

Cabinet

Thursday, 17 October 2019

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Chair)
Councillor Les Caborn
Councillor Colin Hayfield
Councillor Kam Kaur
Councillor Jeff Clarke
Councillor Andy Crump
Councillor Heather Timms

Non-Voting Invitees:

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

Other Councillors:

Councillors Helen Adkins, Sarah Boad, Bill Olnor and Pam Williams

Public attendance:

None

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Peter Butlin and Councillor Jeff Morgan

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

None

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2019 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

(4) Public Speaking

None

2. Development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) summarised the report emphasising that a key element of the resource assumptions is an annual 2% increase in council tax over the next five years. Members' attention was drawn to the timetable for the agreement of the 2020/21 budget and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

In response to a question from Councillor Bill Oler, Cabinet was informed that "demand growth" is influenced by changes in population and demographics. Councillor Oler added that it was unfortunate that the Queen's speech had provided no indication of how the County Council could best serve residents in the future.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) noted that the report contained a series of assumptions which reflected a degree of uncertainty. It was noted that much new funding is being delivered on a one-off basis. This, it was suggested, carries a high risk and the Council will need to be cautious how it commits this new resource. That the Green Paper on Social Care is still awaited was regretted. In addition, it was hoped that the Local Government Association will be able to persuade government to reinvigorate work on the Fair Funding Review that has been delayed for a year.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the emerging financial position within which the 2020/21 budget and 2020-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy will be developed.
2. Approve the timetable for agreeing the 2020/21 budget.

3. Commercial Strategy

In introducing this report, Councillor Kam Kaur particularly drew Cabinet's attention to paragraph 2.4. This she stated, serves to clarify the meaning of commercialism for Warwickshire.

Councillor Richard Chattaway (Leader of the Labour Group) observed that an element of commercialism is an imperative to increase income. This can deliver mixed messages to citizens. In reply, Cabinet was informed that in terms of the report and the Council's direction, commercialism is about changing the way it operates ie being more business-like and clearer about the consequences of its decisions. Income generation is a factor but the principal driver is the delivery of services to residents and businesses. Investment by the County Council in Nuneaton town centre was cited as an example where the aim is to improve the environment and drive economic regeneration.

Councillor Bill Oler welcomed the strategy adding that partners need to be more prepared to share aspirations and intelligence than at present.

Councillor Les Caborn (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health) informed Cabinet that the County Council has been working with the health sector on joint commissioning, this being an example of where a more commercial approach can bring benefits.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves the Council's Commercial Strategy attached as an appendix to this report.

4. An Alternative Model for Primary Aged Children at Risk of Permanent Exclusion

Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning) introduced the published report stating that whilst good progress was being made in addressing secondary age school exclusion the level of primary age permanent exclusion was increasing. Significant efforts have been made in the north of Warwickshire to address this but there is now a sense that a county wide approach is required. An amendment to the published recommendation was tabled in order to emphasise that the model proposed is intended to offer personalised care and support.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse welcomed the report emphasising the need to manage the issue with care and sensitivity. Councillor Roodhouse observed that the report made no reference to overview and scrutiny and suggested that performance of the new model will require monitoring. In addition, it was suggested that local performance should be reviewed by local bodies.

Councillor Sarah Boad observed that on a recent visit to a children and family centre it was noted that staff present had no knowledge of the proposal.

Councillor Pam Williams agreed that performance should be reported regularly to the overview and scrutiny committee.

Whilst welcoming the report Councillor Richard Chattaway suggested that consideration should be given to why permanent exclusions are rising. He agreed that a future review will be required to assess the impact of the new model.

Regarding the role of children and family centres the meeting was informed that these will be used as a base for staff. Pupils will remain in school.

It was acknowledged that a communication strategy will be required to ensure that all partners are aware of the new model. Finally, it was agreed that overview and scrutiny should be asked to monitor the way schools work with the new model.

Resolved:

That Cabinet agrees that,

1. the County Council adopts the proposed new model for preventing permanent exclusions from primary schools.
2. the County Council engages with Head Teachers in Warwickshire to promote the new model of support for permanently excluded primary learners and those at risk of exclusion.
3. the County Council ceases placing any new pupils in the two 'Link' provisions with immediate effect.
4. the County Council commences consultation with current staffing of the Links, with a view to closing both sites at the end of the Spring Term 2020.
5. the Strategic Director for Resources, in consultation with the Strategic Director for People, is authorised to negotiate the inclusion of the Kingswood accommodation within the Inspire Education Trust lease with a view to ensuring that the site is used to enhance the Haven Communication & Interaction Specialist Resource Provision to ensure it can meet the needs as an all through Key Stage 1 and 2 primary resource and to complete any necessary documents to give effect to the agreed arrangements.
6. the County Council commissions 14 fte places across the County, each with an allocated key worker, for primary aged permanently excluded children and those at risk of exclusion. These will be time limited (one term), with a focus on nurturing restorative intervention to inform the identification of the child's next setting (mainstream or specialist). The commission will include transport and support for transition into the identified next setting.

5. Developer Funded Scheme Approval

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning introduced the report which was being presented to Cabinet following consideration at Council on 15 October.

Resolved:

That, subject to the approval of Council on 15 October to add the following schemes to the 2019/2020 capital programme, Cabinet gives approval to the procurement of construction contracts for the following Section 278 schemes and authorises the Strategic Director for Communities to enter into such contracts on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources subject to the applicable Section 278 Agreements with the Developers being signed which will provide for 100% of the funding:

- A425 Banbury Road and A452 Europa Way, Warwick. Developer – Barwood Land. Approximate value £3.5 million
- B4632 Campden Road, Long Marston. Developer – CALA Homes. Approximate value £2.5 million

6. Any Urgent Items

None

7. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

Resolved

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

8. Land at Former Michael Drayton School, Hartshill

Following an introduction by Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Leader of Council and Chair of Cabinet) members discussed the proposals agreeing that action needed to be taken to secure a positive future use of the land in question.

Resolved:

Cabinet agreed the recommendations as set out in the exempt minutes.