

## The Cabinet

**3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016 at 3.00 pm**  
**at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

- Present:** Councillor Cooper (Chair);  
Councillors Y Davies, Eling, Hackett, Khatun and Moore.
- Apologies:** Councillor Crompton;  
Councillors L Horton and P Hughes.
- Observers:** Councillors Ahmed, S Jones, Sandars and Underhill.

10/16 **Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

### **Strategic Items**

11/16 **Council Directorates Business Plans 2016/2017 – 2019/2020**  
**(Key Decision Ref. No. FR038)**

The Council at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016 considered the impact for the Council, of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015. The announcement included an offer of a four-year funding settlement to 2019/20.

Details of the four-year funding forecasts that had been based on the provisional settlement for Sandwell and projected expenditure within the corporate budgetary parameters were submitted to Cabinet alongside the Directorate business plans and budgets for the four years 2016/17 to 2019/20. The individual service budgets contained within the Business Plans were aligned to the overall corporate budget parameters.

## The Cabinet – 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016

Details of the Housing Revenue Account priorities were provided in a separate Business Plan.

The Directorate business plans incorporated a comprehensive risk assessment including a sensitivity analysis for all components of the budget, and active steps had been taken to manage the identified risks. Throughout the budget process, the Council had been mindful of continuing budgetary pressures and had continually reassessed the financial risk impact. Actions had been taken to mitigate/reduce the financial risk wherever possible.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources commended the business plans to the Cabinet and recommended that they be submitted to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board for detailed review.

**Resolved** that the business plans for each Directorate be received and referred to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board for detailed review and that the results are considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016, prior to recommendation to Council in March 2016.

12/16

### Quarter 3 Council Wide Budget Monitoring (Key Decision Ref. No. FR027)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources gave details of the Council's revenue and capital expenditure as at the end of December 2015 together with a forecast outturn for the financial year 2015/16.

Details were also submitted on the monitoring of the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

At a service level, excluding Public Health, there was a forecast year end surplus of £6.099m from within the following service areas:

Adult Social Care Services	£1.584m
Children's Services	£1.290m
Assistant Chief Executive	£1.425m
Regeneration and Economy	£0.947m
Neighbourhoods	£0.905m

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

## The Cabinet – 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016

There was also a projected year end surplus of £1.580m within Public Health relating to the carry forward of funding in 2014/15. Approval was sought to reprofile this carry forward into future years. Details of how these carry forwards would be utilised were provided within individual service statements along with explanations for variances.

When taking into account the projected surplus on central items (£3.279m), the utilisation of centrally earmarked balances (£1.510m) and the ring-fencing of unutilised Public Health Grant (£1.580m), the Council was forecasting an overall surplus against general balances for the year of £7.868m.

Approval was also sought to a number of virements across Directorates and to the use of additional specific grants.

As at period 9, there had been no adjustments to the Council's Revenue Support Grant, Retained Business Rates or Business Top Up allocations. The forecast position for the year was therefore to breakeven.

In commending the budget monitoring position to the Cabinet and recommending actions for the continued effective management of the Council's budgets, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources asked Cabinet to note that the Medium Term Financial Strategy was on track and that there were no budget pressures that required action outside of normal budget management processes.

### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that the financial monitoring position of individual directorates be received and referred to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board for consideration and comment;
- (2) that the financial monitoring position of the Housing Revenue Account for the 9 month period ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 be received;
- (3) that the following virements across budget heads be approved:-

## The Cabinet – 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016

- a) £0.121m from Neighbourhoods to Corporate Management in relation to the budget for employees;
  - b) £0.139m from Assistant Chief Executive to Neighbourhoods in relation to a contribution to CCTV;
  - c) £0.587m between Children's Directorate; Inclusion Support, Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help in relation to the allocation of carry forward for 2014/15 Children Services;
  - d) £0.650m between Adult Social Care Directorate; Social Work Team and Complex Commissioning in relation to Mental Health Services;
  - e) £0.228m between Neighbourhood's Directorate; Neighbourhood Working and Area Working in relation to management of local area budgets;
  - f) £0.060m capital virement from Corporate Management to Neighbourhoods; relating to movement of resources in respect of Self Service Customer Portal Scheme;
  - g) £0.243m capital virement from Corporate Management to Adult Social Care; relating to movement of mobile working budget to help Fund the Swift Impress System Scheme;
- (4) that the use of the following additional Specific Grants be approved:-

Assistant Chief Executive:

£0.031m for Fraud and Error Reduction Initiative

Neighbourhoods:

£0.068m for Domestic Violence accommodation

£0.057m for Sandwell Valley

£0.032m for further wi-fi improvements for libraries

£0.033m for homelessness prevention

## The Cabinet – 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016

- (5) that the following carry forwards be re-profiled to future years:
- £1.580m for Public Health
  - £0.038m for Corporate Management
  - £1.290m for Children’s Services
  - £0.755m for Assistant Chief Executive (includes unutilised carry forward 2014/15)
  - £1.494m for Adult Social Care
  - £0.550m for Regeneration & Economy
  - £0.875m for Neighbourhoods
  - £1.110m for HRA
- (6) that the following central items carry forward be re-profiled to future years:
- £0.422m for Regeneration & Economy
- (7) that the following revenue expenditure in 2015/16, contribute to the capital programme in current and future years:
- £0.350m for Regeneration & Economy
  - £1.070m for Assistant Chief Executive
  - £0.030m for Neighbourhoods

13/16

### Membership of the Sandwell School Forum (Key Decision Ref. No. CS060)

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services advised that as part of an ongoing exercise to redefine the way in which the local authority worked in the changing educational landscape of the number of academies and the potential for development of Free Schools, Grammar Schools and new faith schools means, the make-up of the Schools Forum was constantly under review to ensure that its membership reflected the requirements of regulations 4 to 7 of The Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012.

The local authority could determine the size and composition of their Schools Forum and the forum members terms of office. Over the course of the last 18 months, schools and academies had been successful in reconstituting their governing bodies and boards to create smaller more effective teams.

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

## The Cabinet – 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016

With this model in mind and with the support of the Schools Forum sub group, the Council proposed to reduce the membership of the Schools Forum so that all statutory groups were represented and the balance of membership broadly reflected the pupils taught in each phase of education.

The smallest size that a School Forum could be was nine members. Currently, there were 34 members of the Sandwell Schools Forum but despite its size, during the last five years, it had become increasingly difficult to ensure that meetings were quorate and that attendance had led to fair and balanced voting on key decisions.

Based on the current numbers of both primary and secondary school children in education in the borough, the approximate ratio of primary to secondary based members on a revised Forum was 3:2. This ratio would be reviewed annually in the light of changes to pupil numbers within the system. The proposed composition for the new Forum was 20 members representing primary and secondary schools, including Academies, governor representatives and various educational partners.

There was no requirement for the Council to consult on the proposed changes to Forum; however, proposed models were presented for feedback to Schools Forum members, the Joint Executive Head teacher Group, the Primary Head Teacher Partnership, the Secondary Head Teacher Partnership and the Association of Sandwell Governing Bodies. The final proposed model had been developed following feedback from all groups. The two Diocesan Board representatives and union board representatives had been informed of the proposed changes.

In response to a question from the Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board, the Cabinet Member confirmed that a place had been offered to the trade unions, which had been accepted.

The Cabinet Member commended the revised composition for the Schools Forum to the Cabinet for approval.

**Resolved** that the change to the constitution of the Sandwell Schools Forum, as set out in Appendix A, be approved and implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.

14/16

**Framework for the Provision of External Fostering Placements  
(Key Decision Ref. No. CS059)**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services reported on a proposal to utilise a new Framework Agreement set up by Birmingham City Council for the provision of foster care placements. Under the arrangement, the Director - Children and Families would be able to award call-off contracts to commence in April 2016 for two years, with an option to extend for up to a further two years, in accordance with the requirements of the Framework.

Since 2011, Sandwell had entered into contracts for the provision of fostering placements for looked after children, under a collaborative procurement led by Staffordshire County Council. The initial three year period ended on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 and was extended for twelve months to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. Following the end of this framework agreement, Sandwell has been 'spot purchasing' fostering placements.

Providers that were successful in being placed upon the framework following the procurement process would not be guaranteed placements, but would have the opportunity to accept individual purchased placements (call-offs) which would be under the terms and conditions of the Framework Agreement.

The new framework would be structured in four age bands and include a price cap for each age band. Providers that submitted a tender price in excess of the price cap would be excluded.

In response to a question from the Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the pricing framework also took into account any additional needs where specialist care was required.

## The Cabinet – 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016

### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that the Director – Children and Families be authorised to utilise the Framework Agreement established by Birmingham City Council for the provision of foster care placements to award call-off contracts for placements for a period of up to two years, with an option to extend for up to a further two years, to commence in April 2016 and otherwise in accordance with the requirements of the Framework;
- (2) that in order to give effect to resolution (1) above, the Director – Governance enter into the necessary agreements, on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director – Children and Families.

15/16

### **Award of Contract for the Provision of Minor Drainage Services (Key Decision Ref. No. HE036)**

The Leader of the Council, in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment, sought approval to award a contract for the provision of minor drainage and watercourse maintenance works in Sandwell.

The contract would support the Council's Highways service area with its front line minor drainage and watercourse maintenance operations, to carry out reactive and routine minor works to install, renew, maintain, repair and inspect highway and highway drainage infrastructure, private drains, reservoirs and watercourses.

Following the evaluation of the returned tenders and a full financial and qualitative analysis undertaken in accordance with the published selection and award criteria, the most economically advantageous tender was received from Hills Contractors Limited.

The anticipated total expenditure under the contract for the three year period 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019, with the option to extend for up to a further twelve month period until 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020, was £1m.

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]



## The Cabinet – 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016

### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that the Director - Regeneration and Economy award the contract for the Provision of Minor Drainage Services to Hills Contractors Limited for the period 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019, with the option to extend for up to a further twelve month period until 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020;
- (2) that in connection with resolution (1) above, the Director - Governance enter into an appropriate contract with Hills Contractors Limited for the provision of minor drainage services, on terms to be agreed by the Director - Regeneration and Economy.

### **Business Items**

16/16 **Decisions Taken by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment on 17 December 2015**

The decisions of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 were received.

No questions were asked of the Leader, in the absence of the Cabinet Member.

17/16 **Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee held on 13 January 2016**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 were received.

No questions were asked of the Cabinet Members.

## The Cabinet – 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016

### 18/16 Exclusion of the Public

**Resolved** that the public and press be excluded from the rest of the proceedings to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

### 19/16 Ingestre Hall Residential Arts Centre Sustainability Investment (Key Decision Ref. No. FR030)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources sought approval to use capital resources to carry out heating improvement works at Ingestre Hall Residential Arts Centre during the course of Summer 2016. Works included upgrading the main plant room, replacing and improving the main heating and hot water boiler system. In view of the age of the building, asbestos would need to be safely removed to enable the works to be completed.

Upgrading the systems by the complete removal of the near obsolete oil and fired boiler plant within the Hall and the removal of associated fire risks and asbestos would give greater lifecycle benefits.

The solution offered a potential 'spend to save' opportunity through reduced future operating costs, due to reduced fuel costs and an opportunity to receive an income based on renewable heat generated, from the Government's Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme.

A full capital appraisal bid had been undertaken by Strategic Finance. A number of risks had been identified as a result of the appraisal and action points recommended to mitigate those risks.

An equality impact assessment was not required for this proposal.

## The Cabinet – 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016

### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that the sum of £630,000 from the Council's capital resources be approved to fund the replacement of the main boiler system at Ingestre Hall Residential Arts Centre;
- (2) that in connection with resolution (1) above, the following action points identified within the appraisal report be implemented to reduce any risk to the Council:-
  - ensure any required planning, conservation and Historic England approval is obtained;
  - ensure the design of the replacement boiler continues to be compliant with the current Renewal Heat Incentive regulations and therefore improve the chances of a successful application to the scheme;
  - undertake robust contract monitoring to assist with the successful delivery of the project within required timescales and costs;
  - undertake robust financial management to assist with the successful delivery of the project within stated costs and ensure that contingency is only accessed with member's approval;
- (3) that the Director – Governance enter into any legal agreements on terms to be agreed by the Assistant Chief Executive, to allow the replacement works of the main boiler system at Ingestre Hall Residential Arts Centre to be completed.

(Meeting ended at 3.26 pm)

Contact Officer: Suky Suthi-Nagra  
Democratic Services Unit  
0121 569 3479

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]