

AT A MEETING of the Cabinet of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the
Castle, Winchester on Monday, 16th October, 2017

Chairman:

* Councillor Roy Perry

* Councillor Keith Mans
* Councillor Peter Edgar
* Councillor Liz Fairhurst
* Councillor Andrew Gibson
* Councillor Rob Humby

* Councillor Andrew Joy
* Councillor Mel Kendal
* Councillor Stephen Reid
Councillor Patricia Stallard

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman: Councillors Bennison, Carter, Dowden, Forster, Heron, Huxstep and Latham.

Broadcast Statement

The Chairman announced that the meeting was being recorded for broadcast on the County Council's website and would be available for repeated viewing. The press and members of the public were also permitted to film and broadcast this meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recording for broadcasting purposes.

21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Stallard and from Select Committee Chairmen with a standing invitation to attend Cabinet: Councillors Bolton and Mitchell.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

23. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and agreed.

24. DEPUTATIONS

It was noted that requests to speak by Councillors elected to other Authorities had been declined in accordance with the deputation scheme.

The Chairman confirmed that he welcomed input from non-Executive County Councillors and that he had agreed that Councillor Dowden could speak at Item 6 on the agenda.

25. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman noted the significance of this meeting of the Cabinet, with reference to the report relating to future financial strategy and transformation programmes at item 6 on the agenda. He reported recognition for the County Council's achievements and partnership working with the NHS from the head of Public Health England following their visit to Hampshire. With reference to the recent Adult and Children's social care conference in Bournemouth, it was noted that the pressures in those two areas are felt nationwide.

26. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE AND TRANSFORMATION TO 2019 SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Cabinet received a report of the Director of Corporate Resources regarding the medium term financial strategy and Transformation to 2019 (T19) savings proposals.

In introducing the item, the Chairman noted the scale of savings that had already been made and the work undertaken to achieve this. A further £140 million was now required from a combination of demographic and inflationary pressures and a reduction in government grant. Specific pressures in areas such as providing support for young adults with complex needs were highlighted. To achieve the savings required, the Chairman favoured careful planning, supporting people to help themselves and enabling community level action by Town and Parish Councils.

The Director of Corporate Resources set out the key sections of the report, noting that it included the outcomes of public consultation, recommendations from individual departments and equality impact assessments relating to the proposals. She detailed a number of areas and drew Cabinet's attention in particular to section 3 of the report detailing the Council's commercial activity and its focus on sustainable and low risk investment.

With the agreement of the Chairman, Councillor Dowden addressed Cabinet. He acknowledged that the financial pressure resulted from national austerity measures, but felt that it would cause hardship. He did not consider the consultation that was carried out to be valid and was opposed to the strategy of making equal reductions across the organisation. Councillor Dowden noted that pressure on social care was particularly high and expressed his concern that cuts to community transport would undermine progress by putting community organisations at risk of closure and leading to increased levels of social isolation. He called on Cabinet to seek additional funding from the Government specifically to alleviate pressures on social care provision.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Dowden for his input and confirmed that all of Cabinet were very concerned about the position, but noted that government could not simply keep spending and therefore savings were required. The approach of asking for an equal contribution from all departments and then seeking to provide additional support for vulnerable areas where required was supported.

In discussion of the issues raised, Members were supportive of the direction of travel and of the report. It was noted that the County Council did not have the option of sharply increasing Council Tax as had been done in the 1990s and therefore savings were needed. Furthermore there were statutory restrictions on the way in which some service provision could be changed, despite public support, such as charging for the use of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). Cabinet acknowledged that the number of consultation responses had been low and felt that this was reflective of a broad level of acceptance for the proposals. It was emphasised that the goal of improving social outcomes continued despite the financial pressure and confirmed that providing protection for vulnerable children would not change. It was also confirmed that approaches would be made to government regarding the charging restrictions on HWRCs and exploring the options for a pilot scheme.

With reference to the community benefits that could be driven by Town and Parish Councils and the impact of the proposals on communities in Hampshire, it was proposed and agreed that the recommendation at 14.11 be amended to increase the funding available to those Councils to £500,000. It was furthermore proposed and agreed that an additional recommendation be added at 14.12 that Cabinet:

“Requires that officers, as specific decision making processes move forward, continue to explore all viable options to revise or refine these proposals with particular regard to service continuity in areas such as community transport, school crossing patrols and waste and recycling centres, in consultation with partners and stakeholders as appropriate, while recognising that any modification to any proposal must be consistent with the financial and time imperatives of the overall programme.”

With the two amendments detailed above, the recommendations in the report, including the recommendations to the County Council were proposed and agreed. The decision record is attached.

Chairman,