

The Cabinet met at the Shire Hall, Warwick on the 28th April 2005

Present

Cabinet Members:

Councillors June Tandy (Chair) (Policy and Governance)
Ian Bottrill (Regeneration and Planning)
Martin Brassington (Supporting Communities)
Ken Browne (Transport, Environment and Rural Affairs)
Richard Grant (Schools)
Mick Jones (Young People, Lifelong Learning and Families)
John Haynes (Public Information and Safety)
Tim Naylor (Resources Management)
Raj Randev (Adult Services)
Bransby Thomas (Performance and Best Value)

Non-Voting Invitees:

Councillors Alan Farnell (Leader of the Conservative Group),
Jerry Roodhouse (the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group).

Other Members:

Councillors David Booth,
Richard Hobbs,
Izzi Seccombe,
Bob Stevens.

1. General

(1) Apologies

None.

(2) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Councillor John Burton declared a personal interest in Item 6 – Education Capital Issues, as a member of the Diocesan Board.

Councillor Richard Hobbs declared a personal interest in Item 14 Food Law Enforcement Plan and any discussion relating to agriculture.

Councillors David Booth, Richard Hobbs, Izzi Seccombe and Bob Stevens declared personal interests in exempt Item 19 – Land at Knight's Lane, Tiddington, Stratford upon Avon.

(3) Minutes of the Meeting held on the 7th April, 2005 and Matters Arising.

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Cabinet's 7th April 2005 meeting be approved and be signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

(4) Requests for Discussion of En Bloc Items.

It was agreed that items 13 and 15 would be discussed before decisions were taken.

2. CPA Improvement Plan

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive which presented the CPA Improvement Plan to the Cabinet for endorsement. The Improvement Plan set out the actions that would be taken to address the areas of weakness determined by the Audit Commission's 2004 CPA Assessment of the County Council.

During the discussion it was suggested that references in the Plan to individual councillors should be references to portfolio holders.

The Chair, seconded by Councillor Tim Naylor, moved and it was Resolved:-

That the Cabinet approve and adopt the CPA Improvement Plan to oversee the Council's improvement agenda in support of its objective of retaining 'Excellent' CPA Status.

3. Capital Programme for Transport 2005-06

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy which set out the proposed detailed Capital Programme for Transport for 2005-06. The Programme had been discussed with Area Committees and had their support. The Cabinet was invited to approve the programme.

Councillor Ken Browne, seconded by Councillor Tim Naylor, moved and it was Resolved:-

- (1) That the Capital Programme for Integrated Transport and Structural Maintenance of Roads and Bridges listed in

Appendix A Tables 1, 2 and 3 of the report be approved and contracts let as required for the projects; the increased cost of Bishopton Park and Ride is approved as part of this recommendation.

- (2) That the increased costs of Nuneaton Development Project and Rugby Western Relief Road be approved to allow the projects to continue to be developed, on condition that contracts are not let until the funding of the projects has been resolved as proposed at paragraphs 2.5(ii) and (iii) of the report.
- (3) That the programme of Major Capital Road Schemes listed in Appendix A Table 4 be approved.
- (4) That the Cabinet recommends to the Council that the Transport Capital programme be increased by £0.847M to cover the increased costs reported in Table 4 for Rugby Western Relief Road and Nuneaton Development Project subject to the funding condition at recommendation (2) being satisfied.

4. Supporting People

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Social Care and Health which updated members on the Audit Commission Inspection of the Supporting People Programme in Warwickshire. It included the Action Plan, which had been agreed by the SP Commissioning Body on 1st April 2005.

This report also included progress on the SP Five-year strategy and the 'sign-up' to it.

Following introductory comments from Councillor Raj Randev, it was Resolved:-

That the Cabinet approve the Action Plan and the Supporting People Five-year Strategy and present them to the Council for consideration.

5. Central Area Special School Reorganisation

The Cabinet considered the report of the County Education Officer which asked the Cabinet to confirm, following statutory consultation, the proposals for special school reorganisation in the Central Area of Warwickshire.

Councillor Richard Grant moved, Councillor Tim Naylor seconded and it was Resolved:-

That following statutory consultation, the Cabinet agree the proposals to:

- make Ridgeway School the primary special school for children whose needs cannot be met fully in mainstream schools for the Central Area
- make Round Oak School and Support Service the secondary special school for the Central Area

and authorise the County Education Officer to implement these proposals with a view to both new special schools being completed for September 2007.

6. Education Capital Issues

The Cabinet considered the report of the County Education Officer.

The paper recommended that the former caretaker's bungalow at Paddox Primary School in Rugby be declared surplus to requirements and that bids be submitted to the DfES for three projects at aided schools.

Councillor Richard Grant moved, Councillor Tim Naylor seconded and it was Resolved:-

- (1) That the former caretaker's bungalow on the Paddox Primary School site in Rugby be declared surplus to the needs of the Education Service and that the property be sold with the capital receipt, net of selling expenses, being divided equally amongst the school, neighbouring schools and the County's capital programme.

- (2) That the following voluntary aided school bids be submitted to the DfES:

for Targeted Capital Fund –

Harris School, Rugby
King Edward VI Grammar School, Stratford

for an Innovative Building Design Project –

Lawrence Sheriff School, Rugby.

7. Consumer Direct

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Libraries, Heritage and Trading Standards which sought agreement to bid for Warwickshire to be the call centre provider for Consumer Direct in the West Midlands region.

Councillor John Haynes moved, Councillor Tim Naylor seconded and it was Resolved:-

That the Cabinet agrees that the Council should bid to deliver the Consumer Direct service across the West Midlands region on behalf of the Central England Trading Standards Authorities (CEntSA), subject to the risk assessment currently being undertaken and notes that such a bid could lead to a contract with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) commencing about December 2005 and terminating in 2010 subject to the approval of the County Solicitor and County Treasurer.

8. Trent Valley Rail Service Changes and the Proposed Closure of Polesworth Railway Station

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy.

The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has recently published proposals for changes to the Trent Valley Line local rail service between Coventry/Rugby - Nuneaton – Stafford. As part of this proposal the Strategic Rail Authority is considering closing Polesworth Railway Station. The report detailed these matters and discussed the strength of any challenge to the closure proposal that the County Council may wish to bring.

During his introduction of the item Councillor Ken Browne, suggested that the quality of service that led to the proposal to close Polesworth Station should be questioned. Seconded by Councillor Tim Naylor, he moved and it was Resolved:-

- (1) That the Cabinet opposes (i) the proposed reduction in local train services on the Nuneaton – Stafford route and (ii) the closure of Polesworth Station.
- (2) That the Cabinet authorises the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy and the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive to lodge the County Council's formal objection to the proposals, to carry out further investigations regarding the proposals, and to present a

further report to Cabinet as soon as feasible regarding the outcome of such investigations.

9. Strategic Rail Authority

The report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy was considered.

The Strategic Rail Authority had published its draft West Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy and was seeking comments. Cabinet was recommended to note the contents of the report and approve the proposed response of the County Council.

Resolved:-

That Cabinet approves the proposed response of the County Council.

10. Department for Transport Consultation on Certain Elements of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991

The report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy was considered.

The Traffic Management Act 2004 received Royal Assent in July 2004 and was being implemented in phases. The report highlighted the significance of the new network management duty and recommended how the Council should respond to this consultation.

Resolved:-

That the Council supports the general principles of the Traffic Management Act, subject to concerns mentioned in paragraph 3.7 of the report, and authorises the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy to submit a response to the consultation on those lines together with comments on matters of detail.

11. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Local Plan - Proposed Modifications

The report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy was considered.

The report provided an update on the progress of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough's Local Plan and sought Member approval for the proposed changes.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet endorses the views expressed by its officers in this report on the Proposed Modifications of Nuneaton and Bedworth's Borough Local Plan, and confirms the officer advice sent to the Borough Council.

12. Government Proposals for New Arrangements for Financing Firefighters' Pensions

The report of the County Treasurer was considered.

The report set out Government proposals to change the financing arrangements for Firefighters' Pensions.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet note the proposed changes to the arrangements for financing firefighters' pensions and approve the response to the Government's consultation on the proposed changes.

13. Development Partnership with Sierra Leone

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy.

The County Council had been invited to be part of a consortium of local authorities bidding for resources from the World Bank to assist in the post-conflict reconstruction of Sierra Leone. The report sought agreement to participate in the bid.

Members noted that there were well-established links between Warwickshire Schools and schools in the Bo District of Sierra Leone and that the LGA and government was encouraging participation.

Following a short discussion about the small cost to the Council and how the proposal fitted in with the Corporate Strategy, it was Resolved:-

That the Warwickshire County Council participates in the bid to be made by the consortium of local authorities for resources from the World Bank (and any other bid made by the consortium to any other suitable funding source) to support a development partnership with Sierra Leone.

14. Food Law Enforcement Plan

The report of the Chair of the Crime and Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

At its meeting on the 5 April 2005 the Crime and Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee's views were requested on the Cabinet report of the Director of Libraries, Heritage and Trading Standards on the Food Law Enforcement Plan 2005/2006. Following discussion the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended Cabinet to support the Plan subject to the inclusion of a reference to imported foods.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet support the Food Law Enforcement Plan and work programmes subject to the inclusion of a reference to imported meat in paragraph 3.7 of the Plan under the heading Service Delivery.

15. North Warwickshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth – Area Review of 14-19 Provision

The Cabinet considered the report of the County Education Officer.

The report asked the Cabinet to comment on the proposed Action Plan drawn up in response to the Area Review of 14-19 Provision jointly commissioned by the Authority and the Local Learning & Skills Council.

During the discussion it was suggested that the Learning and Skills Council should be asked to make the inclusion of families more apparent in the Action Plan.

It was then Resolved:-

- (1) That the Cabinet consider and comment on the Action Plan prepared jointly by the Local Learning & Skills Council and the County Council in response to the Area Review of 14-19 Provision.
- (2) That the comments of the Cabinet and those of the North Warwickshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth Area Committees on the Area Review and Action Plan be forwarded to the Local Learning & Skills Council.

16. Any Other Items

The Chair expressed her appreciation to Cabinet colleagues and Leaders of the Opposition Groups for the work undertaken in the management of Cabinet business. In particular she thanked retiring members Ian Bottrill, Martin Brassington and Bransby Thomas. Her views were echoed by the Leaders of the other groups.

17. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

Resolved:

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of confidential and exempt information as defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

18. Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on the 7th April, 2005 and Matters Arising.

Resolved:-

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 7th April 2005 be approved as a correct record and the minutes be signed by the Chair.

19. Proposed Disposal to Stratford District Council of Ground Leasehold Interest, Knight's Lane, Tiddington, Stratford-upon-Avon

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Property Services.

The Cabinet was asked to consider the disposal to Stratford District Council of the ground leasehold interest, in part of the County Council's smallholding land, Knights Lane, Tiddington, Stratford upon Avon.

Consideration of this item was deferred to enable a further report to be prepared.

20. Kenilworth Youth Centre: Proposed Sale and Provision of New Facility

The joint report of the Director of Property Services and the County Education Officer was considered.

The Cabinet considered the sale of Kenilworth Youth Centre in exchange for a new facility, as part of the improvement of Kenilworth's Town Centre shopping area.

21. Warwick: The Old Clink, The Holloway

The report of the Director of Property Services was considered.

The Cabinet considered a new lease for the occupation of The Old Clink.

22. Variation to the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) Consortium Membership Agreement

The Cabinet considered the report of the County Solicitor & Assistant Chief Executive.

ESPO was faced with managing a significant expansion of its business in premises that were no longer appropriate and as a consequence, the ESPO Management Committee had been considering proposals for the physical relocation of ESPO.

The current ESPO membership agreement does not make provision for property ownership and therefore the existing agreement required modification if the new premises project was to proceed. The Cabinet considered the membership agreement.

23. Adoption of a retaining structure supporting the highway at Midland Quarry, Camp Hill, Nuneaton.

The Joint report of the Director of Planning, Transport & Economic Strategy, County Solicitor & Assistant Chief Executive and County Treasurer and a briefing note circulated at the meeting was considered.

The Cabinet considered the adoption of estate roads and supporting retaining structure at Midland Quarry.

25. Increase in Residential Care Capacity.

The report of the Director of Social Care and Health was considered.

The Cabinet considered the block purchase of Service Contracts with two existing independent providers at Kilsby House and Wolston Grange.

The Cabinet rose at 2.26 p.m.