

CABINET

MEETING HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM, TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON THURSDAY 5TH MARCH, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Maher (in the Chair)
Councillors Atkinson, Fairclough, Hardy,
John Joseph Kelly, Lappin, Moncur and Veidman

116. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Cummins.

117. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests were received.

118. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2020 be approved as a correct record.

119. ST. TERESA'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL: OUTCOME OF STAGE ONE CONSULTATION

Further to Minute No. 48 of the meeting held on 3 October 2019 the Cabinet considered the report of the Interim Director of Children's Social Care and Education indicating that the Governing body of St Teresa's Catholic Infant School had written to the local authority stating that they had been unable to set a balanced budget and requesting that the possibility of a merger with their neighbouring Catholic primary school, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, be explored; that the current financial position indicated that the school was heading for a forecast in-year deficit of £0.050m; and based on reducing numbers, as indicated by the recent October 2019 census data (pupil numbers reduced by nine compared to the October 2018 census), this position would worsen to a deficit of £0.120m by the end of 2020/21; and to a deficit of £0.200m by the end of the 2021/22 financial year.

The report also indicated that On 3 October 2019 Cabinet agreed to begin Stage One of a statutory consultation exercise and the purpose of this report was for Cabinet to consider the outcome of that consultation and also invite Cabinet to agree to next steps; that the Stage One proposal had set out a plan to close St. Teresa's Catholic Infant School and to expand provision of our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School; the Archdiocesan Education Department had confirmed that it was properly consulted on the proposal; Archdiocesan officers were involved in the

consultation meetings and had engaged with the local authority and schools during the statutory process to date; and the Archdiocese could confirm the provision of sufficient primary phase Catholic school places in the area based on the recommendation made in this report.

Attached to the report were Annex A Consultation Leaflet – St Teresa’s; Annex B- Consultation Summary; and Annex C. St. Teresa’s OLOL – Consultation outcome

Decision Made: That

- (1) it be noted that consideration and account had been taken of the responses to the statutory consultation process;
- (2) the option to merge St Teresa’s Catholic Infant School with Our Lady of Lourdes catholic Primary School be not progressed; and
- (3) approval be given to defer the decision regarding the future of St Teresa’s Infant school to the Cabinet meeting on 28 May 2020 to allow options brought forward as a result of the consultation to be fully explored by the Governing Body of St. Teresa’s, with support by the Archdiocese of Liverpool and the Local Authority.

Reasons for Decision:

The Local Authority has the power to consider all options and to allow for further consultation including closing a maintained school following the statutory process detailed in the report.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Alternative options have been explored by the governing body with support from Officers prior to the governing body making their request. It was felt that more time could be given to consider the alternative option presented by the Governing Body of St Teresa’s.

120. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE 2019/20

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services advising of:

- (1) the current forecast revenue outturn position for the Council for 2019/20;
- (2) the current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2019/20; and
- (3) the monitoring position of the Council’s capital programme to the end of January 2020 which included the forecast expenditure to year end; variations against the approved budgets and an

explanation of those variations for consideration by Members; and updates to spending profiles and proposed amendments to capital budgets necessary to ensure the efficient delivery of capital projects.

Councillor Moncur, Cabinet Member – Health and Wellbeing raised concern about the long delay in the Government confirming the public health grant allocations to local authorities across the country, as this delay was hampering the ability of Sefton and other councils to plan the best possible services and support to improve public health in their communities.

Decision Made: That

- (1) the current forecast revenue outturn position for 2019/20 and the current position relating to delivery of savings included in the 2019/20 revenue budget be noted;
- (2) the mitigating measures being used to partially mitigate the forecast outturn position, as detailed in paragraph 2.2 of the report, excluding a forecast deficit on Housing Benefits which will be considered at the end of the financial year if it materialises be noted;
- (3) it be acknowledge that the forecast outturn position will continue to be reviewed to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position can be achieved or understand a potential call of General Fund Balances;
- (4) the review updates to spending profiles across financial years as detailed in paragraph 5.1.1 of the report be noted;
- (5) the review of the new schemes approved by Council and added to the Capital Programme for 2019/20 and 2020/21 as detailed in paragraphs 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 of the report be noted;
- (6) the latest capital expenditure position as at 31 January 2020 of £13.718m with the latest full year forecast being £21.823m, as detailed in paragraphs 5.2.2 and 5.2.4 of the report respectively, be noted;
- (7) the explanations of variances to project budgets as detailed in paragraph 5.2.5 of the report be noted;
- (8) it be acknowledged that capital resources will be managed by the Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council as detailed in section 5.4 of the report; and
- (9) the Head of Health and Wellbeing be requested to prepare a letter for Cllr Maher to submit to the Rt Hon Matt Hancock M.P., Secretary of State for Health and Social Care expressing the Council's

dissatisfaction at the delay in his department confirming the public health grant allocations to local authorities.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure Cabinet are informed of the forecast outturn position for the 2019/2020 Revenue Budget as at the end of January 2020, including delivery of agreed savings, and to provide an updated forecast of the outturn position with regard to the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates; to keep elected Members informed of the progress of the Capital Programme against the profiled budget for 2019/20 and agreed allocations for future years; to progress any changes that are required in order to maintain a relevant and accurate budget profile necessary for effective monitoring of the Capital Programme; to approve any updates to funding resources so that they can be applied to capital schemes in the delivery of the Council's overall capital strategy; and that in March 2017 Council approved a three-year budget plan to March 2020. The final year of this plan was revised in February 2019 as part of the process of setting the 2019/20 budget. The Council is in the final year of the budget plan and remains confident its strategic approach to budget planning alongside good financial management and extensive community engagement means that the plan continues to develop on solid foundations; it remains flexible and will secure the future sustainability to 2020 and beyond. However, in year demand for social care services is currently resulting in the costs for these services significantly exceeding the budget. If further budget pressures are identified between now and the end of the year additional remedial action will be required to bring the overall budget into balance.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None

121. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PEER REVIEW – ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 77 of the meeting held on 10 January 2019 the Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive that set out progress against the Cabinet Approved action plan responding to the Local Government Association's (LGA) Peer Review team's recommendations. The report indicated that the Peer Review, undertaken in September 2018, was an independent check on how the Council was performing in terms of planning for and delivering against its ambitious plans for the future.

Decision Made: That

- (1) an annual reporting mechanism in line with the reporting of the financial outturn in June, commencing in June 2020 be approved; and
- (2) future monitoring of activity be included within the scope of the Council's Framework for Change programme.

Reasons for Decision:

Peer Reviews are a proven tool for sector-led improvement and the Council has always been open to learning from others and sharing good practice. The peer challenge in 2018 provided external recognition of the things it believed the Council was doing well, highlighted where the Council could learn from other Councils considering best practice elsewhere and recommended several key actions. In January 2019 Cabinet considered and agreed an action plan responding to the Peer Team's recommendations.

The report seeks to keep Members informed of the progress. The LGA will follow up the initial review with a visit within 18 months to 2 years to assess progress against their recommendations.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.