

Report of Cabinet

1. Any Cabinet recommendations on the reports that require a decision by full Council appear as separate items on the agenda.
2. Please note that the report may not reflect the wording used in the minutes, as they have yet to be formally agreed.
3. All decisions taken by Cabinet on 15 November 2023 can be found on the published Decision Notice.

Meeting held on 15 November 2023

South Ribble Quarter Two Performance Monitoring Report 2023-24

4. I presented a report that provided Cabinet with a position statement for the Corporate Strategy for quarter two (July-September) 2023/24.
5. We noted the overall performance of the authority was strong. There had been significant progress in a number of areas and only three areas of concern highlighted.
6. There were delays surrounding the procurement and refurbishment of Greens Dance Studio. It was now expected the project would complete in January 2024 as opposed to December 2023 due to the extensive refurbishment works needed.
7. We were told an update on Leyland Town Deal would be provided in January and government officials had undertaken a visit on the project following concerns raised by the Member of Parliament (MP). The project had been praised by inspectors. Although there had been acquisition challenges on the land this had been resolved.
8. Cabinet also noted that homelessness was another area of concern in the borough. I have urged the Chancellor of the Exchequer to intervene and there is an undersupply of temporary and permanent accommodation. External indications signalled the situation would get worse and government intervention was needed nationally.

Capital and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report Q2

9. The Cabinet Member (Finance and Public Protection), Councillor Matthew Tomlinson presented a report that outlined the financial position of the Council in respect of the capital programme on 30 September 2023.

10. Councillor Tomlinson advised Cabinet the projected overspend had dropped from £360,000 to £60,000. In the capital programme there was a significant amount of slippage, however this would be moved across to the next financial year. The majority of those funds were allocated to Leyland Town Deal and Jubilee Gardens. Money would still be invested but additional time was needed.
11. We noted the authority remained debt free. Referring to the reserves, Councillor Tomlinson explained that some reserves were still held from the COVID business recovery fund. As the money was not ringfenced a replacement vehicles and plant programme had been established.
12. I referred to the recommendations from the Corporate, Performance and Budget Scrutiny Committee and advised that a note had gone out to all group leaders providing information on the covid recovery reserves. I explained this information had been provided and we would not be accepting this recommendation. I also agreed to as Officers to recirculate the briefing note to Group Leaders and Chair of the Corporate, Performance and Budget Scrutiny Committee.

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Q2

13. The Cabinet Member (Finance and Public Protection), Councillor Matthew Tomlinson presented a report that set out the revenue and reserves forecast for 2023/24 for the Council, based on the position as of 30 September 2023.
14. Councillor Tomlinson outlined the report and advised of changes such as unexpected grant funding and the staff pay award. Councillor Tomlinson explained the authority had been wise to budget for a 5% increase when other authorities had budgeted for 2 or 3%. The authority would need to find additional funds, but it was not the same budget pressure other authorities were facing.
15. There would be an overspend on the waste and refuse collection budget, but this would be reprofiled next year. Another overspend was on homelessness, a small grant had been received from government, but it has not helped. Councillor Tomlinson expressed his satisfaction that the Leader had written to the Chancellor with other Council Leaders to express concern at the issue as the financial position was unsustainable.
16. I commented that the council remained in a strong position being debt free with substantial reserves.

Property Valuation Services Procurement

17. The Cabinet Member (Finance and Public Protection), Councillor Matthew Tomlinson presented a report that sought approval to engage in a joint procurement exercise with Chorley Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council to procure property valuation services for assets within the Council's portfolios.
18. Councillor Tomlinson explained the joint procurement would bring best value for money and put the authority in a stronger position when going out to tender.

I would like to recommend that Council note the report.

Councillor Paul Foster
Leader of the Council