

CABINET

At a meeting of Cabinet held on
14 July 2021

- (Present)** **Councillor Baines (Chair)**
Councillors Bell, Bond, Bowden, Burns, Gomez-Aspron MBE, McCauley and Quinn
- (Not Present)** **Councillors Charlton and Groucutt (Covid related absence)**

15 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Charlton and Groucutt.

16 **MINUTES**

- * **Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 23 June 2021 be approved and signed.**

17 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

No declarations of interest from Members were made.

18 **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT PERIOD 1 2021/22**

A report was submitted which provided the forecast financial position in relation to the revenue and capital budget for 2021/22 and summarised the reserves and balances position.

The report included details on the progress and delivery of the 2021/22 budget savings and detail of the 2021/22 use of Covid-19 Emergency Grant Funding and Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Funding.

The report sought approval for the flexible use of capital receipts to support the Council's transformation agenda and included the Treasury Management Position Statement.

- * **Resolved that:**
- (1) the latest revised budget and forecast revenue position for 2021/22 as detailed in Section 2 be noted;**
 - (2) the latest position with regard to the implementation of the 2021/22 budget savings as detailed in Section 3 be noted;**
 - (3) the revised capital programme as detailed in Section 4 be approved;**
 - (4) the latest Reserves and Balances position in Section 5 be noted;**

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- (5) **the use of £1.5m capital receipts to resource the Council's transformation programme be approved and delegation be given to the Chief Executive and Executive Director of Corporate Services to identify and approve projects where the use of the flexibilities will be applied as detailed in section 5.5;**
- (6) **the revised balance on the Covid-19 Reserve at 31 March 2021 as detailed in section 6.1.4; and**
- (7) **the Treasury Management Position Statement in Annex G be noted.**

19 PERFORMANCE OUTTURN REPORT 2020/21

A report was submitted which provided an analysis of progress and performance over the year against each of the Council's six priorities. The Report reflected performance during the financial year and the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic was having on many of the Council's measures of performance.

The Council acknowledged that effective performance management arrangements were critical to supporting decision making during these challenging times. The report was presented with the caveat that a new performance framework and targets had been produced and agreed linked to the new priorities, outcomes, and measures of success within the 'Our Borough Strategy 2021-30'. The new framework would form the basis for quarterly reporting to Cabinet during 2021-22 and further work was ongoing to ensure its effective development.

*** Resolved that:**

- (1) **the performance position at year end 2020-21 be noted;**
- (2) **work be undertaken with appropriate Executive Directors to address specific areas for performance improvement; and**
- (3) **work be undertaken with appropriate Executive Directors to progress the Council's new performance framework that will form the basis for quarterly performance reports to Cabinet over the course of 2021-22.**

20 OFSTED RESTART VISIT FEEDBACK

A report was submitted which provided an update on Children and Young People's Services Ofsted Restart Visit in May 2021.

The initial feedback from the visit found that St Helens knows itself well and the inspection team found what the authority told them they would find.

Recognition was given to the workforce; how well staff know their children and all The work undertaken during the past year to keep our children safe.

The Inspectors acknowledged the changes made by the Local Authority (WOW) and how staff had responded and adapted well to these; feeling informed, valued and supported.

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Recognition was given to the partnership work between schools, education, health and social care and the work undertaken to protect our vulnerable children and young people. Positive feedback was also received from Care Leavers who shared how supported they had felt during the past year.

There were areas identified that required further improvement; most of these were contained within the Children's Improvement Plan (which is reported to the Children's Improvement Board) and work continued to address these. Ofsted found inconsistencies within practice and whilst they noted cases of good work, they also shared cases where the Council could do better.

The next discussion with Ofsted was whether the authority would receive a focused visit or a full inspection regardless of the outcome Children's Services improvement journey continues and until then progress will continue to be reported to CIB and DfE.

The next DfE 6-month review would take place in August and this would provide a benchmark to evidence progress made since the Restart Visit.

* **Resolved that the feedback from OFSTED be noted.**

21 PROPOSALS TO EXPAND THE EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SEND

A report was submitted which set out the current position of SEND provision for pupils with autism and the increase in demand for specialist places.

The Council had received an allocation of £649,444 from the Department for Education SEND Capital Programme to invest in expanding the offer for pupils with SEND.

An independent review of high needs planning highlighted the increased demand for specialist education provision creating significant pressure in the high needs budget.

The review recommended increasing provision within mainstream schools for pupils with autism, as part of a wider strategy to improve the spectrum of specialist provision.

Schools in St Helens had been asked to express an interest in managing a resourced provision for pupils with autism.

In order to make swift progress to establish the provisions, Cabinet was requested to Delegate authority to the Director of Children & Young People's Services to undertake initial consultation with schools and to provide Cabinet with further details of proposals following the consultation.

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the allocation of £649,444 from the Department for Education capital to invest in expanding the offer for pupils with SEND be noted;**

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- (2) the proposal to expand the number of mainstream resourced provisions to accommodate up to 40 pupils with autism be noted; and
- (3) authority be delegated to the Director of Children & Young People's Services to undertake initial consultation with schools and to provide Cabinet with further details of proposals following the consultation.

22 ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

A report was submitted which updated Cabinet that at its meeting held on 6 January 2021, Cabinet had agreed to consult on the draft St Helens Economic Recovery Plan. The report provided details of responses received during the 6-week consultation period and presents a final version of the St Helens Economic Reset and Recovery Plan for adoption by Cabinet.

The revised Plan reflected the ongoing economic impact analysis of the Covid-19 Pandemic following engagement with the private sectors, the wider business community, the public, community, and voluntary sectors across the borough. It will support the borough's continued engagement with Government, the Liverpool City Region and potential investors in order to tackle the borough-wide economic downturn, maximise the opportunities for economic growth and frame regeneration in the context of Sustainable Inclusive Growth.

*** Resolved that:**

- (1) the outcome of the public consultation on the draft St Helens Economic Recovery Plan be noted;
- (2) the final version of the St Helens Economic Reset and Recovery Plan and the Implementation Plan be adopted; and
- (3) monitoring and evaluation of the final version St Helens Economic Reset and Recovery Plan and its accompanying Implementation Plan be endorsed ensuring that it continues to reflect the evolving impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the whole borough.

The following Minute was a Key Decision but notice had not been given in the Public Notice of Key Decisions. The Cabinet was able to make a decision in relation to the item as the provisions relating to the General Exceptions in the Council's Constitution had been met.

24 HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY – CONSULTATION DRAFT

A report was submitted which presented the draft Housing Allocations Policy which established a revised framework for the allocation of social housing in the borough. The report requested approval to consult with residents, partners and stakeholders on this document before the presentation of a final Policy in November 2021.

*** Resolved that:**

- (1) the draft Housing Allocations Policy be approved;

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- (2) a period of consultation with residents, partners and stakeholders in the borough on the proposed Housing Allocations Policy be approved; and
- (3) an update on the consultation feedback received and a final draft Allocations Policy be submitted to Cabinet in October 2021.

25 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

- * Resolved that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item for the reason stated:

Minute	Reason (Under the Local Government Act 1972)
26	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

The following Minute was a Key Decision but notice had not been given in the Public Notice of Key Decisions. The Cabinet was able to make a decision in relation to the item as the provisions relating to the General Exceptions in the Council's Constitution had been met.

26 PENKFORD SCHOOL RELOCATION TO THE FORMER RED BANK SITE

A report was submitted which updated Members that Penkford Special School buildings had exceeded their life expectancy and there was a need to accommodate pupils within a fit for purpose building. At its meeting held on 23 September 2020, Cabinet approved the redevelopment of the former Red Bank Educational Unit and the relocation of Penkford School to the redeveloped facility.

The report identified tendered cost increases in respect of the proposed works and approval was sought to increase the budgetary provision and to award a contract for the planned construction works reflecting the revised costs subject to the satisfaction of pre-conditions.

- * Resolved that:

- (1) the revised total cost for the Penkford School relocation scheme of £7.636m be approved and budgetary provision in the Education, Skills & Business portfolio capital programme be increased by £0.708m;
- (2) an award of contract to Galliford Try be approved, following a competitive tender process via the North West Construction Hub, to deliver the required construction works associated with the relocation of Penkford School to the former Red Bank Educational Unit site. The contract award will be conditional upon:
 - i. final business case approval by the Department for Education; and

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- ii. **finalised lease agreement with the Legh Family Estate and Red Bank Schools Limited; and**
- (3) authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Director of Children’s Services and the respective Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Education, Skills and Business and Regeneration and Planning, to approve any further variations in expenditure on the Penkford School relocation scheme that do not exceed, in total, 5% of the revised budgetary provision identified in recommendation (1) above.**

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