

Unconfirmed minutes – subject to change until confirmed at the next meeting.

## **Cabinet**

27 January 2015 - At a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mrs Goldsmith (Chairman), Mr Barnard, Mr Brown, Mr Catchpole, Mr Evans, Mrs Field, Mr Hunt and Mr Lanzer.

Also present: Mrs Urquhart (Chairman Performance and Finance Select Committee).

Apologies: Mr Montyn.

## **PART I**

### **Declarations of Interest**

1. There were no declarations of interest.

### **Minutes**

2. Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2014 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

### **Urgent Matters**

3. There were no urgent matters.

### **Performance Framework and Revenue Budget & Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2018/19**

4. The Leader introduced the report on the Future West Sussex (FWS) Plan and Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2018/19 (copy appended to the signed minutes). The Leader welcomed Mrs Urquhart, Chairman of the Performance and Finance Select Committee, to the meeting.

5. It was noted that the What Matters to You Survey was undertaken with residents to test the three key priorities in the FWS Plan. Responses to the survey were considered to have indicated a high level of support for the priorities and residents' feedback influenced the drafting of the FWS Plan, draft budget and the Performance Dashboard.

6. The Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life commented that the FWS Plan highlighted the key areas where a difference can be made to the lives of children and young people and their families.

7. The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing commented on how the FWS Plan articulates how Public Health is integrated into the County Council's business and informing everything how it delivers. The Cabinet Member felt that the Plan provides focus on the activities to help improve the lives of people of West Sussex.

8. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health commented that the FWS Plan helps to shape the approach for the County Council to respond to

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significant policy changes in adult social care. The Cabinet Member highlighted that the Plan, alongside the Budget, ensured that there was investment in preventative services to enable people to plan ahead and give them greater choice in their later life. It was felt that the Plan reflected the County Council's role as a key partner in improving the quality of services in the care sector. The Cabinet Member noted that the Budget invests in services to meet an increase in demand.

9. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Relations commented on the vision and ambition for the County that is articulated in the FWS Plan. The Cabinet Member noted that the role of the County Council in championing the local economy will become more important in the context of changing Government funding. It was commented that the Plan and Budget demonstrate the County Council's investment in the long-term future of the West Sussex economy.

10. The Cabinet Member for Residents' Services commented that the FWS Plan and the targets in the Performance Dashboard were ambitious. It was felt that the Plan would not be easy to deliver but presented a welcome challenge focused around a strong vision.

11. The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills commented on the ambition expressed in the FWS Plan and how the performance measures would help bring partners together to achieve common aims. It was noted that the levels of spending in the Learning Service had been maintained.

12. The Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy thanked the Cabinet and officers for their team effort in creating a simple vision for the County. It was noted that the Plan aimed to give children the best start in their early years and at school so that they are ready to play their part in the economy and help create a place where people stay and enjoy long and healthy lives. The Leader commented on the role of the County Council in helping shape the future of West Sussex, supporting residents when they need it in times of emergency and protecting the vulnerable.

13. The Cabinet Member for Finance commented on the spending power of the County Council, which made it one of the biggest economic players in the county. The Cabinet Member expressed his faith in the Plan and the budget that was designed specifically to support and fulfil the Plan.

14. The Cabinet Member for Finance noted that the budget set out reductions in the cost of back office services and overheads in order to make the savings required and invest in services. It was noted that the County Council had saved £100m over the last four years and the budget sets out savings of £68m over the first two years towards a funding gap of £124m over the next four years. The Cabinet Member emphasised the importance of identifying back office savings and better ways of operating in order to maintain front-line services and avoid the need to increase the burden of local taxation.

15. The Cabinet Member for Finance highlighted that it was proposed that the County Council would, for the fifth successive year, freeze the level of Council Tax, such that residents would pay the same amount as was set in February 2010. The Cabinet Member reflected that the County Council had done what it could to help people to cope with a rise in the cost of living.

16. The Cabinet Member for Finance commented on the capital investment the County Council was intending to make in the infrastructure and economy of the

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county, using local businesses where possible to ensure that economic prosperity is shared inside the county. It was noted that the capital investment would need to be carefully managed and tough choices made to ensure that resources were focused on projects that are economically advantageous to the Council. It was noted that the programme for 2015/16 had been financed without the need for external borrowing.

17. The Chairman of the Performance and Finance Select Committee addressed the Cabinet on the comments from Select Committees. It was noted that the process had been well-received and Select Committees had been able to scrutinise the plans line by line and contribute to the development of the FWS Plan and budget.

18. Select Committee Members had:

- Welcomed the increase in front line budgets to meet services demands, particularly in Adults' Services;
- Asked to be more involved in the activity of PropCo
- Expressed concern about administrative support for social workers being in the budget for one year only;
- Asked Cabinet to consider how to improve Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services;
- Asked for more information on the Cabinet's approach to implementing the Care Act;
- Requested further engagement in 5 Bold Ideas for the economy, particularly on how inward investment was to be achieved; and
- Asked for plans to improve deteriorating footways to be shared.

19. The Executive Director for Corporate Resources and Services highlighted the technical recommendations outlined in the report to County Council on 13 February and assured the Cabinet that, in his professional and independent view, the budget presented was legal, robust and sustainable. It was noted that in the most recent audit the external auditor had assessed the Council as a going concern; the financial modelling undertaken, based on Autumn Statement and the planning to address the funding gap, led the Director to believe that the external auditor could arrive at the same judgement after the next audit.

20. Resolved:

That the Future West Sussex Plan 2015-19 and County Council Draft Revenue Budget & Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2018/19 be recommended to County Council for approval.

### **Outside Bodies Update**

21. The Cabinet received the report of the Head of Law and Governance on the proposed changes to the Outside Bodies list (copy appended to the signed minutes).

22. Resolved:

- Janet Mockridge is appointed to the Littlehampton Harbour Board until the end of the term of the County Council in May 2017;
- The Southampton University Court is deleted from the County Council's Outside Bodies list and appointments are no longer made by the County Council; and

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- The Inter-Authority Fire and Rescue Group is added to the County Council's Outside Bodies list, for appointments to be made by the Cabinet Member for Residents' Services.

### **Dates of Future Meetings**

23. The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 26 January 2016.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.