

**Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet
held on 25 January 2018**

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, Neil Dirveiks, Judy Falp, Pete Gilbert, Clare Golby, Andy Jenns, Keith Kondakor, Caroline Phillips, Wallace Redford, Andy Wright, Alan Webb and Chris Williams

Public attendance: 1 (Councillor David Humphries. Leader of North Warwickshire Borough Council)

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received for Councillor Bill Olnier who has been experiencing a period of ill health. Cabinet extended their best wishes to Councillor Olnier for a rapid recovery.

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

None

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017 and Matters Arising

The minutes for the meeting held on 7 December 2017 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

(4) Public Speaking

None

2. One Organisational Plan Quarterly Progress Report April – December 2017

Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) introduced the published report explaining that the Council is currently performing at an “amber level”. Referring to the overspends recorded on page 6 of the report it was explained that these will be addressed as part of the budget setting process. Councillor Keith Kondakor expressed concern over reported underspends on transport related projects. These, he suggested, were indicative of projects not progressing possibly through a lack of staff resource. Delays, he added, could end up costing the Council money in the longer term.

In response to a question from Councillor Keith Kondakor regarding cycle racing in Warwickshire, Cabinet was informed of work to secure more visits by national cycle races to Warwickshire in the future. This news was welcomed by members.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the progress on the delivery of the One Organisational Plan (2017-20) as at the end of December 2017 as summarised in Sections 1 to 3 of the report and detailed in Appendix A.
- 2) Wishes to remind Corporate Board and Heads of Service of the importance of delivering a balanced budget both collectively and individually and that any proposal for action to bring those budgets overspending back on track should be discussed with Portfolio Holders as a matter of urgency.
- 3) Approves the net transfer of £1.581 million to Business Unit reserves to support the delivery of services in future years, as outlined in section 3.2.
- 4) Agrees to the proposed use of some of the forecast underspend in Other Services as set out in paragraphs 3.1.4 and 3.1.5.
- 5) 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.

3. 2018/19 Refresh of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2020 – Updated Information

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader – Finance and Property) explained that the report before Cabinet provided an indication of how the budget would be set. The ability to increase the tax base by 1% was noted and in this the 1st year of a 3 year plan it is necessary to adjust the budget to reflect changes that have occurred. Councillor Alan Webb, whilst welcoming the increase in the tax base noted that the pressure for services was increasing and that this would significantly increase costs. An example given was that of waste. Councillor Butlin explained that he was aware of the issue around waste stating that it will be considered as part of the budget setting process.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the latest resource and spending information and the impact on the emerging budget proposals.
- 2) Notes the Head of Finance's risk assessment on the level of general reserves, as detailed in Appendix A.
- 3) Agrees, in light of the information provided, their 2018/19 budget resolutions for recommendation to Council on 6 February 2018.
- 4) Authorises the Head of Finance to incorporate the outstanding resource information into the budget resolutions to be considered by Council on 6 February 2018.
- 5) Recommends Council, in the event of final central government funding allocations and levels of business rates being above or below the provisional settlement level, approve that the variation be managed by an adjustment to the Medium Term Contingency.

4. Home to School Transport Policy

Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning) informed Cabinet that this matter had been considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 January 2018. The committee had concluded that routes should be reassessed in the light of concerns raised.

Cabinet was informed that the policy review had been subject to an extensive consultation exercise and that considerable effort had been made in the analysis of responses to it.

In the light of the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and further reflection on the consultation responses Councillor Hayfield tabled replacement wording to recommendation 2. This states,

“Having regard to the concerns raised by the consultation exercise, by Overview and Scrutiny and by local members, Cabinet believes that it would be appropriate to reconsider the re-classified walking routes as outlined In the Cabinet paper”.

The meeting was informed that concern had been expressed over changes to arrangements for passenger assistants on buses. With regards to assistance for learners over the age of 18 Councillor Hayfield stated, “We have engaged representatives of the Warwickshire Parent Carer Forum on the development of SEN aspects with the Home to School Transport Policy. It is fair to say that on the matter of assistance for learners aged 19 and over, there are differing views. There is scope within the policy to allow for further discussion on how this aspect of the policy is applied, such as the process for whether other members of the household can provide transport assistance. We will work with the Parent Carer Forum to develop this administrative process. We are committed to ensuring that transport does not prove a barrier to education”.

It was noted that the changes to 19-25 transport had been imposed by government but would lead to greater expenditure by the County Council.

The concerns raised previously by Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) over the transition period for Special Education Need pupils were acknowledged. It was stressed that Cabinet was mindful of the need for a cross-departmental working approach to be taken with stakeholders and parents/carers.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse welcomed discussions regarding 19-25 as these are required around legal aspects of the service. With greater demands on resources future years' budgets will need to take account of all aspects of 19-25 SEN transport and not simply the provision of buses. It was agreed that feedback on further discussions will be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet was informed that cameras on buses can be used to record parking infringements outside schools. This information can be forwarded to the police for action as appropriate.

Councillor Andy Jenns and Councillor Andy Wright welcomed the proposal to review the walking routes observing that this was evidence that the Council does listen to and take account of people's views.

Councillor Les Caborn (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health) observed that young people's transition into adulthood now commences earlier than 16 years.

It was noted that the criteria for determining safe routes to school had been set many years ago and that traffic levels and driving styles had changed in that time. It was important that they now be reviewed.

Councillor Neil Dirveiks welcomed the proposal for independent travel training.

Resolved

1. That Cabinet endorses the following revisions to the Home to School Transport policy:
 - a) That from 1st September 2019 the definition of "nearest qualifying school" is altered to include only the school closest to the pupil's home by the shortest route with a pupil place available, in line with statutory requirements.
 - b) That from 1st September 2019 pupils with special educational needs and / or disabilities living within statutory walking distance receive transport assistance only if attending the nearest suitable school with a place available, and assessed as being unable to make the journey without transport assistance, even if accompanied.
 - c) That from 1st September 2018 free transport is no longer provided on medical grounds for students aged 16-19.

- d) That from 1st September 2018 passenger assistants are provided only on vehicles carrying pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan, or in other very exceptional circumstances.
 - e) That the Independent Travel Training Scheme is included in the revised policy.
 - f) That from 1st September 2018 free transport is provided where necessary for learners aged 19-25 with special educational needs and / or disabilities in line with requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014.
2. Having regard to the concerns raised by the consultation exercise, by Overview and Scrutiny and by local members, Cabinet believes that it would be appropriate to reconsider the re-classified walking routes as outlined In the Cabinet paper.

5. Schools National Funding Formula

Councillor Colin Hayfield summarised the key aspects of the published report. The meeting was informed that overall Warwickshire will receive additional funds but these will not benefit all schools. Discussions had been held around whether funds should be moved between the Dedicated Schools Grants notional blocks (See para 1.1 of the report). School's Forum had elected not to move 0.5% of the Schools Block Funding to the High Needs Block. The recommendations before Cabinet reflected the preferences of the School's Forum.

In response to a question from Councillor Judy Falp the meeting was informed that finance support in the form of advice and guidance is available to schools during times of transition and at other times. No direct financial support is available.

Councillor Sarah Boad requested that easily navigable information focusing on local schools be provided to members. It was agreed that this should be sent to members.

Resolved

That Cabinet agrees to:

- 1) Implement the National Funding Formula at school level for 2018/19.
- 2) In doing so, agree that the Minimum Funding Guarantee should be set at +0.5%.
- 3) Not take forward the transfer of 0.5% of the Schools Block funding to the High Needs Block funding and note that a review of the High Needs Block will be a central part of the review of DSG.
- 4) Support the view of the School's Forum that any Schools Block funding not needed to deliver the "hard" National Funding Formula is set aside to meet the additional costs of growth in pupil numbers/schools during 2018/19.

6. Early Years Funding Formula 2018/2019

Councillor Colin Hayfield explained that under the latest proposals from government Warwickshire will see approximately a £1m reduction in its early years funding. The maintained nurseries in Warwickshire have been classified as either good or outstanding and there is a need to ensure they have a sustainable future.

Councillor Caroline Phillips highlighted the proposed reduction of £15k funding for a nursery in an area of high need within her division. Her concerns focused on the funding of services into the future.

Reservations were expressed over the outcome of the School's Forum Working Group. Members regretted the decision of the group not to direct more funds to high need groups.

It was agreed that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to review early years provision with particular reference to the impact of take-up of 30 hours childcare and on quality control.

Members requested and it was agreed that in the light of their concerns over reductions in funding, that the Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning write a letter to the Secretary of State for Education outlining those concerns.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the allocation of:
 - A universal rate to providers of £3.96 per hour for 2018/19
 - A deprivation rate of £0.53 per hour for eligible children for 2018/19
- 2) Notes the reduction in the funding for centrally provided early years services to £0.21 per hour for 2018/19 and that a review of early years funding will be a central part of the review of DSG.
- 3) Agrees that the Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning should write to the Secretary of State for Education to express Cabinet's concerns over reductions in early years funding.

7. School Admissions - 2019/20

Following introductory comments by Councillor Colin Hayfield, Councillor Sarah Boad stated that she welcomed the reintroduction of the requirement for the formal acceptance of school places adding that that the system currently in use had led to confusion and upset for many. With the replacement system it will be necessary to ensure that parents/carers are clear that they must accept the place when it is offered. Failure to do so could mean they lose it. Members agreed that offers should be followed up to make sure of this.

In response to a request from Councillor Keith Kondakor it was agreed that the school list should include those new ones that are scheduled to open in the next two or so years.

It was confirmed that all children in Warwickshire do get offered a school place although this may not be their first choice.

Resolved

That Cabinet agrees that:

- 1) The 2019 entry Coordinated Schemes as set out at Appendices A1 – A4 are adopted.
- 2) The in-year admissions process for entry during the 2019/20 academic year is adopted for all schools where Warwickshire County Council is the admission authority, and other admission authorities as agreed as set out at Appendix B.
- 3) The Joint Managing Director for Communities be authorised to agree the published admission numbers for community and voluntary controlled schools in Warwickshire.

8. Adult Transport Policy

Councillor Les Caborn introduced this item emphasising the need for an equitable transport policy. There are around 400 people/families across Warwickshire whose needs will be subject to individual assessment. Through this the best and fairest transport solution can be identified. Transport training will be introduced thus helping to increase client independence. It had been noted that the easy read version of the consultation document had been well received.

Councillor Neil Dirveiks cautioned that clients run the risk of being lost to the service during the transition from childhood to adulthood. He asked that resources be made available to help avoid this. In response Cabinet was informed that officers from the Communities Group and People Group will work closely together and with clients and carers to ensure a smooth transition.

Resolved

That Cabinet approve the proposed Adult Transport Policy for implementation by the County Council with effect from 1st April 2018 for new customers, and with effect from their first reassessment or review after 1st April 2018 for existing customers.

9. Delivery of the Warwickshire Energy Plan: Establishing a Collective Fuel Switching Scheme

Councillor Peter Butlin provided an introduction to this report explaining how access to cheaper energy tariffs and assist many of the more vulnerable people of Warwickshire.

Councillor Richard Chattaway welcomed the initiative but expressed his regret that it had not been possible to pursue the previously discussed scheme to establish an energy company. He asked that the effectiveness of the new switching scheme be

reviewed in May 2019 (once it had had time to become established). In response it was agreed that the Communities and Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake this review jointly.

Councillor Alan Webb suggested that the scheme be clearly branded as a local authority initiative as people will be prepared to trust this. Councillor Keith Kondakor called for more advice to be made available on the benefits of switching and on the pursuit of energy efficiency and how to undertake it.

Cabinet was informed that the decision not to proceed with the establishment of an energy company was based on concerns over the level of risk to the authority and over the ability to attract sufficient customers to ensure viability.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Authorises that for an initial two year trial period Warwickshire County Council work with iChoosr to deliver a collective fuel switching scheme to households (gas and electricity) across Warwickshire.
- 2) Authorises up to £55k p.a. of the County Energy Plan monies be allocated to cover costs to develop three promotional campaigns a year for two years aimed at enrolling and registering sufficient household gas and electricity accounts across Warwickshire to cover implementation costs. If any surplus were received this would go towards providing a registration & energy efficiency advice service for people needing assistance such as those without access to the internet, plus additional promotional activity for the next campaign.
- 3) Authorises the Joint Managing Director (Resources) to enter into:-
 - (i) any discussions which he considers necessary including investigating the delivery of the scheme in partnership with Coventry City Council and the Warwickshire District and Borough Councils.
 - (ii) any arrangements which he considers necessary (and on acceptable terms and conditions) to give effect to the scheme referred to above including any partnership arrangements.
- 4) Notes that a review will be carried out on the experience of each campaign and reported on at the end of the first year to determine the future life of the scheme.
- 5) Authorises the carry forward of the remainder of the Warwickshire Energy Plan monies to deliver three campaigns per year for the proposed 'Switch and Save' scheme. The end of year report will include recommendations for spending these and they will depend on the successful performance of the preceding campaigns.

10. Any Urgent Items

None

11. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

EXEMPT ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE (PURPLE PAPERS)

12. Exempt Minutes of the Meeting of 7 December 2017

The exempt minutes from the 7 December 2017 meeting were agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair.

13. Corporate Review of Traded Services

Councillor Kam Kaur explained the background to the published exempt report. Cabinet was informed of the drivers behind the review of traded services.

Resolved

As per the exempt minutes.

The meeting rose at 14.49.

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Chair