

Minutes of Leader Decision Making Session held on 5 October 2010

Present: Councillor Alan Farnell (Decision maker)

Officers: John Betts – Head of Corporate Finance
Sheila Hancox- Head of Warwickshire Education Business Partnership
Virginia Rennie – Group Accountant, Budget and Technical
Janet Purcell, Executive and Member Support Manager

1. General

(1) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

(2) Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2010

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September be agreed as a correct record.

2. Response to Consultation on Changes to the Allocation Formulae for Social Care Grants

Councillor Alan Farnell considered a report of the Strategic Director of Resources that proposed a response to the consultation on changes to the allocation formulae for three social care grants. Virginia Rennie advised that, although merging of the grants may be preferable in the long term, the Government proposals were not welcome as they stood. The response therefore suggested that the grants would be best distributed outside the Formula Grant System. This response was in line with that of the Society of Chief Treasurers and the Local Government Association.

Resolved

That Warwickshire County Council's response to the Department of Health's Consultation on Changes to the Allocation Formulae for three Social Care Grants be as set out at Appendix 1 to these minutes.

3. Response to Consultation on Local Government Formula Grant Distribution 2010

Councillor Alan Farnell considered a report of the Strategic Director of Resources that proposed a response to the Government's consultation on changes to the Local Government Formula Grant Distribution. It was noted that the proposed response took account of the likely effect of change for the County Council (although the actual impact is difficult to predict) but was also consistent with previous submissions made by the authority, was supporting the options that are technically valid and based on the most up-to-date data available.

Resolved

That Warwickshire County Council's response to the Local Government Finance Formula Grant consultation be as set out at Appendix 2 to these minutes.

4. Response to Consultation on Local Transport Capital Funding

Councillor Alan Farnell considered a joint report from the Strategic Director of Resources and Strategic Director of Environment and Economy and noted that the response suggested that funding should be focussed on maintenance rather than growth or improvement whilst resources are constrained and that allocations should be made according to need.

Resolved

That Warwickshire County Council's response to the consultation on Local Transport Capital Funding be as set out in Appendix 3 to these minutes.

5. Response to Consultation on Revenue Support Grant Top-slice for Improvement Services to Local Authorities

Councillor Alan Farnell considered a proposed a response to consultation on the Revenue Support Grant Top Slice for Improvement Services. Virginia Rennie advised that the response supports the principle of a single top-slice and considers that it should reduce the costs of support, remove centrally imposed restrictions and promote the ability of local government to decide how best to use the resource. It also recommended that the Local Government Improvement and Development be the body that allocates future funding.

Resolved

That Warwickshire County Council's response to the Revenue support Grant Top-Slice for Improvement Services to Local Authorities Consultation be as set out in Appendix 4 to these minutes.

6. Response to Consultation on skills for Sustainable Growth and A Simplified Further Education & Skills Funding System & Methodology

Councillor Alan Farnell considered a report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy setting out a proposed response to two Government's consultations relating to sustainable growth and skills funding. It was proposed that the response form part of the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership response. Sheila Hancox explained that the response supported a simplified system and reduction in the number of bodies with whom colleges have to work and looked to employers and training providers working closely together to meet local need and with funding targeted at those who most needed it (and not necessarily in providing formal training). Councillor Alan Farnell agreed the response, noting that the Local Enterprise Partnership would need to have a role in this.

Resolved

That Warwickshire County Council’s contribution to the Coventry, Solihull, Warwickshire Partnership’s response be as set out in Appendix 5 (Skills for Sustainable Growth) and Appendix 6 (A Simplified Further Education and Skills Funding System and Methodology) of these minutes.

7. Response to Consultation on School Funding 2011/12: Introducing a Pupil Premium

Councillor Alan Farnell considered a proposed response to this consultation as set out in a report from the Strategic Directors of Resources and Children, Young People and Families. John Betts advised that the proposal for a pupil premium may be of benefit to Warwickshire. It was noted that the Schools Forum would also be sending a response.

Councillor Alan Farnell approved the response but requested that the response included a request for clarification on the position of academies and free schools.

Resolved

That Warwickshire County Council’s response to the Department for Education Consultation on School Funding 2011/12 be as set out in Appendix 7, subject to the addition of a request for clarification regarding the position of academies and free schools.

8. Any other items of business

None

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Leader

The meeting rose at 9.45 am