

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 22 November 2012

Present

Cabinet Members:

Councillors	Alan Farnell	Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet
	Peter Butlin	Transport & Highways
	Alan Cockburn	Sustainable Communities
	Colin Hayfield	Customers, Access & Property
	Richard Hobbs	Community Safety
	Martin Heatley	Workforce & Governance
	Izzi Seccombe	Adult Social Care
	Bob Stevens	Deputy Leader of the Council
	Heather Timms	Children & Schools
	David Wright	Finance, Improvement & IT

Non-Voting Invitees:

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

Other Councillors:

Councillors Les Caborn, Jim Foster, Mike Gittus, Robin Hazelton, Barry Lobbett, Tim Naylor, Carolyn Robbins, John Ross, Helen Walton and John Whitehouse.

Invitee:

The Chair welcomed Dr Ralph Mitchell to the meeting.

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

All were present but Councillor Martyn Ashford had hoped to attend as Chair of the Bus Subsidy Task and Finish Group (referred to at item 7) but was unwell.

Councillor Julie Jackson (Chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Richard Chattaway and Councillor Chris Williams had also sent their apologies.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Councillor June Tandy declared a personal interest as vice- chair of the governing body of Wembrook School.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2012

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2012 be approved as a correct record.

Matter Arising – Minute 7 Overview and Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Transport

Councillor Tim Naylor referred to the Cabinet's decision to 'note' the overview and scrutiny recommendations and to a request sent to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee seeking a response to the recommendations. Councillor Heather Timms, Portfolio Holder for Children and Schools replied that there would be a response.

(4) Petitions

None

2. Mid-Year 2012/13 Organisational Health Report: Finance, Performance & Risk (April – September 2012)

Councillor David Wright (Portfolio Holder for Finance, Improvement and IT) presented this mid year report.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, questioned how the £1.837m overspend and the pressure in Safeguarding is being tackled and what is the predicted forecast. Councillor Tim Naylor, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, also expressed concern at an apparent £3.5m imbalance in the People Group budget and questioned how the reductions in government funding for children's services can be met.

Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Children and Schools) stated that the focus was on working to reduce the numbers in care and that the rate of increase had reduced but the overall number had increased so it remained an ongoing pressure. Wendy Fabbro, Strategic Director for People Group, added that the People Group in total were working to ensure a balanced budget and were also continuing to address safeguarding through its focus on early intervention and prevention. It was noted, however, that there were pressures and that the current approach was that this would be managed within the People Group.

Councillor John Ross, Chair of the Finance and Performance Working Group, presented the questions raised by the Working Group who had considered this report at its meeting on 19 November. (The questions had been circulated to Cabinet Portfolio Holders following that meeting).

The questions were answered as follows:

- (1) Risk Description: Young people and vulnerable adults suffer injury or death where the LA and its partners could have intervened to avoid it happening (paragraph 7.5 of report).

The Group had noted that the net risk level stood at red and wished to know what is the Council's latest position in relation to the new guidance under the Munro Review which was currently out to consultation.

Councillor Heather Timms reported that the consultation had now closed. Warwickshire is one of the demonstration sites for Munro and there would be two national meetings and 10 one day site visits. Councillor Timms added that this would require a thorough approach and support of peer councils working together to procreate solutions.

- (2) Going for Growth Performance Report – “securing improvement to M40 J12 to unlock up to 2,600 jobs at Jaguar Land Rover and Aston Martin” (page 2 of Appendix U).

The Working Group considered this to be a significant risk to the Council and will be monitoring the measure, but in the meantime requested information on the latest position.

Councillor Alan Cockburn (Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Communities) confirmed that funding was still being pursued as stated in the report.

- (3) Human Resources Performance Information Q2 from Corporate Staff Survey

The performance report includes measures of the percentage of staff who believe they have a real opportunity to develop their skills and staff who feel they have the opportunity for personal development and growth. The Working Group asked what plans or measures would be implemented to meet these measures.

David Carter, Strategic Director for Resources, advised that improvements were being made to the staff appraisal process in response to staff comments and that these were areas that would be picked up through the improved approach to appraisal.

- (4) Information Assets, Performance Information Q2

The Working Group noted that the implementation of an e-learning facility for staff on Information Security Awareness had not happened by the deadline of September 2012.

Councillor David Wright (Portfolio Holder for Finance, Improvement and IT) advised that this would be in place by March 2013.

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet notes:

- (i) the Mid-Year (April – Sept) 2012/13 performance against targets set. (Appendix T) and Going for Growth targets (Appendix U);
- (ii) the Mid-Year (April – Sept) 2012/13 revenue outturn position and the reserves at year-end;
- (iii) the Mid-Year (April – Sept) 2012/13 performance against the 2012/13 Savings Plan;

- (iv) the revised capital payments totals and the revised financing of the 2012/13 capital programme as detailed in Table 3 and detailed in Appendices A to S;
- (v) the projection of estimated capital spending and financing for future years;
- (vi) the management of significant risks as outlined in Section 7; and
- (vii) the detailed messages highlighted by Corporate Board in Section 8.

(2) That Cabinet approves the net transfer to reserves totalling £0.110 million.

3. Going for Growth – Approval of Projects

Councillor Alan Cockburn (Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Communities) presented a report setting out proposals for the allocation of the £3.475 set aside for Going for Growth projects and moved an additional recommendation to allow officers to progress schemes, once full Council on 18 December has approved the use of General Reserves.

Councillor Cockburn explained that the Cabinet had seriously considered all the bids and the recommendations of officers but had decided to support ‘revitalising town centres and market towns’ rather than ‘local labour and community benefit’ as being most likely to deliver growth at this time.

- supporting small businesses to create apprentices
- internal apprenticeships
- BDUK funding to push out broadband beyond the Government target
- Revitalising town centres and market towns
- Warwickshire Small business loans scheme

Councillor David Wright welcomed the proposals as a way of boosting growth and decreasing the gap in economic prosperity. Councillor Alan Farnell added that the Cabinet had opted for business loans rather than grants as this would ensure money was returned to then support other businesses.

Councillor Farnell, in response to questions on timing, explained that every effort would be made to encourage projects to be up and running by the end of 2012/13 financial year, but exact timing would depend on how quickly bids come forward.

Recommended to Council

That Council approve the use of £3.475 million General Reserves to support the Going for Growth projects listed in paragraph 1.6 of the report.

Resolved

That, subject to Council approval as referred to above, the Strategic Director for Communities and Strategic Director for Resources undertake the detailed implementation of the schemes, including entering into all relevant contracts.

4. Warwickshire Rural Growth Network

Councillor Alan Cockburn (Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Communities) reported that the Council has now accepted a grant offer from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (of approximately £2.4m) to establish the Warwickshire Rural Growth Network (RGN) and that a further application is being progressed for a grant scheme for micro-enterprises in the RGN area. It is expected that the RGN will generate 120 new business start ups, support 400 businesses to develop, provide new enterprise space and create or safeguard 500 jobs. The RGN is focused around Stoneleigh Park and a partnership arrangement with LaSalle is being developed who have new accommodation available for use as the Warwickshire RGN Technology and Innovation Centre.

Members welcomed the success to date and the progress being made and noted that activities will be operational in the New Year following the current procurement exercise.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the addition of the capital element of the grant to establish the Warwickshire Rural Growth Network (RGN) to the Capital Programme;
- 2) Recommends that Council allocates the revenue element of the DEFRA grant to the Communities Group for the purposes of establishing and delivering the Warwickshire RGN;
- 3) Commits to entering into a partnership agreement with LaSalle Investment Management for the provision of a Rural Technology and Innovation Centre at Stoneleigh Park as part of the Warwickshire RGN; and
- 4) Authorises the Strategic Director for Communities to negotiate, and enter into, agreement to deliver the Rural Growth Network Proposals on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

5. Warwickshire Joint Carers' Strategy Refresh 2012-15

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care) presented a refresh of the Joint Carers Strategy, highlighting the themes of the strategy and the input of partners.

Councillor Les Caborn, Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reported that the Committee had considered the strategy and

their comments had been circulated. Councillor Caborn reported that the Committee were content that the right priorities were being pursued and that the direction of travel was appropriate. Members did, however, have a particular concern that the refresh was based in part on a study of young carers undertaken in 1998 and on data from the 2001 census. This could mean that carers were being missed.

Other areas questioned by the Committee included the offer of laptops and gym memberships to carers (particularly whether this was financially viable) and how to extend the assessment of unpaid carers. It was noted that support for carers through computer access and gym memberships was effective in helping their health and wellbeing and that GPs were best placed to assess carers, alongside their assessment of the person being cared for.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe accepted the comments from the Committee and agreed that up to date information was a particular issue that would be addressed. Councillor Seccombe added that the strategy was a live document and would continue to be monitored.

Chris Lewington, Head of Strategic Commissioning, advised that the 2011 census information would be released in January 2013 at district level and that an addendum to the strategy would be produced, although she did not anticipate a change in profile. An update would be produced for members as soon as practicable. It was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee spokespersons would be considering when a progress report should be brought back to the Committee.

Resolved

That Cabinet approve the Warwickshire Joint Carers' Strategy Refresh 2012-15 as set out in Appendix A of the report.

6. Adult Mental Health Needs Assessment

Councillor Bob Stevens (Portfolio Holder for Health) presented the 2012 Adult Mental Health Needs Assessment. It was noted that the review had included extensive consultation and had identified themes that have been used to shape the current commissioning intentions for the Clinical Commissioning Groups and the County Council.

John Linnane, Director for Public Health, added that this had been produced in the light of the Government's 'No Health without Mental Health' document which highlights the importance of tackling mental health issues, the interrelationship between mental and physical health (in particular chronic illness can lead to anxiety and depression) and the broader issues of wellbeing.

Councillor Richard Hobbs (Portfolio Holder for Community Safety) welcomed the assessment and highlighted the increasing acceptance of a link between criminal behaviour and mental health. Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care) added that mental health is important for strong viable communities and that district and boroughs play an essential role in this through many services, including sport/exercise and cultural provision and housing.

Resolved

That Cabinet approve the 2012 Adult Mental Health Needs Assessment.

7. Bus Subsidy Task and Finish Group - Final Report

Councillor John Whitehouse, Chair of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the final report of the task group established to look at the impact of changes to local bus services following the 2011/12 budget reductions.

Councillor Whitehouse commended the task and finish group for their work and for the work undertaken by officers. Councillor Whitehouse was particularly pleased at the approach of officers in fine tuning the changes, often in consultation with local members, and was of the view that this had resulted in more service for the money available than originally envisaged two years ago. The task and finish group had identified three recommendations to maintain the current level of bus services and reinstate some evening subsidy to provide new rural and inter-urban routes on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Councillor Alan Cockburn agreed that it had been necessary to take savings on evening services in order to maintain other services. Councillor Peter Butlin (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways) added that some services have carried on without the subsidy.

Cabinet thanked the Communities Overview and Scrutiny for their report and undertook to consider the recommendations as part of budget proposals for 2013/14.

Resolved

That the following recommendations from the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee's report on evening bus subsidy be considered in the budget proposals for 2013/14:

1. That there be no further reductions to the passenger transport support budget
2. That the proposal detailed in Appendix C of the Task and Finish Group report for funding a new set of Friday and Saturday evening bus services is adopted.
3. That there be an officer review of the new network 12 months after implementation.

8. Concessionary Travel – Discretionary Elements from April 2013

Councillor Peter Butlin (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways) introduced a report that set out the results of a review of concessionary travel since it took effect in April 2011 and proposed continuation of the scheme for a further period of five years. It was noted that there would be a review within this period if there are any changes to the statutory scheme.

Resolved

- 1) That the discretionary weekday travel times of 9.00am to 9.30am and 11.00pm to midnight are retained;
- 2) That the scheme is agreed for a period of five years, from April 2013 until March 2018, and that a further review of the discretionary elements is carried out during summer 2017; and
- 3) That a review of the discretionary elements is carried out sooner in the event of changes to the statutory scheme by central government.

9. Tender for a Taxi Transport Contract

Councillor Peter Butlin (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways) put forward a proposal for tendering for the taxi transport contract. The proposal was to continue with a framework contract including use of electronic auctions that has brought savings in excess of £800,000.

During discussion it was agreed that officers investigate whether other authorities are making information on tender bids public to ensure that information is not being made available that could lead to the undermining of the ability to make savings.

Resolved

- 1) That Cabinet approves proceeding with a tender for the provision of a taxi transport contract; and
- 2) That Cabinet authorises the Strategic Director of Communities to enter into a contract for the provision of taxi transport and all subsequent call-off contract, there under, on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

10. Mobile Library Service Reconfiguration

Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio Holder for Customers, Access and Property) presented proposals for reconfiguring the mobile library service to deliver positive change within a reduced budget and required budget savings of £95,000.

Councillor John Whitehouse, Chair of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reported the views expressed by the Committee, in particular that opening hours should be part of the consultation, that more weight be given to lack of access to services and rural isolation factors when determining deprivation on this issue and that the outcome of consultation come back to members for determination, rather than officers as is implied in the report.

Councillor Colin Hayfield gave his assurance that frequency of stops and when and where stops are made will be looked at and that there will be large scale consultation that will include current users.

Resolved

- 1) That Cabinet approves the strategy for reconfiguring the Mobile Library Service (MLS) as outlined in Section 2 of the report.
- 2) That Cabinet authorises the Strategic Director for Resources to prepare proposals for delivery of the mobile service using three mobile vehicles and that those proposals are reported to Cabinet for final consideration.

11. People Group, Learning and Achievement Capital Programme 2012-2013 Additional Proposals

Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Children and Schools) presented a report on proposals for capital works in schools. These works were additional to those approved in May 2012 when it was agreed that further additional projects be brought forward using the balance of resources that were unallocated in May.

During discussion Councillor Izzi Seccombe referred to the increase in number of school places that will be required as a result of major housing developments and the need to ensure S106 monies are allocated to education. Councillor John Whitehouse also referred to development in his area that indicated that could require a new school in the future which could be a preferable solution to trying to accommodate pressures now. Councillor Heather Timms gave her assurance that the longer term view was being considered and that there would be a further report on future pressure and investment in school places.

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet approves the additions of Learning and Achievement capital programme set out in Appendix A and detailed in Section 2 of the report
- (2) That Cabinet recommends to Council that a grant of £3,139,949 received from DfE for the provision of additional school places is allocated for this purpose.

12. Trading Standards Service Enforcement Policy and Civil Law Advice Policy

Councillor Richard Hobbs (Portfolio Holder for Community Safety) presented a report that set out a revised and simplified Enforcement and Civil Law Advice Policy for the Trading Standards Service.

Resolved

That Cabinet endorse the reviewed and revised Enforcement Policy and Civil Law Advice Policy.

13. Any Other Urgent Items

None

The meeting rose at 11.15 am.

..... Chair