

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD BY TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 2
NOVEMBER 2021**

PRESENT

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)

County Councillors B Baynham, P Davies, A W Davies, H Hulme, I McIntosh and
R Powell

In attendance: County Councillor J Morris

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander and the Executive Director: People and Organisational Development.

2. MINUTES

The Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the meetings held on 5th and 12th October 2021 as correct records.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported.

4. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader thanked Cabinet members and portfolio holders who had worked to help ensure that the county had received £22 million in levelling up funds. £16 million was going towards the development of the Montgomery Canal, and funds were also being made available for projects in Llandrindod Wells and Brecknockshire. She thanked Fay Jones MP and Craig Williams MP for their support.

5. ACCOMMODATION IN POWYS FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

Cabinet was asked to give approval for the Council to support and cooperate with the Home Office and its contracted agent, Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH), in the provision of accommodation across Powys for households and people seeking asylum in the United Kingdom.

The initial requirement was for six privately owned family-sized homes to be secured in Powys for asylum seekers. These properties would be sourced and managed, on behalf of the Home Office, by CRH. There would be minimal financial impact for the Council with involvement limited to initial consultation regarding suitability of properties, and then an ongoing liaison role with CRH to ensure the smoothing running of the project. This could be accommodated within

current staffing resources and service budgets, with the Resettlement Project officer being assigned the lead role of liaising with the Home Office, CRH and the Welsh Strategic Migration Partnership to ensure the smoothing running of the project. Cabinet had received a presentation from the Welsh Strategic Partnership before the meeting.

Cabinet noted that there had been many offers of support from communities. CRH would be responsible for consulting communities, but Council officers would work closely with them.

RESOLVED to support and cooperate with the Home Office, and its service provider (Clearsprings Ready Homes) in the provision of accommodation in Powys for asylum seekers.

6.	FINANCIAL FORECAST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2022 (AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021)
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Cabinet considered the revenue budget outturn forecast report for the period ended 30th September 2021. Cabinet noted that a small overspend was projected and also noted that just under £3 million savings were unlikely to be achieved. The Head of Finance cautioned that the support received from Welsh Government would not be recurring, and services must be consider the ongoing impact of the pandemic and factor this into service budgets. It was also important that services addressed overspends in their budgets to avoid putting pressure on the Council's revenue reserves.

County Councillor John Morris presented the observations of the Finance Panel. In response to concerns raised by the Panel about a projected substantial overspend in Children's Services, the Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture set out the pressures the service was under. She explained that the investment made in the service and the model adopted to help keep families together were now proving to be very beneficial. She would welcome the opportunity to come to the Finance Panel to explain this.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cabinet note the current budget position and the projected full year forecast to the end of March 2022.**
- 2. That the grants set out in section 7 of the report are noted.**
- 3. That Heads of Service take action now to recover the projected overspends.**
- 4. That where additional in year financial pressure cannot be accommodated within existing budget, a detailed report is requested to give clear explanation of projected overspend before action is taken by Cabinet to address the projected deficit.**

7. CAPITAL FORECAST AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021
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Cabinet considered an update on the financial position of the Council's capital programme for 2021/22 as at 30th September 2021.

The revised programme at the 30th September 2021 stood at £106.75 million following the successful award of additional grants and the reprofiling of budgets between financial years. Actual spend amounted to £25.48 million, representing 24% of the total budget. Cabinet noted that significant cost pressures were materialising due to the increasing costs of materials. This together with the limited numbers of contractors tendering for schemes and the rurality of Powys was impacting on the cost of schemes.

51% of the Capital Programme was funded through borrowing, the interest cost for this was charged to the revenue account. The revenue expenditure to cover the borrowing for past and present capital schemes was estimated at £18.16 million which meant that 4.4% of the net revenue budget was supporting the past and present capital spend. It was essential that the investment in the capital programme was affordable over the short, medium, and longer term and demonstrate tangible benefits linked to the council's priorities.

The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) advised that the re-profiling of schemes was essential to enable more accurate project expenditure, the consequential need to borrow and the impact on the revenue budget.

County Councillor John Morris advised that the Governance and Audit Committee would be looking at the affordability of the capital programme.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the contents of the report are noted.**
- 2. That Cabinet approves the virement of £0.17 million from the South Powys Bulking Site Project to the North Powys Bulking Site in order to comply with recently updated environmental permit conditions, additional fire management measures, additional costs due to ongoing COVID-19 measures and increased material and plant costs.**

8. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Cabinet noted the forward work programme.

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)