

Minutes of the Meeting of Warwickshire County Council

held on 1 July 2016

Present:

Councillor Bob Hicks (Chair)

Councillors: John Appleton, John Beaumont, Peter Butlin, Les Caborn, Richard Chattaway, Chris Clark, Jeff Clarke, , Jose Compton, Corinne Davies, Nicola Davies, Neil Dirveiks, Sara Doughty, Peter Fowler, Jenny Fradgley, Bill Gifford, Mike Gittus, Brian Hawkes, Colin Hayfield, John Holland, John Horner, Julie Jackson, Philip Johnson, Kam Kaur, Bernard Kirton, Phillip Morris-Jones, Peter Morson, Brian Moss, Bill Olnier, Dave Parsons, Mike Perry, Caroline Phillips, Howard Roberts, Jerry Roodhouse, Chris Saint, Izzi Seccombe, Dave Shilton, Jenny St. John, Bob Stevens, June Tandy, Heather Timms, Angela Warner, Alan Webb, Mary Webb and Chris Williams.

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Sarah Boad, Mike Brain, Jonathan Chilvers, Alan Cockburn Yousef Dahmash, Richard Dodd, Danny Kendall, Keith Kondakor Joan Lea, Keith Lloyd, Jeff Morgan Maggie O'Rourke, Wallace Redford, Clive Rickhards, Kate Rolfe, Matt Western and John Whitehouse.

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

None.

2. Call-in: Consultation on the Proposal to close Warwickshire Employment Support Team (WEST)

Councillor Alan Webb, Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, referred to the recent extraordinary meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held to consider the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care's decision to go out to consultation on the proposal to close WEST in order to meet the £280k savings target for this service as set out in the Council's One Organisational Plan. Councillor Webb outlined the concerns of the Committee and in particular that the Committee had not been convinced that sufficient work had been undertaken to investigate options other than closure and that it was unclear what alternatives there would be for those impacted by the closure of the service.

Councillor Webb moved the following motion and was seconded by Councillor Phil Johnson:

A 'That this matter be referred back to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder with the following recommendations:

(1) That the Portfolio Holder checks it accords with the One Organisational Plan to prioritise the most vulnerable.

- (2) That the Portfolio Holder allows a full consultation that includes not just closure but also other options available.'

Councillor Alan Webb explained that the Committee wished there to be a more holistic approach to identifying savings, rather than focusing on particular services, and that the savings made do not conflict with the Council's aim to prioritise services to the most vulnerable.

Councillor Phil Johnson, in seconding the proposal later in the debate, suggested that there are other areas outside of Adult Social Care that could be explored for savings without impacting on very vulnerable people. Councillor Johnson added that closure would impact on those who do not wish to face the added difficulty of uncertainty and challenge of accessing alternative support through a possible potpourri of services. Councillor Johnson added that most of the users of this service live in the north of the County and a removal of this service would therefore further widen the deprivation gap between north and south of the County.

DEBATE

The following points were made in support of the motion:

- The current report to Cabinet on progress with the One Organisational Plan refers to the exploration of alternative delivery for WEST, with a project board that is looking at 2016/17 savings. This suggests a misalignment with the current proposal and it is unclear whether all alternative delivery options have been explored and therefore this should go back to the Portfolio Holder to work with Overview and Scrutiny Committee and reconsider the proposal.
- Unemployment is particularly high amongst this group of vulnerable people and supporting them into work is important for them and avoids longer term financial costs.
- It is unclear whether alternative options have been explored or whether there has been discussion with other possible providers. The lack of alternatives and information means the consultation is limited to one option of closure.
- The proposal does not appear to be in accordance with the Council's One Organisational Plan to support the most vulnerable people. The closure of the service could have a serious impact on a group of particularly vulnerable people.
- There is no reference to consultation within mainstream schools where many in this group will be placed.
- The consequences of the closure are not clear and should be monitored.
- This issue should have been brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee before this decision was put to the Portfolio Holder.

The following points were made against the motion:

- The need to make £280k savings in WEST has been in the OOP savings plan and agreed by Council as part of the budget resolutions.
- The consultation is an opportunity to hear the views and ideas from others and this should take place first and brought back to members.
- The options considered and alternative avenues of support are listed in the report.
- The Adult Social Care Portfolio Holder has spoken so organisations and their views will come forward in consultation.

- The whole of the Adult Social Care Portfolio is concerned with people who need care and any savings made in Adult Social Care will have an impact on this group of people.

Councillor Jose Compton, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, in responding to the debate, gave her assurance that she was committed to protecting the vulnerable and that all points made would be looked at as part of consideration of the response to the consultation.

VOTE

The motion set out at A was put to the vote and was CARRIED, the vote being 24 for, none against and 21 abstentions.

Resolved

That this matter be referred back to the Cabinet member with the following recommendation:

- (1) That the Portfolio Holder checks it accords with the One Organisational Plan to prioritise the most vulnerable.
- (2) That the Portfolio Holder allows a full consultation that includes not just closure but also other options available.

The meeting closed at 2.50 p.m.

.....
Chair