

The Cabinet met at the Shire Hall, Warwick on the 2nd February 2006.

Present

Cabinet Members:

Councillor Alan Farnell (Chair) (Policy and Governance),
“ John Burton (Schools),
“ Alan Cockburn (Corporate Services),
“ Peter Fowler (Family Services),
“ Colin Hayfield (Adult and Community Services),
“ Richard Hobbs (Community Safety),
“ Martin Heatley (Environment),
“ Chris Saint (Economic Development),
“ Izzi Seccombe (Children’s Services),
“ Bob Stevens (Performance Management).

Non-Voting Invitees:

Councillor June Tandy, Leader of the Labour Group,
“ Jerry Roodhouse, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group.

Other Members:

Councillors Sarah Boad, David Booth, Ken Browne, Josie Compton, Michael Doody, Anne Forwood, John Haynes, Marion Haywood, Mick Jones, Frank McCarney, Helen McCarthy, Tim Naylor, Raj Randev, Sid Tooth and John Wells.

1. General

(1) Apologies

An apology for non attendance was received form Councillor Richard Grant.

(2) Members’ Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

David Carter advised members that the standard declarations shown on the agenda were personal declarations and each member would need to declare any prejudicial interests. Also the

standing declarations were for Cabinet members and the leaders of the two opposition groups and other members who were also members of district councils would still need to declare this at each meeting.

Councillor Richard Hobbs requested that, in future, standing personal declarations should be submitted in respect of those county councillors who were also members of the Warwickshire Police Authority.

The following members, who were members of the Borough/District Councils indicated, declared personal interests in any matters affecting the relevant Borough/District Council:-

Councillor Alan Cockburn, Member of Warwick District Council.
Councillor Peter Fowler, Member of North Warwickshire

Borough Council.

Councillor Colin Hayfield, Member of North Warwickshire

Borough Council.

Councillor Richard Hobbs, Member of Stratford on Avon District Council.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Member of Rugby Borough Council.

Councillor Chris Saint (Economic Development), Member of Stratford on Avon District Council.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Children's Services), Member of Stratford on Avon District Council.

Councillor Bob Stevens (Performance Management). Member of Stratford on Avon District Council.

Councillors Richard Hobbs, Chris Saint, Izzi Seccombe and Bob Stevens declared prejudicial interests in **Agenda Item 27 Exempt – Winton House, Stratford upon Avon**, in view of their membership of the Stratford on Avon District Council.

Councillors Josie Compton and Michael Doody declared personal interests in any matter affecting the Warwick District Council, as members of that Council.

Councillor Sarah Boad declared a personal interest in **Agenda Item 9 – Supporting People** in view of her husband being the Warwick District Council's representative on the Partnership Board.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th January 2006 and Matters Arising.

Following comments about the correct spelling of Councillor Sarah Boad's name it was Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Cabinet's 12th January 2006 meeting be approved.

There were no matters arising.

(4) Request for Discussion of En Bloc Item.

It was agreed that item 13 would be discussed before a decision was taken.

2. 2004/2005 Joint Audit & Inspection Letter to Members

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources and received a presentation on the main points of the Joint Audit Letter from Steven Lappage of PricewaterhouseCoopers and Sandy MacMillan of the Audit Commission.

Councillor Alan Farnell thanked the auditors on behalf of members for the work that had been undertaken.

He also expressed members appreciation for the work undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers during their engagement as the Councils auditors and presented gifts in appreciation for the work undertaken to Steven Lappage and his colleagues.

Resolved:-

That the Auditors Management letter be received.

3. Public Consultation on 2006/07 Budget and Council Tax: Results

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources which provided members with details of the results from the public consultation on the 2006/07 budget priorities and council tax.

Councillor Bob Steven suggested that when ever possible reports relating to the budget should be circulated as early as possible before the Christmas to give members more time to consider the issues.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet note the feedback received from the public about the budget and level of council tax for 2006/07 and commend the information to the political groups for consideration when preparing their 2006/07 budget resolutions.

4. 2006/07 Revenue and Capital Budgets - Feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources.

The report outlined for Members' consideration the feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the 2006/07 Revenue and Capital spending proposals.

Following introductory comments from Councillor Alan Cockburn it was Resolved:-

That the Cabinet note the report and refer the views onto the political groups for consideration when preparing their budget resolutions.

5. Capital Programme 2006/07 to 2008/09

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources which summarised existing and proposed capital projects put forward by departments. It identified the cost of proposed schemes from 2006/07 onwards and potential income available to fund them. The proposals were commended to the political groups for consideration in formulating an approved capital programme for 2006/07 and draft programmes for 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Following introductory comments from Councillor Alan Cockburn it was Resolved:-

That the Cabinet

- (1) Notes the report and commends it to the political groups for their consideration in formulating proposals for the capital programme 2006/2009 and the revenue budget 2006/2007 to be considered by the County Council at its meeting on 7th February.

- (2) Notes that there is £1.566 million of resources available in the capital programme for new capital development bids in addition to resources generated by borrowing where the revenue impact is built into Council budget resolutions.

6. 2006/2007 Budget

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources.

The report provided members with an updated indication of the revenue resources available for 2006/07 and the associated spending proposals identified by directorates. It also recommended that the framework 2006/07 revenue and capital budget resolutions be forwarded to the Council for the budget setting meeting on 7 February 2006.

Following introductory comments from Councillor Alan Cockburn it was Resolved:-

That the Cabinet:

- (1) Notes the 2006/07 government support of £74.505 million.
- (2) Notes the projected resource implications of setting a 2006/07 council tax at various levels, as outlined in paragraph 4.3 of the report.
- (3) Notes the need to fund/utilise the deficit/surplus on the collection of council tax in previous years, reported to us by the district/borough councils, of £X.XXX million as part of the budget resolution to Council.
- (4) Notes the Strategic Director of Resources' comments on the minimum acceptable level of general reserves (see **Appendix A** of the report).
- (5) Notes the 2006/07 revenue spending pressures outlined in section 10 and detailed in **Appendix B** of the report.
- (6) Notes the likely level of resources available for 2007/08 and recommend that the Party Groups consider the implications of any decisions on the allocation of resources in 2006/07 on 2007/08 and future years.
- (7) Recommends to County Council that account is taken of the 2006/07 Framework Budget Resolutions when setting the 2006/07 Budget (see **Appendix C** of the report).

7. Completion of the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA2) 2006-2009

The report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development was considered.

Councillor Bob Stevens suggested that, having regard to recent developments with the negotiations and alterations to targets and other calculations, consideration of the matter should be deferred to a later meeting.

Members expressed their appreciation for the work undertaken by Nick Gower-Johnson in connection with the Agreement.

Resolved:-

That consideration of this item be deferred.

8. Record of Performance Assessment for Adult Social Care 2005.

The Cabinet considered the report of the Interim Director of Social Care.

The report provided a summary of the Commission for Social Care Inspection's evaluation and judgement of Warwickshire County Council's Adult Social Care and recommended the adoption of an action plan to further improve performance.

Following introductory comments from Councillor Colin Hayfield it was Resolved:-

(1) That the Cabinet notes the Commission for Social Care Inspection's report on performance within Adult Social Care Services contained in Appendix 1 of the report.

(2) That the Cabinet endorses and approves the performance improvements highlighted in section 4 of the report and the action plan attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

9. Supporting People

The Cabinet considered the report of the Interim Director of Adult Social Services relating to progress on the Audit Commission Inspection of the Supporting People Programme in Warwickshire. A copy of an Action Plan which indicated progress to date was also submitted.

Members were asked to comment on the progress and endorse the actions taken to prepare for the next Supporting People Audit Commission Inspection, expected to commence week beginning 27 March 2006.

During the debate the following points were made:-

- There was a need to ensure that arrangements were cross cutting particularly in view of the Local Area Agreements.
- The importance of the involvement of partnership working in the arrangements.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet endorse the actions taken to prepare for the next Supporting People Audit Commission Inspection, expected to commence week beginning 27 March 2006.

10. Education White Paper: “Higher Standards, Better Schools for All”

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families Services which summarised the Government’s White Paper: “Higher Standards, Better Schools for All” and asked Cabinet to comment on the draft response.

In his introduction of the item, Councillor John Burton requested that the response be forwarded to both the Warwickshire MPs and those MPs whose constituencies bounded Warwickshire.

During the discussion the following points were made:-

- The White Paper should have contained greater emphasis on links with Every Child Matters and the Children’s Service to promote joined up working.
- Members acknowledged the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the drafting of the response.
- The Council’s response would be an all party response.

Resolved:-

- (1) That the Cabinet authorise the Strategic Director for Children, Young People & Families and the County Education Officer to forward the response, as amended, to the Secretary of State and to the Warwickshire Members of Parliament.
- (2) That the Secretary of State be advised that the Council is concerned that no reference is made to the handling of appeals in the White Paper. The Council is concerned that increasing the number of admissions authorities who will be responsible for administering appeals could lead to greater inconsistency and

make it more difficult for the authority to take an overview of appeals and how they are impacting on admissions.

- (3) That the response be signed by the portfolio holder and the other party spokespersons.

11. Change to the Indicated Admission Number of Whitestone Infant School

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families Services.

The Cabinet was asked to approve the proposal to reduce the Indicated Admission Number of Whitestone Infant School in Nuneaton following positive feedback from formal consultations.

Resolved:-

- (1) That the feedback from stakeholders concerning the proposal to reduce the Indicated Admission Number of Whitestone Infant School be noted.
- (2) That approval be given to reducing the Indicated Admission Number of Whitestone Infant School from 120 to 90 per year with effect from September 2007 admissions.

12. Treasury Management Strategy 2006/07

The report of the Strategic Director of Resources was considered.

The report set out the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2006/07 as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

Resolved:-

- (1) That the Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy for 2006/07 be noted and referred to County Council for approval;
- (2) That the Prudential Indicators are noted and referred to County Council for approval, subject to any changes as a result of the setting of the 2006/07 budget;
- (3) That the delegated powers in paragraph 9 of the report be approved.

13. Projected 2005/2006 Revenue Net Spend as at Quarter 3

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources which informed Members of the projected net spend for 2005/2006 based on the information known at the end of the third quarter.

During his introduction of this item, Councillor Alan Cockburn requested that, in future, similar reports should be included on the agenda as items for discussion not for en bloc decision.

He referred to past discussions about the social services budget and the reasons for the overspend under libraries relating to the Customer Centre. In response to comments from Councillor Richard Hobbs, Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources, explained the situation relating to fire-fighters pensions and difficulties which he indicated was due to timing of retirement decisions and that matters would be equalised under the budgetary process.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet:

- (1) Notes the provisional 2005/2006 Revenue net spend position and the projected reserves at year end, and ensures appropriate action is being taken to control spending in the delivery of services.
- (2) Approves the transfer of £500,000 of Social Services budget from Children's Residential Care Services to Foster Care Services, detailed in paragraph 2.14 of the report.
- (3) Approves the contribution to reserves of £200,000 in 2005/06, detailed in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

14. Funding of Black and Minority Ethnic Organisations

The report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development was considered.

The report set out the proposed funding from the Race Equality Budget for Black and Minority Ethnic projects in Warwickshire.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet endorses the funding proposed to Black and Minority Ethnic projects in Warwickshire.

15. Review of Regional Spatial Strategy - Phase 2 - Advice of Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Forum

The report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy was considered.

The Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Forum (CSWF) advised the County Council - along with the Solihull and Coventry City Councils - to adopt a partnership approach to the detailed advice on such matters as housing numbers and employment land to be given to the Regional Planning Body on Phase 2 of the Regional Spatial Strategy's Review. The Cabinet was recommended to agree with the Forum's advice.

Resolved:-

That the advice of the Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Forum (9th December 2005) be generally endorsed and that Cabinet specifically confirms the Council's agreement to:-

- (1) The Forum co-ordinating the joint views of all the authorities in the Sub-region, conveying these for the 3 Strategic Authorities to passport to the Regional Planning Body while the Strategic Authorities retain their legal right to make any additional comments separately; and
- (2) The Forum's contention that the detailed housing figures should be produced for local authority areas - taking into account local, sub-regional and cross-boundary housing market issues.

16. Government Consultation on a New Draft National Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): HOUSING

The report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy was considered.

The proposed new PPS3 - Housing set out draft Government policy aimed at using the planning system to its maximum to deliver Government's aspirations for the scale, quality and affordability of new homes. The latest national policy proposals on the issue modify the Government's radical market-led approach, outlined in its September 2005 consultation 'Planning for Housing'. However, the draft PPS3 still included serious threats to the plan-led approach on which there was local, sub-regional and regional consensus across local authorities in the West Midlands. The Director's recommendation was to respond to the consultation accordingly.

Resolved:-

That the assessment and conclusions, set out in the Director's report at sections 3 and 4, be conveyed to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as the County Council's response to the Government's consultation on the Draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS3): Housing and copied to the West Midlands Regional Housing Board and West Midlands Regional Planning Body.

17. Minerals and Waste Development Framework: Minerals Core Strategy - Preliminary Consultation

The report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy was considered.

The Minerals Core Strategy will determine the scale and broad location of mineral sites in the County. The questionnaire formed the basis of a 6 week period of consultation in order to determine the range of issues that the Core Strategy will have to deal with.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet approves the questionnaire (at Appendix A of the report) for a period of 6 weeks public consultation between February and April 2006 as part of the Minerals Core Strategy Preliminary Consultation.

18. Minerals and Waste Development Framework: Waste Core Strategy - Issues and Options Consultation

The report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy was considered.

The Waste Core Strategy Issues and Options paper set out the issues and a range of options for dealing with the scale and broad location of waste disposal facilities. It will go out for a 6 week period of consultation between February and April 2006 to give consultees an opportunity to comment on their preferred options.

Resolved:-

That Cabinet approves the Waste Core Strategy Issues and Options paper for a 6 week period of consultation between February and April 2006.

19. Potential Tourist Information Facility in Market Hall Museum, Warwick

The report of the Director, Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards was considered.

The possible integration of Warwick tourist information facilities into the Market Hall Museum, Warwick has been raised. Members were asked to note the issues raised and to authorise further investigation and negotiation.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet:

- (1) Authorises officers to pursue an investigation of the feasibility and to undertake negotiations about the integration of Warwick Tourist Information facilities into the museum building at Market Hall, Market Place, Warwick.
- (2) Receive a report in due course prior to the agreement of a final position.

20. Disposal of items from the Museum Collections

The report of the Director of Libraries, Heritage and Trading Standards was considered.

The report sought the Cabinet's approval, in accordance with established procedures, for the disposal of items from the Museum Collections. The report had been considered by the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 10 January 2006 as part of the Collections for the Future report.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet agrees the disposal of items from the Museums Collection in accordance with the schedule in Appendix 1 to the report.

21. Capital Programme Review

The report of the Strategic Director of Resources was considered.

The report related to changes to the capital programme since Cabinet in September 2005.

Resolved:-

- (1) That the Cabinet recommend the Council to approve the additional project relating to Mental health Provision at Table 1 in the report.
- (2) That the Cabinet approve the other additional projects at Table 1 in the report.
- (3) That the revised starts and payments totals for 2005/06 identified at paragraphs 6.6 and 6.7 (Tables 2 and 3) of the report be approved.
- (4) That Cabinet note the projections of spending and financing for future financial years and agrees the variations at Appendix C to the report.

22. Leamington Spa Mixed Priority Scheme (LUMP) with a bid for additional funding to complete the scheme in 2006.

The report of the Chair of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee was considered.

On the 17 January 2006 the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the funding issues relating to the Leamington Spa Mixed Priority Scheme, referred from Cabinet on 12 January 2006.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet note the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee's request for a joint report to a future meeting from the Strategic Directors of Environment and Economy and Resources detailing how the costs of the Leamington Spa Urban Mixed Priority Scheme had been estimated, why they had increased dramatically, and what measures had been taken to mitigate the escalating costs in Phase1.

23. Irrecoverable debts

The report of the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families Services was considered.

Authority was requested to write off two irrecoverable debts. The Strategic Director of Performance and Development had advised that these debts cannot be pursued further or it would be uneconomical to do so.

Resolved:-

That the two debts outlined in the report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families amounting to £7,306.28 be written off as irrecoverable.

24. Any Other Items

There were no urgent items to consider.

25. 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 or exempt information as defined in paragraphs 7,8, 9 and 10 of the Local Government Act 1972'.

26. Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th January 2006 and Matters Arising.

Resolved:-

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2006 be approved as a correct record and the minutes be signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

27. Stratford-upon-Avon: Winton House, Church Street

Councillors Richard Hobbs, Chris Saint, Izzi Seccombe and Bob Stevens and left the room during consideration of this item.

The Cabinet agreed to persue issues relating to this property.

URGENT ITEM (having immediate effect)

28. Tender for Community Based Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People.

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families.

A successful tendering process had resulted in two preferred providers being identified for the north and the south of the County.

Following introductory comments from Councillor Peter Fowler members discussed several aspects of the proposal and agreed the award of a contract.

The Cabinet rose at 2.30 p.m.