

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING
HELD AT 10:00AM, ON
MONDAY 14 MARCH 2022
SAND MARTIN HOUSE, PETERBOROUGH**

Cabinet Members Present: Councillor Fitzgerald (Chair), Councillor Steve Allen, Councillor Ayres (virtually), Councillor Cereste, Councillor Coles, Councillor Hiller, Councillor Simons, Councillor Walsh

Cabinet Advisor Present: Councillor Bashir, Councillor Bisby (virtually), Councillor Howard (virtually), Councillor Gul Nawaz

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

62. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETINGS HELD ON 21 FEBRUARY 2022

The minutes of the Budget Cabinet meeting held on 21 February 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

63. PETITIONS TO CABINET

There were no petitions presented to Cabinet.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

64. 2022 COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Council's 2022 Climate Change Action Plan.

The purpose of this report was to seek Cabinet endorsement of the Council Climate Change Action Plan and to recommend the Action Plan to Council for adoption.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment introduced the report and reiterated the Council's plan to reach net zero carbon by 2030. It was noted that the Council's carbon impact had reduced by 28% since 2018. The proposed action plan contained 25 commitments developed by the Cross Party Working Group, and the Cabinet Member was confident that all the commitments were achievable. There were no additional financial requirements associated with the proposals.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- Members noted that the Council's electricity usage had decreased over the past 12 months, though with increased gas emissions due to increased ventilation.
- The Carbon Literacy Training was praised, and Members were advised that this would be provided to all new and existing Councillors following the election.

Councillor Howard joined the meeting at this point.

Cabinet Members continued to debate the report as follows:

- Members discussed the benefits of preventative measure versus offsetting action. It was considered that, in order to assist in impacting global levels of carbon emissions, all possible action should be taken to reduce emissions before any offsetting action was taken.
- It was advised that work was being undertaken with the Council's procurement team to introduce the consideration of carbon impact when entering into contracts.
- Members noted that Skanska were leading the way with the use of HVO fuel.
- Members were advised that the Climate Change Partnership Group comprised local business and organisations to co-develop the Peterborough Climate Commitment, which the Council had signed up to. It was further noted that Peterborough had been selected by central Government as a pilot city for a Local Area Energy Plan, which would assist in bringing forward projects to move the city towards carbon net zero.
- Consideration was given to the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on emission levels, particularly in relation to Council employees working from home.
- Members questioned the security of supply for HVO fuel and were advised that this was managed through an external provider. If the Council wished to purchase the fuel directly a procurement exercise would be required.
- It was advised that the Council continue to embrace active travel arrangements, with the reintroduction of e-bikes throughout the city. It was noted that the energy crisis currently being experience was expected to be long-lasting, as so supporting residents in fuel-poverty would be key.
- Members noted that funding had been available to work with schools in the area to improve their carbon impact. Further work was planning for other Council buildings which would require funding.
- It was advised that the Council was currently in the recruitment process for a position to help support schools and colleges with the development of carbon management plans.
- It was further advised that funding was available for landlords that would cover two-thirds of the installation costs for work to increase the energy efficiency of homes.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Endorse the Council Climate Change Action Plan and recommend to Council that it adopts the Council Climate Change Action Plan.
2. Recommend to Council that delegation be given to the Executive Director for Place and Economy to undertake any presentational, factual or other minor amendments to the documents associated with this report prior to publication, provided such amendments do not materially amend the content of the documents.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Council had previously committed to the actions of preparing an updated Council Climate Change Action Plan.

The document for consideration had been developed by officers, working with the Climate Change Working Group, and had taken account of reasonable and viable options for the council to cut its carbon emissions.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The option of not preparing a Council Change Action Plan was dismissed, because Council had already committed in principle to its preparation. Alternative content within the Action Plan could have been prepared and recommended, which could have committed more, less or different projects to reduce the council's carbon emissions. However, in order to start to reduce our emissions to net-zero by 2030, yet take account of the resources available, the content of the action plan was deemed a reasonable and practical set of actions for the next 12 months.

MONITORING ITEMS

65. BUDGET CONTROL REPORT JANUARY 2022

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Budget Control Report for January 2022.

The purpose of this report was to provide Cabinet with the forecast outturn for 2021/22 as at the January 2022 budgetary control position.

The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report and advised that the Council continue to forecast a breakeven position with a small use of reserves. The assumption continued to be that no use of capitalisation funds would be required. All directorates, apart from Public Health, were reporting underspends. The collection of business rates remained an ongoing challenge. It was further advised that discretionary assistance was still available for those not eligible for the mandatory council tax rebate.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- It was noted that the position was encouraging for the future, however the Council still had a significant amount of work to do, particularly in relation to protecting reserves.
- It was considered key to actively respond to the Budget Control Reports throughout the year and take decisive action where needed.
- Members acknowledged that the anticipated negative impact of the winter months on the budget position had not materialised.
- It was advised that the Moratorium had been essential to improve the Council's position over a short period of time, however, more long-term plans would need implementing for the future.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note:

1. The budgetary control position for 2021/22 at 31 January 2022 was a forecast break-even, however the use of £0.741m of reserves underpinned the corporate financing position of the Council.

2. The key variance analysis and explanations were contained in Appendix A.
3. The Council's reserves position, as outlined within Appendix B.
4. The Council's capital financial performance as outlined in Appendix C.
5. The Council's performance with respect to Business Rates (NDR) and Council Tax Collection, as outlined within Appendix D.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To ensure that Cabinet are up to date on the forecast outturn for 2021/22 as at the January 2022 budgetary control position.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

No alternative options were considered.

66. OUTCOME OF PETITIONS

The Cabinet received a report in relation to petitions received by the Council.

The purpose of this report was to update Cabinet on the progress being made in response to petitions submitted to the Council.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the actions taken in respect of petitions.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

As the petitions presented in the report had been dealt with by Cabinet Members or officers, it was appropriate that the action taken was reported to Cabinet.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

No alternative options were considered.

Chairman
10.00am to 10.46am
14 March 2022