

**Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet
held on 7 March 2019**

Present:

Cabinet Members:

Councillors	Izzi Seccombe OBE	Leader of Council and Chair of Cabinet
	Peter Butlin	Deputy Leader (Finance and Property)
	Les Caborn	Adult Social Care & Health
	Jeff Clarke	Transport & Planning
	Andy Crump	Fire & Rescue and Community Safety
	Colin Hayfield	Education and Learning
	Jeff Morgan	Children's Services
	Dave Reilly	Environment and Heritage & Culture

Non-Voting Invitees:

Councillor Richard Chattaway Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Sarah Boad (attending for Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group)

Other Councillors:

Councillors Judy Falp, Jenny Fradgley, Clare Golby, Keith Kondakor, Bill Olnor, Dave Parsons, Wallace Redford, Kate Rolfe and Alan Webb

Public attendance:

12

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Councillor Kam Kaur - Portfolio Holder for Customer & Transformation
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse – Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

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

None

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2019 and Matters Arising

The minutes for the meeting held on 14 February 2019 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

(4) Public Speaking

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet) welcomed four members of the public who wished to address Cabinet on matters pertaining to agenda item 2, "Approval to Submit Funding Bids to the Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund".

Mr Richard Thomas made the following points:

- The Stratford South Western Relief Road (SWRR) will not be delivered and therefore nor will the Long Marston Garden Village. This will not please the government.
- For planning permission to be granted the Stratford on Avon District Council Core Strategy will need to be revised. The SWRR proposal is in contravention of at least eight paragraphs of the Core Strategy.
- An environmentally sustainable set of transport infrastructures with long term ambitions is required for Stratford-upon-Avon and Long Marston.
- Decision makers have not acted for two years. It is doubtful if either of the two alternatives can be delivered on time with 1300 residents and significant consultees watching closely.
- Warwickshire County Council should force a rethink of the scheme by not applying for the funding.

Mr Roger Hollerton stated:

- The proposal for improvements on the A5 and that for the SWRR are starkly contrasting. The A5 is an important transport corridor that is widely accepted to be in need of improvement. The SWRR is an unbuilt 3km road over a flood plain that would connect no strategic points in Stratford's road network. It is proposed by a developer, to be built by a civil engineering contractor with Warwickshire County Council as the client. It has already attracted significant opposition.
- The design life of the road is 100-150 years.
- Some elected members have privately declared that the proposed new road will have outlived its usefulness in a handful of years. This brings a reputational risk to the Council as it will be seen as a "white elephant".
- The report references "wider strategic aspirations for the A5". This would not apply to the SWRR.
- The County Council has sought to protect itself from risk and has an agreement with CALA Homes for a bond. In practice, however, no project is without cost growth and any contractor will be indifferent to any bond arrangement that might exist with CALA. Any doubts held by County Councillors should lead to the rejection of the proposal for the new road.
- The SWRR plugs a planning hole created by Stratford upon Avon District Council.

- Approval of the scheme will create a risk of the County Council's decision-making competence being called into question by central government.

Mr Lionel Whitehead stated:

- It is clear that inadequate risk management and contingency planning has not been ensured with this project to date.
- No robust risk assessments have been carried out to qualify the £130 million required for the SWRR.
- SDC & WCC should not be allowing developers to deliver road infrastructure that is linked to housing development, this doesn't give a balanced approach to solving problems and delivering the best outcomes.
- From day one CALA have submitted unrealistic cost assurances, hence you finding yourself in a position where additional funding is required because CALA's promise of a 'free road' that would only cost them £30 million to build, has now increased by 433% to £130 million.
- The £130million that this road is predicted to cost, is disproportionate and equivalent to each one of the 3,100 houses at Long Marston Airfield contributing £41,936 per house to generate the £130million required for the SWRR.
- Based on the average UK house price being £226,906, the £41,936 would be equivalent to 18.5% of this average house value.
- When evaluating cost-benefit rationalisation, for every pound invested what is the 'financial worth' of benefits verses this cost of £130 million. What evidence is there to demonstrate that SWRR represents good value for money when considering the extortionate escalating costs growing from £30 million to £130 million, far more than originally budgeted.
- Lack of commercial skills within the Council and lack of experience of managing major construction projects, such as the SWRR, from CALA has found WCC having to bailout CALA and SDC with their reckless, naïve approach.
- It is evident that the location of this proposed SWRR should have been aborted and reallocated to a more deliverable location years ago.
- Regardless of whether the SWRR is 'fit for purpose' or 'not', the Core Strategy is dependent on the SWRR being delivered, therefore the SWRR's value to the council is to protect the Core Strategy, this is not a reason to allow the SWRR development to be approved.

- This request for additional funding should be rejected so that a more effective, cost efficient, morally improved and robust joined up strategy can be implemented to truly address the traffic concerns of Stratford and its suburbs.

Councillor Molly Giles (Stratford on Avon District Council) observed:

- The proposal for the SWRR carries risks in terms of its delivery date and cost.
- The CALA Homes application is not in a state on which it can be consulted on with questions remaining over modelling assumptions used.
- Stratford on Avon District Council's Heritage Assessor has disputed CALA Homes' assertion that the route of the SWRR would not impact significantly on aspects of heritage. There is a general lack of credibility within the current proposals that will lead to delays in implementation.
- CALA Homes have not thoroughly considered mitigation measures which may lead to a significant increase in construction costs.
- Each house built at Long Marston will be required to contribute a significant sum to the building of the road which itself will bring little benefit to the town of Stratford upon Avon.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe thanked members of the public for their contributions and attendance.

2. Approval to Submit Funding Bids to the Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning) introduced revised recommendations before summarising the key elements of the report. He emphasised that the proposals for the A5 and Stratford South Western Relief Road were based on Local Plans and on identified needs for housing. Any bid would be submitted on the basis that it carried no financial liability for the County Council.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe described the continuing need for improvements on the A5 and reminded Cabinet of the County Council's responsibility to ensure that the County's economy continues to thrive.

Councillor Jenny Fradgley expressed her concerns over the proposed route of the SWRR adding that she had originally been led to believe it would be remote from the SSSI. Councillor Fradgley was concerned over the increasing anticipated cost of the road and its visual impact. These views were supported by Councillor Kate Rolfe.

Councillor Keith Kondakor observed that any housing development should make provision for younger and older residents who are unlikely to need or desire to drive to work or other facilities. They require a good public transport system. The money being sought from the HIF could be used to support sustainable transport solutions

around the County. In addition, there is an increase in the number of empty houses in Warwickshire. This should be addressed before new ones are built.

Councillor Dave Parsons recognised the need for improvements on the A5 but expressed reservations over the link between the HIF bid and housing provision as set out in the North Warwickshire Borough Council Local Plan. Councillor Parsons was of the opinion that Highways England should pay for any enhancements on the A5.

Councillor Bill Oler expressed disappointment that having made an expression of interest in September 2017 the County Council had only two weeks to submit a bid. He stressed the need for attention to be given to the stretch of the A5 between the Hinckley Island and MIRA.

Councillor Dave Reilly expressed his support for both the proposals as set out in the report reminding Cabinet the Stratford on Avon District Core Strategy had been deemed to be sound by a government inspector.

Councillor Alan Webb noted that the HIF had been established to address developers' inability to fund major highway schemes. He asked what might happen if the construction of homes stalls and funds are no longer available from developers.

Councillor Richard Chattaway (Leader of the Labour Group) acknowledged the contentious nature of the SWRR scheme and noted that major capital schemes always come in over budget.

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader – Finance and Property) emphasised to Cabinet that the matter before it was the submission of a bid for funding. Comments and concerns around either scheme would be noted and taken account of by Homes England in considering the bids. The County, he stated, needs housing and the HIF has been established to support schemes that are too large for S106 funding to support. If the bid for the SWRR fails, there is a chance that so too will the Stratford Local Plan. That in turn would lead to speculative development by builders.

Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning) expressed his support for the A5 bid adding that the short timescale imposed on the Council was regrettable.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe stressed the need to support district and borough councils in the delivery of their local plans.

Resolved

- 1) That Cabinet approves the submission of the following funding bids to the Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), subject to sign off by the Strategic Director of Resources, Strategic Director of Communities and the Section 151 Officer and to the principle that the County will accept no cost or financial liability for the schemes:
 - A5 Transport Corridor – North Warwickshire; and
 - Stratford-upon-Avon South Western Relief Road

- 2) That, should the bids be successful, Cabinet requests a further report to confirm that this principle and other funding conditions have been achieved before any funding agreements are signed.

3. Allocation of 2019-20 Dedicated Schools Grant

In introducing the published report Councillor Peter Butlin emphasised particular pressures in the early years block and high needs block. Attention was drawn to recommendation 5 that requires a further report to Cabinet in April on the pressures on the high needs budget.

Councillor Sarah Boad affirmed the pressures schools are currently under regarding high needs pupils.

Councillor Keith Kondakor requested that in future reports tables setting out increases in pupil numbers provide an indication of geography by district and borough. He also drew the distinction around housing development bringing in the first instance a growth in primary school numbers followed by secondary school growth.

Councillor Colin Hayfield observed that the Council has little discretion on how the DSG is allocated. The report, he suggested, raised a number of questions around school finance, early years payment and pressures on high needs. These would be addressed at another time.

In response to a request from Councillor Chattaway it was agreed that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to review DSG allocations.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Support the continued allocation of the Schools Block DSG, as outlined in Section 3, in line with the National Funding Formula for Schools;
- 2) Support the continuation of the current Early Years formula of a universal rate of £3.96 per hour and a deprivation rate of £0.53 per hour for eligible children for 2019/20 budget allocations for all early year providers;
- 3) Request that proposals from the Early Years Working Group in relation to the allocation of 2020/21 Early Years DSG are brought forward for consideration as part of the 2020/21 DSG budget setting process;
- 4) Approve the proposed allocation of the High Needs DSG budget for 2019/20, as set out in Section 5 and Appendix A of the report;
- 5) Request that a further report is brought to Cabinet in April 2019 on the pressures on the High Needs DSG budget and the detail of the plans for bringing the budget back into balance; and

- 6) Agree the proposals for allocating the Central School Services DSG budget, as set out in Section 6 and Appendix B, for 2019/20 that will go forward for approval by the Schools Forum on 14 March 2019.

4. Capital Investment Fund 2018-19 Quarter 4 Report

Councillor Peter Butlin introduced the report with Councillor Jeff Morgan (Portfolio Holder for Children's Services) expressing his support for all three schemes set out in it.

Regarding casualty reduction schemes Councillor Keith Kondakor suggested that it would be useful to know which other ones are being developed.

Members expressed their overall support for the three schemes. Regarding children's centres the meeting was informed that most of the enhancement work would be internal. They were referred to officers for more detail.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approve the allocation of £0.280m from the Capital Investment Fund to fund the adaptation of ten existing Children's Centres to Children and Family Centres and addition of the scheme to the Capital Programme at this value;
- 2) Approve the conditional allocation of £1.601m from the Capital Investment Fund to fund the current design of the Temple Hill/Lutterworth Road, Wolvey Casualty Reduction Scheme development and addition of the scheme to the capital programme at a total cost of £1.635m, with the remaining funding coming from Cllr Warwick's 2019/20 delegated budget. The allocation is conditional upon the outcomes of the consultation process and if this leads to cost increase or significant redesign a new Capital Investment Fund bid must be submitted and approved at the earliest opportunity, with the scheme halted until this is complete; and
- 3) Approve the allocation of £0.526m from the Capital Investment Fund to fund the purchase of replacement waste handling and compaction equipment at Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and addition of the scheme to the capital programme at a total cost of £0.726m, with remaining funding to come from the 2018/19 and 2019/20 HWRC maintenance programmes (£0.160m) and capital receipts from selling the equipment being replaced (£0.040m). The allocation is conditional on the outcome of a full leasing appraisal when costs are known with certainty to identify the approach offering the best value for money for the Council.

5. Treasury Management Strategy

Councillor Peter Butlin drew members' attention to a list of investments on page 2 adding that criteria for investment had been revised and tightened.

Resolved

That Cabinet recommends that:

- 1) the Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy for 2019/20 (Appendix A-I of the report) be approved by County Council and their provisions have effect from 1st April 2019;
- 2) the County Council requires the Strategic Director of Resources to ensure that gross borrowing does not exceed the prudential level as specified in Appendix B of the report, taking into account current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in the budget report;
- 3) the County Council delegate authority to the Joint Managing Director (Resources) to undertake all the activities listed in Appendix H of the report; and
- 4) the County Council requires the Joint Managing Director (Resources) to implement the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy as specified in Appendix I of the report.

6. Agency/Interim Staffing – Approval to Procure

Following an introduction from Councillor Peter Butlin members agreed the published recommendations.

Resolved

That Cabinet authorises the Joint Managing Director (Resources) to:

- 1) Commence appropriate procurement processes for the provision of agency/interim staff; and
- 2) Enter into all relevant contracts for the provision of agency/interim staffing on terms and conditions acceptable to him.

7. Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan Action Plan 2019-20

Councillor Andy Crump (Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety) explained that the matter before Cabinet concerned consultation on the IRMP action plan. The IRMP and action plan had been considered by the cross-party Fire and Rescue Working Group.

Regarding the review of fire stations in the Nuneaton and Bedworth area Councillor Bill Olnor observed that having a single such facility in the east of the borough may leave the west vulnerable. Councillor Olnor suggested that two fire stations (one in the east and one in the west) would satisfy the requirement. In addition, Councillor

Olnier asked that any consultation on fire stations be thorough and that it involve the district and borough councils.

Councillor Richard Chattaway expressed a general concern over the action plan whilst Councillor Kondakor suggested that the optimum location for a fire station may be in the middle of a town like Nuneaton. Councillor Clare Golby counselled against suggesting that fire stations would be closed. Nothing, she added, had been agreed.

Councillor Wallace Redford stated that it is important to ensure that effective plans are in place for the period during the construction of HS2. On the subject of HS2 Councillor Boad welcomed that the references in the action plan no longer confined themselves to north Warwickshire. HS2 she added will impact on the south of the county as well.

Members agreed that it was of paramount importance to locate equipment in the right place to reduce attendance times.

For clarification David Carter (Joint Managing Director for Resources) confirmed that Council would only need to review the action plan if it was not in accordance with the agreed IRMP.

Resolved

That Cabinet provide approval to consult upon the Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service (WFRS) Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Action Plan 2019-20.

8. Review of Section 75 Partnership Agreement for the Provision of Integrated Mental Health Services between Warwickshire County Council and Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust

Following a brief introduction by Councillor Les Caborn (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health) members agreed the published recommendations.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Agrees to a further Partnership Agreement between Warwickshire County Council and Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust for the provision of integrated community mental health and social care services for a term of 3 years from 1st April 2019;
- 2) Authorises the Strategic Director for People Directorate to enter into the Agreement on terms and conditions acceptable to him and the Joint Managing Director (Resources); and
- 3) Expects that the partnership arrangements will be subject to a review at least one year prior to expiry of the Agreement.

9. Constitutional Review – Contract Standing Order

After an introduction by Councillor Peter Butlin Cabinet's attention was drawn to paragraph 2.3 of the report which set out the key changes to the Contract Standing Orders.

Resolved

That Cabinet recommend the revised Contract Standing Orders, as outlined in the appendix of the report, to Council for approval.

10. Any Urgent Items

None

The meeting rose at 15.20.

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Chair