

AT A MEETING of the Cabinet of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the
Castle, Winchester on Tuesday, 7th December, 2021

Chairman:

* Councillor Keith Mans

* Councillor Rob Humby	Councillor Edward Heron
* Councillor Roz Chadd	* Councillor Russell Oppenheimer
* Councillor Liz Fairhurst	* Councillor Stephen Reid
* Councillor Steve Forster	* Councillor Jan Warwick

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman: Councillors Glen, Hayre, House, Porter, and Withers.

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Heron

26. 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 Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 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.

27. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2021 were reviewed and agreed

28. DEPUTATIONS

No requests to make a deputation had been received, but it was noted that Councillors House and Porter would speak on items on the agenda with the agreement of the Chairman.

29. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

In advance of the report later on the agenda, the Chairman highlighted a number of recent meetings regarding County Deal proposals with the Leaders of District and Unitary Councils, which had led to an agreed statement of common purpose

and noted that the Government's White Paper was expected in the new year. The importance of place and local accountability as well as growth and enterprise and therefore the role of key partners in a County Deal was highlighted.

30. LEARNING TO LIVE WITH COVID-19 AND WORKING TOWARDS ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive regarding the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the agreement of the Leader, Councillor House addressed Cabinet. He asked how other County Councillors would be engaged in the proposals; asked what the position was on elected mayors and questioned what red lines would lead to devolution rather than levelling up.

In response the Leader clarified that there would be increased engagement with County Councillors as the process developed. He confirmed his historic opposition to elected mayors but confirmed that on this and any red lines it was important to first see the White Paper, however, the County Deal should be an opportunity to work more efficiently to deliver services and an agency delivery scenario would not be acceptable.

Key elements of the report relating to both the public health situation and the delivery of council services were set out. Increasing infection rates in younger age groups across the county were highlighted and it was suggested that this was a result of increased mixing and reducing immunity. It was clear that the vaccine was working and making a difference and the County Council was working with NHS partners on delivery. There had been a small number of instances of the omicron strain in Hampshire and work was underway to understand the impact. With reference to the priority of keeping children in school, it was noted that attendance in Hampshire was above the national average and the corporate priority of managing a return to office working was detailed.

The report was welcomed by Cabinet. Rising infections in schools were highlighted as a cause for concern and it was confirmed that vaccines were available for eligible children via both schools and GPs. The importance of pro-active communications in the recent omicron outbreak was recognised.

The recommendations in the report were considered and agreed. A decision record is attached to these minutes.

31. FINANCIAL UPDATE AND BUDGET SETTING AND PROVISIONAL CASH LIMITS 2022/23

Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Finance Officer and Director of Corporate Operations regarding 2022-23 budget setting an update on the in-year financial position.

With the agreement of the Leader, Councillor House addressed Cabinet, asking what financial implications had arisen as a result of the Environment Bill and questioning how the shortfall of £17 million would be resolved.

With the agreement of the Leader, Councillor Porter also addressed Cabinet. She noted the positive investments in Children's Services that were detailed in the report, but expressed concern that where work was delayed the agreed spend could prove insufficient due to price inflation. Councillor Porter also questioned the implications for Parish and Town Councils and for the lengthsman scheme.

The Leader noted that a meeting for all Town and Parish Councils was scheduled to take place and this would provide an opportunity to discuss.

Key points in the report were set out, in particular the implications of the spending review on funding for adult social care. It was highlighted that the usual approach was being proposed of meeting shortfalls with reserves and then incorporating them into future savings programmes; greater certainty would be available when the settlement had been announced. It was confirmed that the implementation date of the Environment Bill would determine the level of savings arising from it and the permanent funding proposed for the climate change team was highlighted.

Cabinet welcomed the report and the long-term commitment to the climate change team. Efficiency upgrades to schools using Saalex grant funding from government were recognised as was success in the recycling of asphalt.

The recommendations in the report were considered and agreed. A decision record is attached to these minutes.

32. ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT - CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2020-21

Cabinet considered the annual safeguarding report of the Director of Children's Services.

The report was introduced and the approach and response to the key national issues of child exploitation, unaccompanied asylum seeking children and recruitment and retention were drawn out.

Cabinet members welcomed the report and noted its poignancy in light of recent news about Arthur Labinjo-Hughes. It was noted that it was too soon to know whether this tragedy would lead to structural changes to social care and potential budget pressures. However the service was already dealing with an increased number of referrals due to Covid and it was confirmed that Hampshire social workers would always make decisions in the interests of individual children and not according to budget constraints. The above national average rate of school attendance in Hampshire during covid and the success of joined up working between social care, schools and health partners had assisted safeguarding.

The recommendations in the report were considered and agreed. A decision record is attached to these minutes.

33. **ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT – ADULTS’ HEALTH AND CARE 2020-21**

Cabinet considered the annual safeguarding report of the Director of Adults’ Health and Care.

In introduction of the report, the strong ongoing performance of the department was highlighted in the context of increasing demand and the need to respond to Covid. The contribution of the Hampshire Adult Safeguarding Board was highlighted and recognised by Cabinet.

The recommendations in the report were considered and agreed. A decision record is attached to these minutes.

34. **HAMPSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY GROUP**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults’ Health and Care regarding the Hampshire Community Safety Strategy Group.

With the agreement of the Leader, Councillor Porter addressed Cabinet, thanking officers for their previous detailed presentation to the Policy and Resources Select Committee. The importance of informing communities about the impact of drug use both personally and in relation to county-lines activity was highlighted.

The report was introduced and it was noted that the Director of Adults’ Health and Care was chairman of the Group and its activity centred around the facilitation of effective partnership working to ensure priorities were being addressed. Attention was drawn to the revised priorities as set out in the report and these were welcomed by Cabinet. With reference to a recent increase in reporting of crimes against women it was highlighted that the Group had recognised violence against women as high priority and this would include working with partners, including schools on a number of areas.

The recommendations in the report were considered and agreed. A decision record is attached to these minutes.

35. **ANNUAL PREVENT REPORT**

Cabinet considered the annual PREVENT report of the Director of Adults’ Health and Care.

The report was introduced and it was noted that its purpose was to update and provide oversight of national and local events. Specifically the recent murder of an MP and the Liverpool hospital bombing had raised the national threat level. Locally there had been an increase in the number of cases being considered. Within the County Council, e-learning training on extremism had been undertaken by 93% of the workforce. Cabinet welcomed the update and recognising the role of social media, highlighted the importance and need for such platforms to take responsibility for their content.

The recommendations in the report were considered and agreed. A decision record is attached to these minutes.

36. **REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH PARTNERSHIP FUNCTION BETWEEN ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL AND HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Public Health regarding the Public Health partnership with Isle of Wight Council.

The Director of Public Health provided an update on the partnership with Isle of Wight Council, noting the benefit to the wider area at no detriment to HCC and a number of service delivery achievements. Cabinet recognised the positive benefit to officers of gaining a greater breadth of experience and that the County Council was able to enter into such a partnership as a result of its scale and expertise.

The recommendations in the report were considered and agreed. A decision record is attached to these minutes.

Chairman,