

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet that took place in the Council Chamber at County Hall on Tuesday 18 October 2022

Present:

Councillor	Cabinet Member Responsibility
Councillor K Bentley	Leader of the Council (Chairman)
Councillor M Buckley	Waste Reduction and Recycling
Councillor G Butland	Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture
Councillor B Egan	Children's Services and Early Years
Councillor Lee Scott	Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport
Councillor J Spence	Health and Adult Social Care
Councillor L Wagland	Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning

Councillors M Durham, M Mackrory, M Platt, P Schwier and L Shaw were also present. Councillors A McGurran (substituting for Councillor I Henderson), A Goggin and D King attended remotely, via Zoom.

1. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest.

The report of Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received and the following were noted:

1. There had been no changes of membership since the last report.
2. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability, Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance, Christopher Whitbread, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs and Councillor Ivan Henderson, Leader of the Labour Group, for whom Councillor Aidan McGurran (attending via Zoom) was substituting.

Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Finance and Technology, was attending in place of Gavin Jones, Chief Executive.

3. There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes: 19 July 2022

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 19 July 2022, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Questions from the public

None.

4. 2022-23 Financial Overview as at the Half Year Stage (FP/304/02/22)

The Cabinet received a report setting out the current forecast financial position of Essex County Council's (ECC) revenue and capital budgets as at the half year stage of the 2022/23 financial year.

In introducing the report, the Leader of the Council referred to a textual amendment to recommendation 2.1 ii, which ensured that the reason quoted for bus service operator losses was consistent with that provided elsewhere in the report (i.e. reduced patronage). This is reflected in resolution 1ii below.

The Leader expressed thanks to all Council staff for their efforts to manage the increasing financial pressures being faced by the Council.

The Leader responded to questions from Councillors King and McGurran in relation to:

- A request, which the Leader agreed, to share with all political groups information on issues associated with the budget, including certain of the assumptions behind it and the Council's likely position in relation to the Prudential Indicators.
- Clarification of the explanation for bus service operator losses, as set out above.

Resolved:

1. To draw down funds from reserves as follows:

- £2.7m** from the Covid Equalisation Reserve to the following portfolios due to Covid related expenditure: Adult Social Care and Health portfolio **£1.7m**, Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance RSSS portfolio **£501,000**, Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs RSSS portfolio **£211,000**, Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport portfolio **£179,000** and Leader RSSS portfolio **£70,000**. Further detail can be found in section 5 (sections 5.1.v, 5.13.ii, 5.15.iii, 5.9.iii and 5.16.ii)
- £1.8m** from the Transformation Reserve to the following portfolios: Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport portfolio; **£850,000** mitigating the Local Highways Panels saving included within the Medium Term Resource Strategy (MTRS) and **£917,000** to reimburse bus service operator losses related to reduced patronage as per FP/437/06/22 (section 5.9.iii). **£25,000** to the Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance RSSS portfolio relating to Experian Licences (section 5.13.ii)
- £550,000** from the Adult Social Care Risk Reserve to the Adult Social Care and Health portfolio relating to short stay isolation beds for older adults (section 5.1.v)

- iv. **£344,000** from the Children's Transformation Reserve to the Children's Services and Early Years portfolio for the Tendring Multi-Disciplinary Team to continue funding the pilot project in that region. (section 5.2.iii)
- v. **£384,000** from the Adults Transformation Reserve to the Adult Social Care and Health portfolio relating to costs for Business Support posts **£302,000** and Transforming Community Care and Dementia (TCCD) **£82,000** (section 5.1.v)
- vi. **£68,000** from the Community Initiatives Fund Reserve to the Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance portfolio to fund payments to community groups that have been awarded small grants (section 5.3.iii)

2. To appropriate funds to reserves as follows:

- i. **£1.4m** to the Carry Forward Reserve for use in 2023/24 from the following portfolios:
 - Other Operating Costs **£600,000** (section 5.12.ii)
 - Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture **£400,000** (section 5.4.ii)
 - Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs RSSS portfolio **£232,000** (section 5.15.iii)
 - Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport **£86,000** (section 5.9.iii)
 - Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance RSSS **£60,000** (section 5.13.ii)
 - Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance **£50,000** (section 5.3.iii)
- ii. **£1.8m** from the Transformation Reserve to the following portfolios:
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- iii. **£535,000** to the Technology and Digitisation Reserve from the Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs RSSS portfolio to support future work relating to the Cloud Modernisation Programme (section 5.15.iii)
- iv. **£260,000** to the Reserve for Future Capital Funding from the Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs portfolio for the lift replacement costs within the Commercial Property portfolio (section 5.8.iii)
- v. **£118,000** to the Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) Equalisation Reserves from the Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability portfolio in relation to the Debden PFI (section 5.7.iii)
- vi. **£94,000** to the Transformation Reserve from the Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs RSSS portfolio towards the Workforce Strategy project (section 5.15.iii)

3. To approve the following adjustments:

- i. Vire **£47,000** from the Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport portfolio to the Leader RSSS portfolio for a Highways Communications officer (sections 5.9.iii and 5.16.ii)
- ii. Vire **£36,000** from the Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning portfolio to the Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport portfolio to fund a secondment from Development Management to the Transport Strategy and Engagement Team (sections 5.5.iii and 5.9.iii)
- iii. Amend the capital budget as shown in Appendices C (i) and C (ii) which allows for capital slippage of **£33m**, with £27.1m slipped into 2023/24, £4.7m into 2024/25 and £1.2m into 2025/26. Capital budget additions of **£20.4m**, capital budget reductions of **£14.9m** and advanced works of **£5.2m** (£13.4m to be advanced from 2026/27, £904,000 from 2023/24, £5.2m into 2022/23, £5.6m into 2024/25 and £3.5m into 2025/26) (see section 7.2).

5. Better Care Fund Plan 2022-23 (FP/482/08/22)

The Cabinet received a report seeking adoption of the 2022-23 Better Care Fund Plan for Essex and agreement of the delegation to vary the related Section 75 agreements to reflect the Plan once agreed.

Councillor Spence, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care responded to questions from Councillors Mackrory and McGurran in relation to:

- Whether there could be any guarantee that the aim to improve service effectiveness through development of a more integrated approach would be achieved more successfully than when similar commitments had been given in the past.
- The measures in place for contract monitoring.
- Why the Council did not require domiciliary care providers to pay staff the National Living Wage in an effort to improve recruitment and retention.
- What the Council is doing to make sure that care providers allocate sufficient time for care visits to enable staff to complete all the required tasks in the time allowed.

Resolved:

1. Agreed to adopt the Better Care Fund Plan for Essex in the form appended to report FP/482/08/22.
2. Agreed to authorise the Executive Director for Adult Social Care to vary the related Section 75 agreements to reflect the agreed Plan.

**6. Decisions taken by or in consultation with Cabinet Members
(FP/504/09/22)**

The report was noted.

7. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Cabinet was scheduled at 10.15am on Tuesday 15 November 2022 at County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH.

9. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.50pm.

**Chairman
15 November 2022**