

CABINET

24th May 2011 - At a meeting of the Cabinet held at the County Hall, Chichester

Present: Mrs Goldsmith (Chairman), Mr Barnard, Mr Bradbury, Mr Brown, Mr Catchpole, Mr Evans, Mr Griffiths and Mrs Urquhart.

Declarations of Interest

1. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

2. Resolved - that the minutes of the Cabinet held on 25th January 2011 be approved as a correct record.

Performance Framework 2010/11

3. The Cabinet had before them the report by the Executive Director, Finance and Performance on the end of year performance against the 2010/11 targets in the Performance Framework (copy appended to the signed minutes).
4. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families commented that although the percentage of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within seven working days of referral had been missed the Department of Education had recently increased the timeframe for assessments to 10 days. Of the 6474 assessments carried out in 2010/11, 3738 had been on time. It was acknowledged that although improvements were being made, there was further work to do and this was being closely monitored by the Improvement Board.
5. It was noted that the target for street lights working had been missed by 0.1% (65 street lights not working) issues over performance had resulted in actions against the contractor and there had been regular meetings with the contractor to resolve the problems. Members were pleased to note that the County Council was taking a robust and effective approach to performance management and that measures were in hand to ensure that the contractor met the requirements.
6. The Cabinet Member for Public Protection reported that although the reduction in the number of accidental dwelling fires had missed the target by six fires, more work was being carried out in Adur, Crawley and Worthing which were the main areas of concern for this issue.

7. Members were pleased to note that 17 targets had been met and thanked the officers for achieving them and noted the examples of good practice throughout the Authority. The Leader also thanked her Cabinet for their contributions in ensuring the targets were met.

Budget Outturn 2010/11

8. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources introduced the report on the budget outturn 2010/11 (copy appended to the signed minutes).
9. The Cabinet noted the underspend of £9.4m in the last financial year and that £8.8m had been taken into reserves to fund redundancies including the 30% reduction in the Operational Management Group in the coming months. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources also highlighted that the County Council had not borrowed against its Capital Programme in 2010/11 and so saved £1.4m. However in 2011/12 the County Council would need to find a further £37m savings.
10. It was anticipated that the Auditor would give an unqualified opinion on the accounts. The report would be considered by the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee on 27th June 2011.
11. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources thanked the Executive Director, Finance and Performance and his team for the excellent report. The Leader commented that the Cabinet should not underestimate the challenge facing the County Council in 2011/12.
12. The report was noted.

Delivery of Performance Framework 2011/14 through Directorate Business Plans 2011/12.

13. The Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director, Finance and Performance on the delivery of the performance framework 2011/14 (copy appended to the signed minutes). The Leader explained that its purpose was to demonstrate how the performance plan was driving the Council's annual business plans for 2011/12. In particular Cabinet Members highlighted the following principles and objectives:
 - Effective financial management and the need to find £37m in 2011/12 (objective1)
 - The development of the Community Development and Big Society Service and the work with clusters of parishes and partners (objective 4)

- The development of a strategy to raise standards by encouraging schools to take on Academy status (objective 6).
 - The importance of the Think Family approach (objectives 7-10) and benefits of early intervention in supporting families even though the pay back may not be achieved for some time. The Cabinet noted that the savings might not necessarily be made by the County Council. Instead savings may accrue to one or more of the County Council's partners.
14. The Chief Executive assured the Cabinet that staff would focus on the objectives through the business planning process and individual performance and development reviews. He would report back on progress in meeting the objectives in due course.
15. The Leader invited comments and questions from Members attending the meeting. In response to a question about the impact of the findings of the judicial review of Birmingham City Council's decision on raising the eligibility criteria for adult social care, the Chief Executive assured Members that the County Council was working to ensure that it was not vulnerable to legal challenge.
16. It was agreed that the measure for each of the targets in column 4 needed to be expressed correctly so that they could be understood.
17. The Cabinet noted the report.

Improvement Plan Update

18. The Director of Children's Services introduced the report on progress with the delivery of the Improvement Plan (copy appended to the signed minutes). He said that the Improvement Board and the Performance Challenge meeting worked closely to drive the changes in the way the service worked.
19. The Improvement Plan was reviewed each month and the focus of attention was now on the timeliness and quality of the assessments. Of nearly 6,500 assessments in 2010/11, 59% had been achieved within 10 days. Consultants were working with staff to ensure that appropriate benchmarks were set and that the correct information was recorded.
20. There had been some problems with the migration of data to Frameworki but these were being resolved. The drive for this system had been to provide staff with a more effective working system and managers with the tools to manage the service effectively.

21. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families thanked the staff for their dedication and commitment to the improvement process. The vacancy rate at April 2010 was 13% (37 staff) but 20 staff had recently been recruited and were due to join the County Council shortly both from university and other authorities. Overall the position had improved greatly from that of 12 months ago. Members agreed that the risk register should include an item on the "burnout" of staff. The Director of Children's Services commented that he visited the offices each month to meet and talk with staff.
22. The Leader commented that the Corporate Parenting Panel had been revamped in parallel with the Improvement Plan to ensure that Members were fully conversant with the needs of looked after children.
23. The Cabinet noted the report.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 11.30 a.m.