



Rutland County Council

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RECORD OF DECISION AT A MEETING OF THE CABINET

Tuesday, 18th May, 2021 at 10.00 am

Decisions published on Wednesday 19th May 2021

Decisions will be implemented on 25 May 2021 unless the Call-in Procedure as outlined in Procedure Rule 206 is invoked.

PRESENT: Mr O Hemsley (Chair)
Mrs L Stephenson (Deputy Chair)
Mrs K Payne
Mr I Razzell
Mr D Wilby

OFFICERS	Mr M Andrews	Interim Chief Executive
PRESENT:	Mr J Morley	Acting Director – Adult Services (DAS)
	Mr S Della Rocca	Strategic Director for Resources
	Mrs P Sharp	Strategic Director for Places
	Mr P Horsfield	Deputy Director Corporate Governance
	Mrs J Morley	Governance Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Walters.

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

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive.

The Chairman announced at the start of the meeting, that earlier in the month there had been a legal ruling which meant that the powers to hold decision meetings virtually were rescinded. As a consequence of this, and the fact that Cabinet were not currently able to use the Council Chamber as it was being used as the Rutland vaccination site, the Leader had, temporarily, delegated the ability to make decisions to the individual Portfolio Holders albeit still in consultation with Cabinet. This consultation would take the form of the usual Cabinet meeting.

Instead of the usual roll call of Members to take the decision, the Leader would seek, via a show of hands, Cabinet Members' general agreement or disagreement with the recommendations in the report. Following this consultation, the decisions of the individual Portfolio Holders would be published on or before Wednesday 19 May 2021,

and implemented the following week, 24 May, unless the Call-in procedure was invoked.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4 RECORD OF DECISIONS

The Record of Decisions made at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16 March 2021, copies of which had been previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record.

5 ITEMS RAISED BY SCRUTINY

There were no items raised by Scrutiny.

6 REVOCATION OF RISK BASED VERIFICATION POLICY

Report No.62/2021 was received from the Strategic Director for Resources. Mr Della Rocca introduced the report the purpose of which was to seek revocation of the Risk Based Verification (RBV) Policy for the administration of Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support with immediate effect.

Mr Della Rocca confirmed that as the Council now had access to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) systems it did not have to rely heavily on residents informing it of any changes.

The Cabinet were in agreement with the recommendation.

DECISION:

Cllr Payne, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation, approved the intention to revoke the Risk Based Verification Policy with immediate effect.

7 PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2020/21

Report No.63/2021 was received from the Chief Executive.

Cllr Hemsley, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy and Partnerships, Economy and Infrastructure introduced the report stating that a new Corporate Plan had been introduced in 2019. This had been due to be updated in 2021 but had been delayed because of the Covid situation. However, performance had continued being monitored and the Council was looking forward to refreshing the Corporate Plan later in the year using information gathered from the Future Rutland Conversations that were currently taking place. This information would also help shape a revised Performance Framework for 2023.

Business in many areas had continued as normal, such as the rollout of the full fibre network, whilst others had to cease because of the pressures of managing Covid. In conclusion Cllr Hemsley felt that 38 KPIs below target and 15 KPIs above target was a very respectable achievement.

Cllr Wilby applauded staff who had done an excellent job in very difficult conditions and had shown themselves to be dynamic in responding to the changing situations. Both Cllr Stephenson and Cllr Razzell concurred.

All Cabinet members were in agreement with the recommendations.

DECISIONS:

Cllr Hemsley, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy and Partnerships, Economy and Infrastructure

1. Noted the overall performance position for 2020/21 and the actions being taken to address underperformance;
2. Approved the proposed changes to the KPI framework (as set out in Appendix B);
3. Noted plans to develop performance reporting against a revised Corporate Plan in time for 22/23.

8 BUDGET SAVINGS 2021/22

Report No.64/2021 was received from the Strategic Director for Resources.

Cllr Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation introduced the report, stating that surviving the past 18 months of the pandemic had posed great personal and commercial challenge making it a time like no other experienced in the past. Covid had generated ever changing demands on the Council through rapid and frequently changing regulation and direction, the creation of vaccination and testing centres, administering and delivering over £14m worth and thousands of grants, and the changing demands of social care for residents to name but a few aspects. On top of all of this the Council had continued to deliver business as usual.

The Council was still understanding what the new financial landscape looked like. It continued to carry financial risks that needed mitigating in order to deal with this uncertainty. Much work still needed to be done against this backdrop; the lingering impact of the pandemic could create unknown stresses on income, future Government funding was unknown, a social care white paper was expected and the Council faced capacity and resource issues because Covid demands still conflicted with everyday business.

It was against this backdrop that Cllr Payne wished to recommend to Council the principles outlined in the report in respect of future work and budget savings.

In respect of the delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder to spend up to £500k to allow savings projects to be accelerated, Cllr Payne emphasised the point that no money drawn down from reserves would be spent unless there was proven significant gain.

Some Members had expressed surprise at the £2.4m underspend outlined in the report. £1m was already known about and was a testimony to the prudential management of the former portfolio holder. Budget forecasting had been difficult during the pandemic for the same reasons outlined earlier and in Q4 another lockdown period was entered into which created impacts on budget that were not anticipated eg. there were reductions in demand for both adult and children's social

care, provision had been made for bad debt on properties which had not materialised and there were a higher number of planning applications than expected.

The Q4 outturn report would be scrutinised by the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Committee on the 10 June.

Cllr Payne felt that the large underspend identified was good news as it would help to cushion the blow of the financial pressures that RCC was expected to experience this year such as unforeseen and unknown pandemic demands, a higher than anticipated pay award, the environment bill that would change the way waste was handled, a social care uplift, potential rework of the Local Plan, subsidising the Leisure Contract, and Climate Change demands that were currently in definition. A similar challenge had been identified for 2022/23.

Cabinet were in agreement with the recommendations outlined in the report.

DECISIONS:

Cllr Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation, in consultation with Cabinet, recommended to Council that it:

1. Approves the principles (in para 2.2.2) to guide future work and decision making in respect of budget savings;
2. Approves budget savings of £598k to be applied in 21/22 and changes to funding of £613k;
3. Delegates authority to the Director and Chief Finance Officer (in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance) to spend the £172k in Invest to Save plus £328k from 20/21 anticipated under spends to fund support, if required, that will allow savings projects to be accelerated;
4. Notes the provisional position on the 20/21 outturn (para 2.6) and that the provisional underspend does not change the projected gap of £2.7m for 22/23.

9 ANY ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10.27am

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