up Fund project.

Cabinet approval was required to award call off contracts via the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) specialist vehicle framework 215-20, in accordance with Rule 16.64 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules for awards exceeding £213,477 to purchase vehicles as outlined in the LUF bid.

The aim was to place a one-off order for 11 minibuses, made up of 8 diesel and 3 Electric Vehicles (EVs) to deliver passenger transport services in the county. The specification for the vehicles was shown at Appendix A.

It was moved by Councillor C Wise and seconded that the recommendations of Report No.05/2024 be approved. Upon being put to the vote, with six votes in favour the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- a) **APPROVED** the award of the Contract for purchase of Fleet Vehicles.

11 ANY ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 13th February 2024.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10.50am.

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