

## **CABINET**

**WEDNESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2019**

PRESENT:- Councillors Oliver Donachie, Brian Ford, Dale Heenan, Russell Holland (Chair), Mary Martin, Cathy Martyn, Maureen Penny, Gary Sumner and Keith Williams

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Renard.

Councillor Jim Grant attended the meeting in respect of Minute 31.

### **22. Declarations of Interest.**

The Chair reminded members of the need to declare known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

Councillor Donachie declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in the Cabinet Agenda item: Strategic Partnerships - Local Industrial Strategy and Great Western Powerhouse (Minute 29) in that he is a Director of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

### **23. Minutes.**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **24. Public Question Time.**

There were no public questions.

### **25. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public.**

Resolved – That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the item listed below, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Item Nos.	Paragraph No.	Minute Nos.
13	3	33

### **26. Report of the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Social Care Services July 2019**

Councillor Mary Martin, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Corporate Director of Children's Services submitted a joint report setting out a summary of the key findings from the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Social Care Services (ILACS) in Swindon, which was completed in July 2019.

Councillor Martin invited Cabinet to welcome the inspection's finding that the service was "good" and she thanked the staff for their hard work for achieving this and colleagues for agreeing the necessary additional funding for the service area. The Deputy Leader of Council and Vice Chair of Cabinet echoed these comments and emphasised the need for the Borough to sustain this performance.

Resolved that:

- 1) Note be taken of the judgements and key findings from the OFSTED report across each of the judgements.
- 2) It be recognised where positive progress and improvement has been made and understand how this has been achieved.
- 3) The areas for continued improvement for future scrutiny and assurance be noted and that improvements continue to be made and are embedded and sustained.
- 4) All staff in Children's Services and across the Council be thanked for their commitment and hard work to achieve a successful inspection outcome.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

**27. Budget Management 2019/20**

Councillor Russell Holland, the Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice Chair of Cabinet, and the Director of Finance submitted a joint report providing Cabinet with the 2019/20 revenue budget forecast out-turn.

The Deputy Leader introduced the report by advising Cabinet that without mitigating measures, the Council would face a year-end deficit, hence was vital for all to adhere to their budgets and implement necessary savings measures. The Deputy Leader welcomed the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Spending Review and undertook to bring a report on its implications to the next Cabinet meeting.

Resolved:

- 1) That the 2019/20 revenue budget forecast out-turn for each service area set out in Table 1 and Appendix 1 be noted;
- 2) To note that the Corporate Management Team will develop plans to mitigate the current forecast overspend;
- 3) That the virements set out in Appendix 2.3 be approved.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

**28. Capital Monitoring Quarter 1 2019-20**

Councillor Russell Holland, The Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice-Chair of Cabinet, and the Director of Finance submitted a joint report presenting to Cabinet the capital programme position for the first quarter of 2019/20 and some proposed changes to that programme.

Resolved:-

- 1) That the forecast capital expenditure set out in Table 1 & 2 and Appendix 1

- and 2 be noted;
- 2) That the changes detailed at paragraphs 3.2 to 3.3 be noted and the required funding adjustments approved;
  - 3) That the additions to the programme noted at section 3.4 be approved.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

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## **29. Strategic Partnerships - Local Industrial Strategy and Great Western Powerhouse**

Councillor Oliver Donachie, the Cabinet Member for Economy and Place, on behalf the Leader of the Council and himself, and the Head of Strategic Growth, submitted a joint report setting out key elements of Swindon Borough Council's recent engagement with key strategic partners, Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) and the Great Western Powerhouse.

Councillor Donachie introduced the joint report and thanked the Council's staff and the LEP for their prompt response to the Ministry for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to accelerate the approval timetable. Councillor Donachie drew Cabinet's attention to the cyber-capital opportunities and the business-led multi-campus federation of higher education provision, and the Council's growth priorities, as set out in the body of the report.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice-Chair of Cabinet added to the discussion by briefing Cabinet on the benefits that could come to the Borough from its participation both in England's Economic Heartland, which will have a statutory role, and the informal Great Western Powerhouse, which had been formed to take advantage of possible future central government funding opportunities.

Councillor Dale Heenan asked a question about how the Local Industrial Strategy would respond to the current economic challenges such as Brexit and the closure of Honda. Councillor Donachie and the Head of Strategic Growth responded at the meeting.

### **Resolved:**

- 1) That the principles and high-level content of the Local Industrial Strategy be endorsed and any further recommendations made to ensure that Swindon's priorities are reflected in the document.
- 2) That the Leader of the Council, as a Director of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board, be invited to convey Cabinet's desire that the Local Industrial Strategy be adopted in accordance with recommendation 1.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

### **30. Annual Review of Local Ombudsman Complaints**

The Deputy Leader of the Council and the Vice Chair of Cabinet, on behalf of the Leader of the Council, and the Chief Legal Officer, introduced joint report on the receipt of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's (LGO) Annual Review for 2017/2018. The report gives the total number of complaints and enquiries received by the LGO with regard to Swindon Borough Council. The report highlighted the annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the LGO regarding the Authority for the year ended 31st March 2019.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice-Chair of Cabinet advised Members to note the Council's determination to provide redress where necessary and its good record when compared to other authorities.

Councillors Brian Ford and Oliver Donachie spoke in favour of the report, thanking staff for responding to complaints responsibly, while noting that any complaint is a serious matter.

#### **Resolved:**

- 1) That the LGO's Annual Review 2018/19, including the summary of National Statistics, and the trends across service areas in Swindon 2010-2019, attached at Appendix 1 be noted.
- 2) That Cabinet record its thanks to all officers for their efforts in dealing with complaints effectively.
- 3) That the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors, Directors and Heads of Service be authorised to take appropriate actions to continue to ensure that, where possible, complaints are resolved internally before such matters are referred to the LGO and that requests for information from the LGO are dealt with promptly.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

### **31. Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan**

Councillor Cathy Martyn, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety and the Corporate Director for Communities and Housing submitted a joint report setting out the Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan "MTFP" over the next 30 years.

Councillor Martyn introduced the joint report setting out the Council's context of managing over 10,000 homes while coping with central government both transferring a debt burden onto the Housing Revenue Account and requiring the Council to reduce rents in four consecutive years. Councillor advised Members to note the key points set out in the body of the report.

Councillor Jim Grant, Leader of the Opposition, asked questions about the Council's proposed use of borrowing powers under the HRA given the lifting of the "cap" and any plans to build more council houses to address homelessness. Councillor Martyn along with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice-Chair of Cabinet responded at the meeting.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Medium Term Financial Plan set out at Appendix 1 to the main report be endorsed.
- 2) That it be noted that the plan will be updated annually to take into account Central Government policies that have an impact of the Housing Revenue Account as well as the Council's annual budget setting process.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

**32. Reference from the Health and Wellbeing Board - Swindon Borough Council's Reducing Rough Sleepers Strategy**

Councillor Cathy Martyn, the Cabinet for Housing and Public Safety and the Chief Legal Officer submitted a joint report asking Cabinet to adopt the Reducing Rough Sleepers Strategy 2019-2022 that had been approved at the Health and Wellbeing Board on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019. In accordance with the Board's terms of reference, the Minute of that meeting has been submitted to Cabinet.

Councillor Martyn introduced the joint report, noting that the strategy was the product of several partner agencies, which if approved, would be followed by a detailed action plan.

Resolved:

- 1) That the recommendation of the Health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting on 10th July 2019: "That Swindon Borough Council's Cabinet be recommended to adopt the Council's Reducing Rough Sleepers Strategy 2019-2022" be agreed.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

**33. Land for the Commercial Housing Programme**

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice-Chair of Cabinet, along with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and the Corporate Director of Communities and Housing submitted a joint report seeking approval in principle from Cabinet to transfer Council-owned land to its Housing Company.

Councillor Sumner introduced the joint report and set out the expected process should the recommendations be adopted. Councillors Mary Martin and Keith Williams asked questions about specific sites while Councillor Oliver Donachie asked about the Swindon Housing Company. Councillor Sumner responded at the meeting. Councillor Dale Heenan set out a reasoned principle by which he could support six sites but not the seventh; hence, he would abstain on the vote.

Resolved:

- 1) That, in principle the allocation of land referred to in paragraph 3.1 and

shown edged in red on the plans attached at Appendix One, as future housing developments sites to be delivered by the Swindon Housing Company Ltd be approved.

- 2) That the Head of Property Assets, in consultation with the Chief Legal Officer and the Director of Finance, be authorised to:
  - a. Agree the terms for the transfer of the land detailed at paragraph 3.1
  - b. And, subject to the successful completion of process set out in paragraph 3.5, transfer the land to the Swindon Housing Company Ltd.

Councillor Dale Heenan abstained on the above resolution.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.