

## FULL COUNCIL

8 FEBRUARY 2022

### REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

#### 1. COUNCIL UPDATE REGARDING CABINET

##### 1.1 Purpose of Report

To advise Council of the main decisions taken at the Cabinet meetings on 9 December 2021 and 13 January 2022.

##### 1.2 Background

1.2.1 This report highlights some of those decisions which have been made, but not all. Members wishing to view all decisions made can find these at

<http://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/mgInternet/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

1.2.2 Attached to this report are the lists of decisions made.

##### 1.3 Decisions – 9 December 2021

1.3.1 **Support for Children and Young People (aged 0-25) with Additional Needs, Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities** - Cabinet was updated on the strategic developments across the Council's SEND services. Members approved the Additional Needs Strategy (2022-2025) and the Accessibility Strategy (2022-2025), which aim to improve outcomes for all children and young people with SEND or additional needs within Solihull.

1.3.2 It was agreed that responsibility for approving the final version of the Early Years Strategy (2022-2025) be delegated to the Lead Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Skills.

1.3.3 Cabinet approved the development of a strategy for Inclusive Education during 2022.

1.3.4 **Special Education Needs and Disability Improvement Journey Update** - Cabinet was informed on the activity being taken to improve outcomes for children and young people with additional needs (including SEND) and noted the Council's progress in improving support for these children.

1.3.5 Members reviewed and approved the High Needs budget forecast for 2022/23-2024/25.

1.3.6 **Medium-Term Financial Strategy Update (Corporate Capital Programme 2021/22)** - Cabinet received an outline of the current financial position for the 2021/22 corporate capital programme and approved the revised corporate capital programme for 2021/22, after rephasing. Approval was also given to rephase capital budgets into 2022/23.

1.3.7 Members approved the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme for 2021/22, after capital programme proposals and virements.

1.3.8 Cabinet agreed the passporting of Government capital allocations for 2022/23 to individual Cabinet Portfolios for project allocation.

1.3.9 **Infrastructure Funding Statement 2020/21** - Members were reminded that the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) was required to be published annually, covering the previous financial year. Cabinet approved the publication of the IFS for 2020/21.

## **1.4 Decisions – 13 January 2022**

- 1.4.1 **Summary of Covid-19 Debrief Reports** - Cabinet was provided with a summary of the pertinent learning & recommendations from the recently released Covid-19 debrief reports, from Solihull MBC and the Warwickshire & West Midlands Local Resilience Forums. Cabinet noted the report, which covered the emergency response systems and processes at local and regional level during the first phases of the pandemic.

## **1.5 Other Issues, Meetings, News and Events of Interest**

- 1.5.1 **Children's Services Update** - We have now received the draft Joint Targeted Area Inspection letter (JTAI). This was a joint evaluation of the multi-agency response to the identification of initial need and risk at the front door.
- 1.5.2 The draft letter is currently being reviewed, with our deadline for feedback being the 8<sup>th</sup> February. The letter remains confidential until its final publication date on the 21<sup>st</sup> February, and I am therefore unable to share the details at this stage.
- 1.5.3 However, I do want to provide you with an update on some key points and actions that we are progressing. The Interim Director of Children's Services (DCS) is establishing an Improvement Board which will be led by an Independent Chair and will have representation from all key partners to ensure a multi-agency response.
- 1.5.4 Inspectors were right to describe the pressures on the system following a very significant referral increase at the front door. Partners are actively engaging with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Children, Education and Skills and the Interim DCS to deliver any improvement actions across the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership.
- 1.5.5 The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel will now also consolidate the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review for Star Hobson, Bradford Council into its national review of the murder of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes to identify local and national improvements needed by all safeguarding agencies.
- 1.5.6 The National Review is currently underway, and we will continue to do everything we can to assist the review team. We are expecting the outcomes/findings of this review to be published in May 2022.
- 1.5.7 Council will be aware that I asked for an independent verification of our work with Arthur. To this end, I have worked with the DCS, Chief Executive and Cabinet member through a detailed chronology of our involvement in Arthur's life. In addition, I have also cross referenced our work with an independent auditor. Subsequently, all our records will be submitted to the national panel as part of their review.
- 1.5.8 I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Social Work Teams who are dealing with an increasing amount of work at the front door and who continue to remain professional and committed to supporting our children and families in Solihull.