

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **CABINET**

These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

Thursday, 7th September, 2023

#### **Present:**

Councillor Kevin Guy (Ch)	Leader of the Council, Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Councillor Tim Ball	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Alison Born	Cabinet Member for Adult Services
Councillor Mark Elliott	Cabinet Member for Resources
Councillor Paul May	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Councillor Matt McCabe	Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Sustainable Development
Councillor Manda Rigby	Cabinet Member for Highways
Councillor Paul Roper	Cabinet Member for Economic and Cultural Sustainable Development
Councillor Sarah Warren	Deputy Council Leader (statutory) and Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel
Councillor David Wood	Deputy Council Leader (non-statutory) and Cabinet Member for Council Priorities & Delivery

#### **17 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **18 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **21 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

There was no urgent business.

#### **22 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS**

There were 10 questions from Councillors and 18 questions from members of the public.

Cllr Robin Moss asked a supplementary question relating to question M10 and Cllr Paul May provided a response.

*[Copies of the questions and responses, including supplementary questions and responses if any, have been placed on the Minute book as Appendix 1 and are available on the Council's website.]*

## **23 STATEMENTS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS**

Members of the public and Councillors made statements as follows:

- Chad Allen – Environmental Protection. Mr Allen expressed concern about the potential damage to buildings and the environment caused by English Ivy. He stated that action needed to be taken to prevent this.
- Cllr Tim Warren – Green spaces. Cllr Warren expressed concern regarding the lack of maintenance at the entrance to an estate in Midsomer Norton. Cllr Tim Ball, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, agreed to meet with Cllr Warren to discuss this issue.
- Cllr Fiona Gourley – Petition re rural bus services (*a copy of which is attached as appendix 2 to these minutes*)
- David Redgewell – Mr Redgewell was unable to attend the meeting, however, a copy of his statement is attached as *appendix 3* to these minutes.

## **24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING - 13TH JULY 2023**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **25 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET**

No single member items were requisitioned to Cabinet.

## **26 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES**

No matters were referred by Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels.

## **27 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING**

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

## **28 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023-24**

Cllr Paul May introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation, and made the following statement:

“I would like to thank Sally Churchyard for her dedication to B&NES and youth justice for the last 18 years. She has maintained such a strong commitment to working effectively with partners that we can feel assured re this year’s plan.

We are the lead partner under the Crime and Disorder Act, aimed at preventing offending and reoffending for children aged 10-17. This report, if approved this evening, will be reported to Council for formal approval.

Despite many worries by parents and children re recent deaths, the area still has relatively low reported crime and small numbers of children in the formal youth justice system.

Fear generally is rightly a concern, and we now have a Violence Reduction duty, so we work effectively with the violence reduction partnership to produce a strategic needs assessment plus a strategy to address serious violence (Appendix 4).

In the past, the annual plan has been relatively non-controversial but the genuine community worries highlight the importance of various agencies working together effectively.”

Cllr Tim Ball seconded the motion and stressed the importance of keeping children out of the Youth Justice system.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

To recommend approval of the Youth Justice Plan to full Council.

## **29 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT TO 30TH JUNE 2023**

Cllr Mark Elliot introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation and made the following statement:

“In line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice, this report sets out the council’s Treasury Management performance for the first quarter of the financial year. So, it’s a report about how the council’s financial investments are performing and our borrowing levels.

Given the news headlines about the very, very difficult financial environment that all local authorities find themselves operating within at the moment, and the consequences of that for some of them, I guess there might be a little more public interest in these financial reports over the coming months than is sometimes the case. I’m pleased to say that the report in front of us today sets out the very prudent and responsible approach B&NES council takes to managing its investments and borrowing.

The council's investments at 30th June 2023 totalled £52.85 million. There are no high risk or complicated investment vehicles and I'm delighted we're maintaining our £5m investment in Environmental Social and Governance funds. The average rate of interest earned over the period was 4.30% and the average return has continued to increase during the first quarter as the Bank of England interest rate rises fed through to our investments, with the rate on investment returns always lagging a little behind the base rate increases.

The Bank of England's interest rate action continues to be robust in line with their remit for tackling inflation. The Base Rate has increased from 4.25% to 5% during the first quarter. This trend has continued with rates now 5.25% following a further increase in August. I commend to you the report from the Economic and Market Review set out by the council's investment advisors, Arlingclose, in Appendix 5. It doesn't make for very pretty reading in its assessment of the general economic environment. The public will know from their own pockets about our Conservative government's mismanagement of the national economy and inability to tackle inflation, and this affects the council along with everyone else. Given that high inflation means high interest rates Arlingclose currently predict that rates will top out at 5.5% but acknowledges that there is a risk of the base rate reaching 6% before it peaks. Whilst that will be good news for our investments, as a net borrowing authority, that means we have to manage our borrowings very carefully. Borrowing at the end of the quarter was £219m an increase of £9m from the start of the year mainly reflecting a short-term loan taken out in April in line with cashflow requirements. And whilst it's not the subject of this report, the persistently high underlying inflation level is having a very significant effect on the council's revenue budget.

The sound management of our borrowing and investments can help alleviate some of that, however, and an overall underspend of £710k is currently forecast in respect of Capital Financing costs due to the higher than budgeted investment income and delays in the council's need to borrow. This was reported in the Quarter One revenue & capital budget monitoring report as part of the July Cabinet meeting.

The report includes figures showing performance against all the indicators set out in the Treasury Management Strategy and confirms that these are all within approved limits.

I would like to commend the work of the officers in managing our treasury function so carefully and competently, and for the production of this report, and I move the recommendations set out in 2.1 and 2.2.”

Cllr Sarah Warren seconded the motion and congratulated officers on their good financial management.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- (1) To note the Treasury Management Report to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice.
- (2) To note the Treasury Management Indicators to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date Confirmed and Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by Democratic Services