

# Cabinet

Monday, 16 December 2019

## Minutes

### Attendance

#### Committee Members

Councillor Peter Butlin  
Councillor Les Caborn  
Councillor Colin Hayfield  
Councillor Kam Kaur  
Councillor Jeff Morgan  
Councillor Jeff Clarke  
Councillor Andy Crump  
Councillor Heather Timms

#### Officers

Monica Fogarty, Chief Executive  
Nigel Minns, Strategic Director for People  
Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities  
Paul Williams, Democratic Services Team Leader  
Rob Powell, Strategic Director for Resources

### Others Present

#### 1. General

##### (1) Apologies

Councillor Richard Chattaway Leader of the Labour Group  
Councillor Izzi Seccombe OBE Leader of Council and Chair of Cabinet

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

None

##### (3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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

##### (4) Public Speaking

None

### **13. Chair's Announcements**

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader (Finance and Property)) informed the meeting of the completion of the purchase of a property in Bedworth. Known as the Pear's Centre this will form the basis of provision for the care and education of young people with special educational needs. Officers were thanked for their hard work in completing this transaction.

### **2. 2020/21 Budget and 2020-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy – Background Information and Proposals from Corporate Board**

In introducing this report Councillor Peter Butlin explained that a report setting out Corporate Board's budget and service proposal is produced annually. The report to Cabinet is the first public expression of these proposals. That the County Council is in a strong financial position means that there are a number of options available to it in terms of how it moves forward. In response to a question from Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) it was confirmed that presentations will be made to political groups and that supporting papers will be made available to assist in ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the proposals.

Councillor Butlin explained that the final local government settlement is awaited adding that this should be announced before Christmas. Additional resources have been pledged by government but there remains uncertainty around what form these will take.

Monica Fogarty (Chief Executive) explained that the Corporate Board's proposals as set out in the report are based on the settlement that was announced in September 2019. It is probable that the final settlement will largely reflect the earlier one. It is not possible to provide an indication of the overall percentage increase in funding as much of the additional resource is for one year and is focused on specific services. In response to a question from Councillor Helen Adkins (Deputy Leader of the Labour Group) Cabinet confirmed that it will continue to lobby government for additional funds. Regarding the longer-term prospects for local government finance members were informed that this is a cause for concern with a projected national funding gap extending into billions of pounds. Richard Ennis (Interim Head of Finance) informed the meeting that a full spending review is expected and that the next budget will be very significant.

#### **Resolved**

That Cabinet:

1) Agrees to develop its draft 2020/21 Budget and 2020-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy proposals, taking into account the information presented in the report, the recommended budget strategy from Corporate Board set out in Section 3 and the views of Corporate Board on the information presented.

2) Authorises the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors to begin all necessary preparatory work to deliver budget proposals, prior to the final decision on the budget on 18 February 2020.

### **3. Feedback from Public Engagement – Council Plan 2025**

Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) introduced the published report, highlighting a series of key findings and adding that the recent engagement exercise had attracted many more responses than previously. Cabinet was informed that the draft Council Plan will be presented to its meeting on 30 January 2020.

Councillor Les Caborn (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health) welcomed that public health and wellbeing had been noted as being high on people's agendas and attributed this, in part, to the success of the Year of Wellbeing. Councillor Helen Adkins and Councillor Bill Oler welcomed the support expressed for the provision of services for vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Councillor Jerry Roodhouse observed that the engagement exercise and the analysis of the results demonstrated a more thorough and scientific approach. It will be important, he added, to ensure that the priorities set out in the plan are reflected in the Council's budget. Councillor Kam Kaur stated that 1102 responses to the questionnaire had been received. She confirmed the Council's commitment to vulnerable children and assured members that the budget and Council Plan will be aligned.

### **Resolved**

That Cabinet:

1) Notes the key messages and conclusions from the public engagement programme which will inform the further development of the Council Plan 2025.

2) Endorses the next steps for the development of the Council Plan 2025.

## **4. Customer Experience Strategy 2020-2025**

Councillor Kam Kaur explained that the Customer Experience Strategy reflects the move to the delivery of the new operational model. The Strategy, she stated, is the result of extensive engagement with customers and their families. It reflects the need for multiple modes of communication including by digital, telephone and face to face means.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse welcomed the Strategy but emphasised the need to ensure that customers are supported and trained in the use of new technology ie digital. Concerning the reference to the establishment of a citizen's panel Councillor Roodhouse requested a briefing note on how this would be organised and run. This was agreed. Councillor Pam Williams expressed the view that it will be important to ensure that the Council can engage with vulnerable people.

In addition, Councillor Williams was keen to see references to advocacy in the document. In response to a question from Councillor Bill Oler it was confirmed that mobile libraries are equipped with tablets that enable customers of these facilities to access services digitally. Staff are trained to assist when necessary.

### **Resolved**

That Cabinet:

1) approves the Customer Experience Strategy for 2020-2025 and,

authorises the Strategic Director for Resources to develop and implement the strategic delivery plan.

## **5. High Needs Block (Decision to be Made under the Council's Urgency Procedure)**

Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning) explained the basis of funding for special education needs and disability (SEND). Cabinet was informed of the proposal to passport 0.5% of the Dedicated Schools Grant to the High Needs Group. For this to happen the approval is required of the Schools Forum. This approval had not yet been given but further consideration was to be given to the matter by the Schools Forum on 16 January 2020.

Referencing paragraph 3.4 of the report Councillor Jerry Roodhouse observed that whatever the outcome of the proposed transfer of resources further financial support will be required. He suggested that schools should be required to publish evidence that they have used funds intended to support special education in an appropriate way. Local MPs and central government should be lobbied. This was acknowledged by Cabinet which agreed to add a further element to its resolution to that effect.

Finally, Councillor Roodhouse suggested that the Schools Forum and schools should engage more in partnership work to identify ways in which resources can be better utilised. Councillor Jenny Fradgley noted that more could be done to make better use of Pupil Premiums as many schools are missing out on this source of funds. In order to maintain good working relationships with the Schools Forum and schools Councillor Helen Adkins suggested deferring the action proposed in recommendation 2.

In response to this suggestion Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader (Finance and Property) reminded the meeting that disapplication is a mechanism that can be used if considered appropriate. No decision has been made at this stage to use it. In summing up Councillor Colin Hayfield agreed that government should be lobbied for additional resources. He also agreed with the observation that schools miss out funding-wise when free school meals are not claimed. He added that he would not willingly use the disapplication process and would not wish to make matters worse for schools. Shire counties are frequently underfunded in terms of education. It was hoped that education funding across the country will be more even in the future.

## **Resolved**

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the report and action plan agreed by Schools Forum to ensure efficient use of the High Needs Block (part of Dedicated Schools Grant)
- 2) Agrees that as a precautionary measure that the Council continues at this stage with the disapplication application to move 0.5% of Dedicated Schools Grant from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block until the Leader in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Education makes a final, decision whether to continue or withdraw the disapplication application should anticipated changes in financial regulations still make this relevant.
- 3) Continues to lobby local MPs and government for additional resources to support the delivery of Special Education Needs and Disability services.

## **6. Warwickshire County Council's Approach to Progressing the Integration of Health and Care**

Councillor Les Caborn introduced the report drawing Cabinet's attention to the appendix which set out the actions being taken in Warwickshire.

## **Resolved**

That Cabinet endorse the content of the document Warwickshire County Council's Approach to Progressing the Integration of Health and Care.

## **7. Report and Recommendations of the Climate Change Adaptation Task and Finish Group**

In introducing this report Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Heritage & Culture) thanked members and officers for their work on the task and finish exercise and for inviting her to input into it. Councillor Jenny Fradgley (Chair of the task and finish group) explained the background to the work beginning with the Council's declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019.

Looking to the future Councillor Fradgley anticipated the establishment of a cross-party working group to consider climate change and climate adaptation. Councillor Timms proposed an amendment to the published recommendations with the removal of points i and ii from number 5. This was agreed.

## **Resolved**

That Cabinet:

- 1) Adopts the Met Office's UK Climate Projections as the basis of Warwickshire County Council's expectation of the climate in 2050 and plans to this effect.
- 2) Provide clear direction through the Council Plan 2020-2025 detailing actions that will be taken to prepare Warwickshire for the change in climate to come.
- 3) Includes the impact of projected climate change in the assessment criteria for prioritising options and schemes that come forward for capital investment, which will prepare Warwickshire for the 2050 projected climate.
- 4) Produces an updated Climate Impact Assessment for Warwickshire assessing the economic and social impact of the expected changes in climate on key areas of the Council's responsibility and quantifying the costs of investment against the costs of inaction.
- 5) Establishes a standing group comprised of members from all political groups and officers, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Heritage & Culture to advance work on climate change adaptation.
  - i) That the standing group uses the themes identified in this report to develop an action plan within six months setting out the activity to be undertaken by the County Council in the short, medium and long term.
  - ii) That consideration be given to the establishment of a dedicated resource to coordinate climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.

## **8. Capital Investment Fund 2019/20: Warwick Town Centre Transport Package**

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning) explained that the project described in the report had been in planning for five years. When delivered the scheme will bring improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

Of particular note is the expected improvement in air quality that the expected reduction in congestion will bring. Delivery is expected to be in spring 2021 with much of 2020 devoted to design work. Councillor John Holland welcomed the report and recommendations adding that the project had received the support of all three County Councillors in Warwick. It was noted that the traffic management schemes were part of a condition imposed by Warwick District Council and that the deadline for them as stated in the conditions had passed. There is, therefore, an imperative to progress them. Councillor Holland concluded by requesting, given the historic nature of the town, that design work take this into account when considering materials etc.

Councillor Pam Williams welcomed the link between this project, the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and need to address climate change. She added that the improvements should improve access to the town centre by older people.

Councillor Andy Crump (Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety) stated that the new traffic management arrangements will improve road safety.

### **Resolved**

That Cabinet:

- 1) Recommend that Council approve the allocation of £4.046 million funding from the Capital Investment Fund (CIF) to deliver a transport package for Warwick town centre (as set out in paragraph 2.1) and add the project to the Capital Programme at a full cost of £4.418 million with the balance of funding coming from the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Authorise the Strategic Director for Communities to procure and enter any agreements to give effect to the proposals on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources, subject to Council agreement.

## **9. Any Urgent Items**

The meeting was informed of a fire at Nuneaton Town Hall. Members commended the Fire and Rescue Service for its action and offered support to Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council as required.

## **10. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information**

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.

## **11. Land at Europa Way**

Following an introduction from Councillor Peter Butlin members discussed proposals for an area of land at Europa Way in Leamington Spa.

Cabinet decided as per the resolution in the exempt minutes.

## **12.New Rugby Secondary School (Decision to be made under the Council's Urgency Procedure)**

Following an introduction from Councillor Peter Butlin members discussed proposals for a new secondary school in Rugby.

Cabinet decided as per the resolution in the exempt minutes.