

**Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet
held on 9 November 2017**

Present

Cabinet Members:

Councillors	Izzi Seccombe OBE	Leader of Council and Chair of Cabinet
	Peter Butlin	Deputy Leader (Finance & Property)
	Les Caborn	Adult Social Care & Health
	Jeff Clarke	Transport & Environment
	Colin Hayfield	Education and Learning
	Kam Kaur	Customer & Transformation
	Jeff Morgan	Children's Services
	Howard Roberts	Fire & Community Safety

Non-Voting Invitees:

Councillor Richard Chattaway	Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse	Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

Other Councillors:

Councillors Sarah Boad, Jonathan Chilvers, Corinne Davies, Judy Falp, John Holland, Keith Kondakor, Bill Olnor, Clive Rickhards, Alan Webb, Chris Williams

Public attendance: 25

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

None

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

Regarding agenda item 8, Local Healthwatch Service: Consultation Findings and Proposed Service Model, Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Director of Warwickshire Healthwatch.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2017 and Matters Arising

The minutes for the meeting held on 10 October 2017 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

(4) Public Speaking

Councillor Izzi Seccombe welcomed members of the public to the meeting and invited the three members of the public who had registered to speak to do so.

Councillor Jane Knight (Warwick District Council) – Having explained her role with the Early Years Action Group and Warwick District Council,

Councillor Jane Knight stressed three areas that must be considered if the proposals before Cabinet are to proceed. These are.

- Accessibility – The ability of people to access the services being delivered under the new model.
- Collaborative Integration – The need for all agencies and other bodies involved in delivery of the new model to communicate and work effectively together
- Accreditation – The services delivered must be of the highest quality.

Councillor Knight questioned whether the model proposed could be delivered within the available budget. It was noted that budgets for other services such as Health Visitors and the Family Nurse Partnership are being cut as is Smart Start funding. In addition, the extension of the age range from 0-5 to 0-19 may also serve to dilute the services it is possible to deliver to the very young. Councillor Knight concluded by asking the County Council to add funds to sustain the service for an additional two years.

Sarah Frankland read a statement from Jessica Timmis who was unable to attend the meeting.

The following is a summary of the issues Jessica raised in her statement:

- Jessica's Children's Centre had proved a vital resource and had helped maintain good physical and mental health for herself and her family.
- During the early months a mother goes through a lot of changes - physical, emotional, social and financial changes. The health of mothers is of paramount importance in the good development of a baby and research regarding attachment reveals that if things go wrong at this time it can have a profound effect on a child in later life.
- The Children's Centres' cuts will mean a huge increase in crisis intervention bills.
- Mothering can be an isolating, challenging and terrifying without good support. This needs to be local, particularly for mothers who are not physically able to drive.
- Mental and wellbeing support is crucial at the initial and vulnerable stages. Signposting to toddler and other groups is not appropriate during this vulnerable stage where they might not offer the specific services found in Children's Centres.
- Mothers seek help for a range of complex issues that may not be picked up without the haven of the children centre.
- The cuts are hitting those with the least energy and time to protest against it. Many will feel too drained to attend meetings or fill in a complicated form on line.
- The strength of opposition to the cuts is represented by the many people who have added their comments to the 'life-line' banner (displayed outside Shire Hall prior to the meeting)

Tim Naylor began by stating that he believed that the County Council had already decided how it was going to proceed with the proposals on the table. Having informed the meeting that he had been a Councillor for 16 years and a school governor for 30 years he made the following points.

- The consultation period for the 0-5 redesign should not have been held over the summer holiday period.
- With increases in child poverty, the use of food banks, childhood mental health issues, children with special educational needs and children who do not have English as a first language there has never been so much need for the support currently provided by Children's Centres.
- It is recognised that the principal driver for the service changes is to save money.
- If the Children's Centres close a wealth of experience and skill will be lost. Outcomes will be poorer and the uptake of services will decrease.
- The key to securing successful outcomes for people is early intervention. In the long term, widespread problems will increase.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe thanked the speakers for their contributions.

2. 0-5 Redesign of Children's Centres

Councillor Jeff Morgan (Portfolio Holder for Children's Services) introduced this item by explaining that the papers and the proposals for service changes within it were the result of a great deal of hard work. Councillors from all groups had been involved in developing the 0-5 agenda especially through Smart Start.

The conclusion from the work undertaken was that the current arrangements for Children's Centres are unsustainable. There is a need to improve services and target them on those people who need them the most. One concern has been that many of the most vulnerable families will avoid using Children's Centres.

The meeting was reminded that the report before it is not simply about the closure of Children's Centres. Rather it sets out proposals for the delivery of good services moving forward. For example by taking in-house the 38 Family Support Workers the funding for these workers can be made more secure than it is at present.

Members were reminded of the extent of the consultation exercise that had been undertaken. Public consultation meetings, the use of an online questionnaire, informal drop-ins at Children's Centres, phone calls, focus groups and staff engagement roadshows had all served to attract a significant response and body of evidence.

Councillor Morgan then explained the proposals as set out in the published report concluding that there is a possibility that the number of Children's Centres that will have to close may be small. The next stage will be to discuss service delivery with providers with a view to new contracts starting from September 2019.

It was noted that the model proposed has been introduced elsewhere. In Essex the number of centres had been reduced by around half but the number of families being supported had increased by 22%.

Councillor Chris Williams (Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee) explained that on 7 November the committee had met specifically to consider this matter. He then introduced the eight recommendations for Cabinet that had come from that meeting. Councillor Jeff Morgan thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its work and proposed a further (7th)

recommendation for Cabinet that the committee's recommendations be accepted. This was agreed.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe reiterated that Warwickshire County Council is not unique in reviewing its Children's Centres. The Council has an agreed budget and savings plan and these must be adhered to as much as possible. In addition there is a growing recognition that it is the services being delivered rather than the buildings they are delivered from that are key to successful outcomes for children and their families. Councillor Izzi Seccombe then asked elected members for their contributions.

Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio for Education and Learning) stated that he had visited a number of schools in his area and had noted that some Children's Centres are open for only one day a week. He asked if this was a good use of resources and whether the schools to which they are attached could not make better use of the buildings. This would not necessarily mean the exclusive use by one or other party but shared use to optimise the asset. It was also explained that in North Warwickshire outreach work has developed automatically reflecting the rural nature of the area.

Councillor Alan Webb read out a statement from Councillor Matt Western. Within that statement the following points were highlighted.

- Warwickshire is a prosperous county with income levels and life expectancy above those found nationally.
- The services provided by the County Council have been excellent but are now facing huge pressures due to reductions in government funding.
- Funding for Children's Centres in Warwickshire has been reduced in recent years. A further reduction of £1.12m is currently proposed.
- The proposals will result in the closure of a number of Children's Centres.
- The hub and spoke proposal will see unqualified staff attempting to deliver services.
- Funding for services will become blurred by the extension of the age range to 19.
- The Council would not consider closing primary schools or FE colleges.
- Warwickshire has seen an increase in demand for mental health care.
- There is no evidence in the report that alternative funding streams have been considered. The Council should defer making a decision until such time as these alternatives have been explored.
- The County Council has considerable reserves and should use these to support the Children's Centres.

In response to Councillor Western's proposals for the use of reserves Councillor Izzi Seccombe observed that this would only delay the decision. The Council, she added, needs to avoid stagnation and should look for new ways of delivering better services.

Councillor John Holland considered that not enough has been done around property and property management. More could be done with other agencies to identify ways of optimising the use of property assets. This could build on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board which is looking to identify opportunities for greater collaboration between agencies.

Councillor Bill Olnier called for greater investment to be made in the current Children's Centres and suggested that it was unlikely that all of the Cabinet would be supportive of the proposals.

Councillor Corinne Davies expressed her support for the Children's Centres and concerns that the consultation exercise was flawed. She added that in her view the 0-19 budget remained unclear and asked that consideration be given to the use of reserves to support the Centres.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers (Leader of the Green Group) stated that in his opinion there is no need to cut Children's Centres but there is a need to review how services are delivered. In order to do this a robust transition plan is required.

Councillor Keith Kondakor stated that people in Warwickshire value Children's Centres more than they do having each council having a different waste collection system. If savings could be made through a combined approach to waste management this could be used for services such as Children's Centres.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) emphasised the importance of the Smart Start Strategy in guiding the funding and delivery of 0-5 children's services. It was recognised that some children's centres are underutilised with limited opening hours or closure forced upon them by maintenance issues. A transition fund will need to be set aside using whatever resources have been identified for this. Clarification was sought over how much money is available for transition. In addition Councillor Jerry Roodhouse asked for clarification as to whether the 38 Family Support Worker posts were in addition to the in-house Family Support Worker Service or whether they would address gaps currently within the in-house service as a result of vacancies. Similarly clarification was sought on whether the mental health leads within the FSW service were additional or existing. It was agreed that a briefing note would be sent to Councillor Roodhouse on the matter.

Councillor Clive Rickhards stated that he could see little evidence in the report of where improvements to the services delivered will be made. .

Councillor Richard Chattaway (Leader of the Labour Group) thanked officers for their efforts to date recognising that their work had not been easy. He stated that he considered the consultation exercise to have been robust but challenged whether people's comments had been listened to. To illustrate this he cited the case of Nuneaton where despite strong support for Abbey Children's Centre (in an area of high deprivation) the decision had been made to close this in favour of Riversley. In response Councillor Jeff Morgan informed Cabinet that Riversley had been selected owing to its central location, better facilities and proximity to health services.

Councillor Chattaway stated that there is no clarity over the budgets for each Children's Centre and suggested that there remain a number of challenges around integration that should be addressed before the changes are introduced.

Councillor Sarah Boad noted that her local Children's Centre at Lillington is open for only 21 hours per week. Greater use would be made of it if it was open for 40 hours.

Councillor Les Caborn (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health) pointed out that the process leading up to the meeting had commenced in 2015 and had involved many parties. The issue of service review is about more than Children's

Centres. It concerns the MASH, CAMHS, Health Visitors, Midwifery and the entire 0-5 agenda.

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property) suggested that to use reserves to prop up services for one year would be negligent. He added that broadening the service to the 0-19 age group would not be detrimental. 0-5 would be an integral part of this.

Councillor Jeff Morgan summed up by emphasising that 0-5 services will not be diluted by the 0-19 agenda. The introduction of other healthcare services will see them bring their own budgets. He reiterated that reserves should not be used to support the current arrangements adding that it will now be possible to provide more targeted services.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the consultation process and analysis attached set out in Appendix 1 of the report and the Equality Impact Assessment set out in Appendix 3 of the report.
- 2) Agrees that the Strategic Director for People be authorised to take any necessary steps to implement the Hybrid Model and the recommended approach to transitional arrangements outlined in Section 5 and detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, on terms and conditions satisfactory to the Joint Managing Director (Resources);
- 3) Agrees that the Strategic Director for People be authorised to arrange with the exception of Atherstone, Stockingford and St. Michael's, the transition of 2HELP places from the proposed Children and Family Centres to the Private, Voluntary and Independent Nursery Sector on terms and conditions satisfactory to the Joint Managing Director (Resources);
- 4) Agrees that the Strategic Director for People and the Joint Managing Director (Resources) are authorised to terminate the lease agreements with the current providers of Kenilworth (Bertie Road), Warwick and Whitnash Children Centres and to arrange the responsibility for the day to day operation of the buildings being assumed by the Maintained Nursery Schools;
- 5) Agrees that the Strategic Director for People and the Joint Managing Director (Resources) be authorised to develop and implement the process for the reassignment of sites that are no longer designated as Children and Family Centres; and
- 6) Agrees that the timescales for implementation as outlined in Section 6 be approved.
- 7) Agrees that the eight recommendations agreed by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 November 2017 be endorsed. These are:

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (a) Welcomes the increase in the number of proposed Children and Family Centres in the revised proposals to Cabinet from 12 to 14 and the adoption of a transitional approach to implementation of the new Hybrid Model as outlined in the report.
- (b) Welcomes the prioritisation of Family Support which has to date through the Family Support Worker model been successful in improving outcomes for local children and families and the proposal for an integrated Family Support Work service as set out in the report to Cabinet.
- (c) Asks that Cabinet ensures that those providers operating the 14 Children and Family Centres clearly outline how they will successfully deliver outreach services from the list of 16 Outreach Centres identified at 1.4 (b) of the report to Cabinet.
- (d) Asks that Cabinet ensures that all new providers operating Children and Family Centres in rural areas supply detailed proposals outlining how they will provide services for those 'hard to reach' families within their geographical areas.
- (e) Asks that Cabinet ensures that (i) ongoing progress reports are provided to CYPOS in respect of the 'milestones' as outlined in the timetable at 6.4 of the report to Cabinet and (ii) that if these proposals are accepted by Cabinet detailed implementation plans are brought forward to CYPOS for consideration when available.
- (f) Asks Cabinet to ensure that, prior to any closure of the 11 sites that will no longer be designated as Children's Centres or as providing Children's Centre services as identified at 1.4 (d) of the report to Cabinet, regard will be given to current usage, provision and proximity to the proposed Children and Family Centres in respect of identified outreach needs.
- (g) Asks Cabinet to review the present arrangements around local advisory boards to ensure greater inclusivity, local involvement and accountability moving forward.
- (h) Asks that Cabinet ensure there is a quality assurance framework within the commissioning process, which includes all safeguarding matters.

3. One Organisational Plan Quarterly Progress Report: April-September 2017

Councillor Peter Butlin welcomed the new approach to reporting and then proceeded to summarise the key elements of the report. Regarding the revenue budget an underspend of £45000 was noted. This is well within the 2% tolerance level. Overspends have been reported by the Children and Families, Education and Learning and Fire and Rescue services. Within the savings plan an overall shortfall of £1.433 million is forecast. Within Children and Families the failure to meet targets is largely attributable to a shortage of foster carers. Within Adult Social Care further reductions in transport costs need to be identified.

Councillor Bill Olnier asked, given the level of reserves held by the County Council (£125 million) if some of this could not be used to support Children's Centres.

Councillor Butlin reminded Cabinet of his previous answer to this suggestion provided under item 2.

Referring to page 6 of 15 Councillor Jerry Roodhouse highlighted the number of people killed or seriously injured on Warwickshire's roads as being an area of concern. In addition the level of re-offending by young people, whilst shown as better than the national average should be better. Finally, Councillor Roodhouse observed the continuing issues with the highways maintenance contract where targets are not being met and constituents are increasingly having cause to complain. In response, Councillor Jeff Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment) stated that the Council's Road Safety Team had recently won a prestigious award as the most improved team in the country. Cabinet welcomed this and commended the team. The meeting was then informed that the highways maintenance contract was at 90% of target.

Councillor Keith Kondakor expressed the view that resources are being wasted. In particular he was concerned that there remain six separate waste authorities in Warwickshire and that there is no clarity over the future of the Bermuda Connectivity project. In response to the waste management arrangements Cabinet was informed that a report is to be presented to Cabinet at its meeting in December.

Councillor Kondakor welcomed the proposal to introduce web streaming adding that this can be used for meetings (eg web conference and briefings) other than those of members.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the progress on the delivery of the One Organisational Plan (2017-20) as at the end of September 2017 as summarised in Sections 1 to 3 of the report and detailed in Appendix A of the report;
- b) Would wish to remind Corporate Board and Heads of Service of the importance of delivering a balanced budget both collectively and individually and that proposals for action to bring those budgets overspending back on track should be discussed with Portfolio Holders as a matter of urgency;
- c) Approves the net transfer of £0.469 million from Business Unit reserves to support the delivery of services in future years, as outlined in section 3.2 of the report;
- d) Approves the revised capital payments totals and the revised financing of the 2017/18 capital programme as detailed in the table in section 3.4 of the report; and
- e) Approves the increase in the cost of the refurbishment of Old Shire Hall of £0.936 million to meet the requirements of being a commercial events venue funded from revenue/capital resources previously approved for Property Services and improving the customer experience in Customer Services, as detailed in section 3.4 of the report.

4. Education and Learning (Schools) Capital Programme 2017-18 and Approval of Statutory Proposals

Councillor Colin Hayfield introduced the report explaining the purpose behind each section. Referencing paragraph 1.3 Councillor Keith Kondakor highlighted the pressure building for secondary school places as the bulge in the number of pupils currently at primary level moves upwards. Outward migration from Coventry has left 10000 surplus places in the city but has added to pressures in Warwickshire.

The proposal to build a new school in Weddington was welcomed but it was suggested that residents will need to be assured that this will not result in the existing school closing.

Resolved

That Cabinet agrees:

- 1) That the following proposals for prescribed alterations are approved:
 - To enlarge the premises of Newdigate Primary School on a phased basis with effect from 1st September 2018;
 - To enlarge the premises of High Meadow Infant School and extend the upper age range of the School by 4 years on a phased basis with effect from 1st September 2019 so that it becomes a primary school with effect from September 2022; and
 - To enlarge the premises of Michael Drayton Junior School on a phased basis with effect from 1st September 2018.
- 2) That Council is recommended to approve that the sum of £14,956,085 is added to the capital programme to deliver the schemes outlined in Section 3 of the report; and
- 3) Subject to Council agreeing to add the schemes to the capital programme, that the Joint Managing Director (Communities) is authorised to invite tenders and enter into the appropriate contracts on terms and conditions acceptable to the Joint Managing Director (Resources) for these schemes.

5. Adoption Central England (ACE) - Go Live

Councillor Jeff Morgan explained that this was a good news story. The government has encouraged local authorities to work together on adoption to share expertise and for ACE, Warwickshire will be the lead council. Members welcomed the initiative but expressed the view that it should not lessen the Council's ability to support its own clients. Officers explained that the report before Cabinet marked the end of an 18 month journey adding that they were very confident that they could

deliver whilst remaining one of the top authorities in the country for adoption services. An annual report on progress will be produced and circulated to members.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the outcomes of the engagement and consultation and the resulting equality impact assessment;
- 2) Agrees that the Council enter into a partnership agreement with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Coventry City Council and Worcestershire County Council for Warwickshire County Council as host. This will be to undertake the delivery of each authority's adoption service and some of its Special Guardianship support services as stated in the agreed ACE Service Specification through Adoption Central England (ACE) on terms and conditions satisfactory to the Joint Managing Director (Resources); and
- 3) Agrees the provisional financial proposals as outlined in section 9 of the report to fund ACE and authorises the Head of Finance in consultation with the Strategic Director for People Group to agree the final financial arrangements including the value of the total cash limit.

6. Review of Concessionary Transport Scheme

Councillor Jeff Clarke explained that a good response had been made to the consultation exercise carried out as part of the review. Requests had been made for rail travel to be included in the scheme but it was explained that this was not possible. Councillor Keith Kondakor stressed the importance of concessionary travel in rural areas and to town centres. Reduced services make it more difficult for people to travel. He noted that as the County Council provides a subsidy to London Midland for rail services there should be some scope to negotiate with that company.

In response to a question from Councillor Sarah Boad the meeting was informed that that the County Council pays the bus operators an agreed fare for each route based on an average. The length of the actual journey by the passholder does not matter.

Councillor Judy Falp highlighted the importance of public transport in reducing loneliness.

Resolved

That Cabinet agrees that:

- 1) the scheme remains unchanged, with discretionary weekday travel times for Warwickshire residents starting from 9.00am and finishing at midnight on weekdays, with the exception of the services described in paragraph 14.3 of the report which can be boarded before 9.00am;

- 2) the scheme is agreed for a further period of five years, from April 2018 until March 2023, and that a further review of the discretionary elements is carried out during summer 2022; and
- 3) a review of the discretionary elements is carried out sooner in the event of changes to the statutory scheme by central government.

7. Electric Vehicle Recharging Strategy

Following an introduction by Councillor Jeff Clarke who explained the importance of Warwickshire in terms of the motor industry, Councillor Keith Kondakor welcomed the strategy adding that the County Council should consider using electric pool cars. He stated that a number of myths need to be dispelled regarding electric vehicle charging eg that the electrical supply grid will not be able to cope at peak charging times. Cabinet was informed that plans are being developed to install electric charging points in the Barrack Street car park.

Councillor Bill Olnor welcomed the strategy emphasising the potential role of electrically driven delivery vans.

Councillor Colin Hayfield suggested that the rate of change of technology means that the strategy will soon need to be reviewed. He added that with emerging local plans district and borough councils should take the opportunity to make sure charging infrastructure is included in new developments.

In response to a series of questions presented by Councillor Sarah Boad, Cabinet was informed that there remain a number of obstacles to be overcome.

It was agreed that copies of the strategy should be sent to town and parish councils.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse suggested that as the County Council is leading on the one public estate initiative this should be referenced in the strategy.

Councillor Richard Chattaway observed that the County Council could consider the use of electric buses. In response to this Cabinet was informed that a trial route was being developed.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Endorses the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2017-2026; and
- 2) Recommends that the Council adds the Strategy as an addendum to the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026.

8. Local Healthwatch Service: Consultation Findings and Proposed Service Model

Following a brief introduction from Councillor Les Caborn, members welcomed the report.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Agree findings of the consultation process which will inform the Local Healthwatch re-tender;
- 2) Approve the principles of the new service, in order to proceed with the procurement of the new Local Healthwatch Service; and
- 3) That the Joint Managing Director (Communities) be authorised to commence an appropriate procurement process and award any contracts for the service on terms and conditions satisfactory to Joint Managing Director (Resources).

9. Warwickshire Unauthorised Encampments Protocol 2017

Councillor Jeff Clarke informed that the meeting that the protocol was the result of an initiative undertaken by the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner. Members welcomed the document and agreed that copies of it should be sent to local MPs and to town and parish councils.

Regarding the two emergency stopping places proposed for the county the view was expressed that these are taking too long to develop. In response the meeting was informed that one is almost complete, the other delayed by legal complications.

Resolved

That Cabinet adopt the Warwickshire Protocol 2017 as the Council's overarching approach to managing unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller Encampments.

10. Loneliness Advisory Group

Members welcomed the report agreeing that the group should comprise seven members.

Resolved

That Cabinet

- 1) agrees the terms of reference for the Loneliness Advisory Group as set out in the appendix of the report and
- 2) agrees the group will comprise seven members

11. Establishment of ESPO Trading Company

Councillor Peter Butlin explained that the County Council is one of six shareholder authorities in ESPO. The development of a trading company will open up opportunities to explore other markets.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the decision of the ESPO Management Committee, having reviewed the detailed business case and other documents, to recommend each of the six member authorities to establish a new trading company;
- b) Gives approval to the establishment of a new trading company, 'ESPO Trading Limited' on the basis outlined in this report and that the Joint Managing Director (Resources) be authorised to agree the terms of and sign the necessary documentation to give effect to this decision;
- c) Notes that the Board of Directors of the trading company will include five officers, acting as Executive Directors made up as follows:
 - (i) Three officers from ESPO being the following office holders:
 - Director of ESPO
 - Deputy Director and Chief Commercial Officer
 - Assistant Director of Finance and IT
 - (ii) The Director of Corporate Resources (Leicestershire County Council) or his nominee;
 - (iii) An officer nominated by the other Shareholder (member authorities) of ESPO;
- d) Gives approval for arrangements to be put in place to indemnify the ESPO and other Council officers in discharging their role as Executive Directors of the Company;
- e) Notes that the Shareholders (member authorities) may nominate up to two Non-Executive Directors to serve on the Board of the Company;
- f) Notes that each of the six member authorities will be equal shareholders in the new Company and that the shareholder representative on the new company will be one elected member from each member authority drawn from the membership of the ESPO Management Committee; and
- g) Notes that the shareholder representatives (Elected Members) will be responsible for taking strategic decisions and agreeing the Annual Business Plan for the Company.

12. Receipt of Report of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

Following a brief introduction by Councillor Jeff Morgan, Beate Wagner (Head of Children and Families) explained that the County Council had been following guidelines from the Fostering Network on the payment of allowances. Foster Parents are provided with a general allowance which they can control. Allowances in Warwickshire are above the national rate and it was considered appropriate that the cost of taking a child to school should be covered by that allowance. The complaint was made by foster parents who considered this not to be the case. The

complaint went through the normal County Council complaints procedure but with no resolution ended up with the Ombudsman.

Cabinet was informed that the decision made against the Council could have implications for the level of freedom the Council can give Foster Carers regarding the use of allowances. There will also be implications for the Council budget as further payments will almost certainly need to be made.

Resolved

That Cabinet approve the action plan, following the publication of the Report of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman on 11 October 2017, as outlined in paragraph 3 of the report.

13. Any Urgent Items

None

The meeting rose at 16.00.

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Chair