

The Cabinet met at the Shire Hall, Warwick on the 9th March 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),

“ 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 John Appleton, Ken Browne, Richard Chattaway, Josie Compton, Chris Davis, Michael Doody, Anne Forwood, John Haynes, Marion Haywood, Mick Jones, Katherine King, Frank McCarney, Helen McCarthy, Tim Naylor, Raj Randev, Sid Tooth, John Vereker, John Wells and John Whitehouse.

(1) Apologies for absence.

An apology was received from Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Children's Services).

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

Personal interests relating to any item on the agenda arising by virtue of the members serving as District/Borough councillors and as members of the Warwickshire Police Authority are declared below:

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 and the Warwickshire Police Authority.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Member of Rugby Borough Council.

Councillor Chris Saint, Member of Stratford on Avon District Council.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Member of Stratford on Avon District Council and the Warwickshire Police Authority.

Councillor Bob Stevens, Member of Stratford on Avon District Council.

Councillors Josie Compton and Chris Davis declared personal interests in any matters affecting the Warwick District Council, as members of that Council.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd February 2006 and Matters Arising.

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Cabinet's 23rd February 2006 meeting be approved.

There were no matters arising.

(4) Requests for Discussion of En Bloc Items.

It was agreed that item 7 would be discussed before a decision was taken.

2. Proposed closure of Bishop Wulstan Catholic School, Rugby

Councillor Alan Farnell welcomed the Headteacher Brendan Higgins, members of the teaching staff and pupils of the School and Father Marcus Stock of the Archdiocese of Birmingham to the meeting.

The Cabinet then considered the report of the Strategic Director - Children, Young People and Families which summarised the outcome of the proposal to close (formally to cease to maintain) Bishop Wulstan School in Rugby and presented the options for the way forward.

The Cabinet also considered the draft minutes of the Rugby Area Committee's 6th March meeting which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Area Committee had resolved to recommend the Cabinet:-

- (i) that the proposal to close Bishop Wulstan Catholic School be withdrawn;

- (ii) that the alternative proposals from the four Catholic schools of Rugby and the Archdiocese of Birmingham as detailed in Section 5 of the Director's report be pursued with a serious and rapid evaluation of the 3-16 options and that the LEA give active support to the evaluation of these options.

Councillor John Burton introduced the report and urged the Cabinet to support the recommendations of the Area Committee.

Following comments from Councillor John Vereker, Chair of the Area Committee, in support of the issues raised by the Area Committee, several members expressed their support for the Area Committee's recommendations.

The following points were raised during the discussion:-

- o The withdrawal of the proposal would enable the school to move forward with the proposals outlined in the report.
- o When considering matters the Council must have regard to the needs of all Warwickshire schools particularly when considering financial matters such as the capital programme.
- o There was a need for reports to be submitted to the Cabinet and then the Children and Young people Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to developments at the school, including the alternative proposals, performance, financial aspects and associated matters.

It was then Resolved:-

- (1) That the proposal to close Bishop Wulstan Catholic School be withdrawn;
- (2) That the alternative proposals from the four Catholic schools of Rugby and the Archdiocese of Birmingham as detailed in Section 5 of the Director's report be pursued with a serious and rapid evaluation of the 3-16 options and that the LEA give active support to the evaluation of these options.
- (3) That the Cabinet place on record their appreciation for the hard work and commitment of the Headteacher, Brendan Higgins, Father Marcus Stock, the staff, parents, students and Governors of the School and Councillors Katherine King and John Vereker during this difficult time.

3. Report of the Review of Higher Education Student Finance Delivery in England

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

Following a review of the end-to-end delivery of Student Finance in England which was announced on 7th June 2005, a report was published on 1st February 2006 with an initial Ministerial statement supporting the centralisation of a role currently administered by Local Authorities.

Following introductory comments from Councillor John Burton it was Resolved:-

That a response to the Government's proposals be drafted for consideration by the Cabinet.

4. Establishment of Warwickshire's Safeguarding Children Board

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development and the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families and the views of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board which had been circulated before the meeting.

The report detailed the requirement for Warwickshire County Council to establish a local safeguarding children board to agree and oversee the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the County.

The Strategic Partnership Board had endorsed the recommendations in the Strategic Directors report and made additional recommendations relating to the appointment of the Chair of the Board, the need for an annual report to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board and the need for cooperation with the Council's scrutiny arrangements.

Following introductory comments from Councillor John Burton it was Resolved:-

- (1) That the Cabinet establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board for Warwickshire with the membership and terms of reference as set out in the Draft Constitution attached to the report.
- (2) That the appointment of the Chair of the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board be delegated to the Strategic Director of Adult, Health and Community Services.
- (3) That the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board's Constitution be amended in consultation with its member agencies to include requirements that the Board provides a report to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board annually and cooperates with the County Council's own Scrutiny arrangements.

5. Integrated Risk Management Plan Year 3 Action Plan - Consultation

The report of the Strategic Director of Community Protection and County Fire Officer was considered.

The report set out the Integrated Risk Management Plan Year 3 Action Plan. The final version of the plan had been produced following consideration of all the feedback received during the consultation period from 1st October 2005 to 31st December 2005.

Resolved:-

That the Council be recommended to adopt the Integrated Risk Management Year Three Action Plan on behalf of the Fire Authority from 1st April 2006.

6. Irrecoverable Debt

The report of the Strategic Director of Community Protection and County Fire Officer was considered.

The Cabinet was asked to write off of a debt to the value of £9,926.57.

Resolved:-

That Members note the report and approve the debt worth £9,926.57 outlined in the report be written off as irrecoverable.

7. Warwickshire Arts Service: A Vision for the Future

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chair of the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The report set out the results of a major consultation with stakeholders on policy and priorities for the County Arts Service. The report had been considered by the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 January 2006.

Following introductory comments from Councillor Colin Hayfield, Members discussed several aspects of the proposals and raised a number of points including:-

- The issues should be reviewed in the light of emerging national initiatives.
- Consideration should be given to the development of an outward looking strategy reaching beyond the county boundary.
- Opportunities for alternative funding including resources should be monitored including from Section 106 Agreements.

- The arrangements for the allocation of grants should be examined, including the possibility of Area Committees being given authority to allocate funding to local groups/organisations.
- Work was being undertaken to ensure integration of the service with the new Directorates including adult care services and services for older people.
- The importance of partnership working.
- The arrangements being made for the development of the Cultural Strategy and involvement of the members working group.
Councillor Colin Hayfield indicated his intention to investigate arrangements for the award of grants to smaller organisations, including the possible involvement of the Area Committees and also to discuss with partner organisation such as the district/borough councils, the availability of funding under Section 106 Agreements.

Following comments from Councillor Alan Farnell about the need for the Leaders Liaison Group to be kept informed of developments, it was Resolved:-

That the Cabinet approve the recommendations within the report regarding:

- (1) Key Areas (detailed in paragraph 4.1.1 of the report)
- (2) Grant Aid (detailed in paragraph 4.2.1 of the report)
- (3) Joint Working (detailed in paragraph 4.3.1 of the report)

8. Any Other Items

There were no urgent items to consider.

9. 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 8 and 9 of the Local Government Act 1972'.

10. Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd February 2006 and Matters Arising.

(1) Minutes

Resolved:-

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2006 be approved as a correct record and the minutes be signed by the Chair.

(2) Matters Arising

Minute 21 - Coleshill Parkway

Councillor Martin Heatley reported that the Department of Transport had now increased spend to £4.1m.

11. Equal Pay Strategy

The Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development which described the latest issues in relation to equal pay and a strategy for discussion with the trades unions.

12. Report on Insurance Renewals 2006

The report of the Strategic Directors – Performance & Development and Resources was considered.

The Cabinet agreed insurance renewals for 2006.

13. Contractual Arrangements - Warwickshire Care Services

The report of the Strategic Directors of Adult, Health and Community Services, Performance and Development and Resources.

The report describes the current contractual arrangements with Warwickshire Care Services and sought the Cabinet's agreement on a way forward in partnership.

14. Design Services Partnering Contract

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

The existing partnering arrangement would expire in June 2006 and Cabinet had agreed the principle of letting a new partnering agreement. The report outlined the competitive tendering process undertaken to identify a suitable organisation to partner with Design Services to provide professional and other services as required. It also provided an assessment of the tenders received and gave recommendations for the award of the contract.

That Cabinet approved the award the Design Services Partnering Contract, for the provision of design and other services.

The Cabinet rose at 3.00 p.m.