

Cabinet

Thursday, 30 January 2020

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Chair)
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

Others Present

Councillors: Sarah Boad, Richard Chattaway, Jonathan Chilvers, Judy Falp, John Holland, Dave Parsons, Caroline Phillips, Jerry Roodhouse and Pam Williams

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Jeff Morgan and Councillor Bill Olnier.

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

None

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 16 December 2019 were agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair.

(4) Public Speaking

None

2. One Organisational Plan - Quarterly Performance Progress Report - Period under review: April to November 2019

Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) introduced the published report stating that members were in the process of being briefed on the use of the new Microsoft Power BI performance management tool. Cabinet was informed that overall the Council is performing well. A number of areas where performance was not considered satisfactory were highlighted. These include the percentage of children receiving 6-8 week health checks, the number of fire related deaths, admissions to permanent nursing care and staff sickness levels.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) observed that resignations from the Council had increased in recent times. He wondered if this could be attributed to the impact of the Transformation Programme. Regarding sickness levels, Councillor Roodhouse reminded Cabinet that a new occupational health provider had been appointed in 2019. When, he asked, would the work of this new provider lead to a reduction in sickness. In response to this latter point the meeting was reminded that a number of health and wellbeing initiatives are being pursued. These address mental and physical health. Mental health champions have been identified from amongst staff and return to work interviews (following periods of sickness) are now expected to consider wider wellbeing issues. Councillor Les Caborn (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health) noted the creation of a staff carers support group and thanked staff for their support for mental health initiatives. Councillor Kaur concluded by suggesting that an in-depth review of staff sickness would be of benefit.

Resolved:

That Cabinet notes the progress of the delivery of the One Organisational Plan 2020 for the period as contained in the report.

3. 2019/20 Financial Monitoring as at the end of December 2019 - Capital and Revenue

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader – Finance and Property) introduced the published report highlighting that the forecast underspend had been identified earlier in the financial year than previously. An overspend of £0.626m relating to the move by County Fleet Maintenance to Hawke's Point, Leamington was noted. This was due in part to the need for a new roof for the building. Also highlighted was the forecast overspend of £1.092m in Children and Families. Without additional funding and underspends in some areas this would be increased to £3.832m. Finally, overspends in the areas of SEND and home to school transport were noted.

In response to the introductory comments, Councillor Roodhouse observed that many budgets are showing fluctuations throughout the year. He wondered if this reflected the impact of the Transformation Programme adding that he would wish to see a flatter line next year with evidence that resources were being used to provide services to people and not put into reserves. This view was shared by Councillor Chattaway.

Concerning concessionary travel, Councillor Judy Falp asked if there was a correlation between reduced take up and the fact that WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) women cannot access concessionary travel until the age of 65. In response, Councillor Butlin stated that he was unsure whether WASPI women were being disadvantaged but agreed to find out more and respond to Councillor Falp.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet) noted that it is often the case that government grants come late to the Council and cannot be effectively used by the end of the financial year. In addition, capital projects can be subject to slippage the reasons for which are outside of the control of the Council.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the forecast underspend of £9.118m for the 2019/20 financial year on the Council's revenue budget.
- b) Notes the forecast underspend on the 2019/20 capital programme of £14.580m.
- c) Approves the carry forward of the underspend on the capital programme of (£14.685m) in 2020/21 and future years and the changes totalling £0.105m to the cost and funding of schemes detailed in the report and Annexes A to M.

4. 2020/21 Budget and 2020-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy - Updated Information

Councillor Peter Butlin explained that the report before Cabinet set out the groundwork ahead of consideration of the budget on 18 February. The meeting was informed that an additional £7m initially provided as a one off sum is now in the base budget and will therefore recur in the future. Whilst the new homes bonus will bring in additional funds a recent increase in the minimum wage will add an estimated £8m to the Council's salary bill over the next 5 years.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the latest resource and spending information and the impact on the emerging budget proposals.
- 2) Notes the Strategic Director for Resources' risk assessment on the level of general reserves, as detailed in Appendix A of the published report.
- 3) Agrees to publish its 2020/21 budget resolutions for recommendation to Council on 18 February 2020.
- 4) Authorises the Strategic Director for Resources to incorporate the outstanding resource information into the budget resolutions to be considered by Council on 18 February 2020.

5. Council Plan 2025

In introducing this report Councillor Kam Kaur proposed that the current page 10 of the plan be moved forwards as it sets out the Council's vision. Members' were referred to page 5 of the plan. This, it was explained, set out the challenges to be faced by the Council over the Plan period.

Regarding page 6 of the plan, Councillor Jerry Roodhouse drew Cabinet's attention to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. He asked whether the expectation is for all the subcategories to these goals to be met as well as the main ones. In response he was told that not all of the targets will relate to the work and services of the Council. It was therefore unlikely that it will be appropriate to aim to meet all sub-targets.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers, referencing the information on page 5 of the plan suggested that highlighting all of the challenges to be faced presented a negative picture. It would be better, he suggested, for the section to be more focused on the solutions to these problems. Councillor Seccombe emphasised the need to display a sense of awareness of the issues. Doing nothing can result in greater challenges to be met.

Councillor Richard Chattaway requested that each Portfolio Holder produce a report stating how they will work to deliver the objectives of the plan.

In closing the Portfolio Holder emphasised the need to ensure that services will meet the needs of Councillors.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approve the Council Plan 2025 for onward consideration by Council on 18 February 2020.

6. Allocation of 2020/21 Dedicated Schools Grant

Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning) explained that the Dedicated Schools Grant is essentially passported through the Council. However, one area of concern is high needs education which costs the Council more to provide than is funded by government. Cabinet was reminded of the report considered in December 2019 regarding the possibility of the Council retaining part of the high needs block of the DSG for special education. Councillor Richard Chattaway observed that there continues to be a long waiting list for children with high needs for assessment. He counselled that reducing that list could result in greater pressure on schools. Councillor Roodhouse observed that this is a national issue. It would be interesting, he added, to see if the next budget provides additional funding.

Councillor Dave Parsons suggested that there is a need to examine the pressures that mainstream education is under. This is particularly the case with the raising of the minimum age having an impact. He added that CAMHS waiting times continue to be high for young people and that in addition cases of autism are on the rise.

In response to members' concerns the Chair agreed to write to all Warwickshire MPs before the March budget with a request for more funds to be made available.

Council Hayfield closed by reiterating the need for more funds to be made available for special and mainstream education.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Supports the allocation of the Schools Block DSG, as outlined in Section 3, in line with the National Funding Formula for Schools.
- 2) Supports the continuation of the current Early Years formula of a universal rate of £4.09 per hour and a deprivation rate of £0.07 per hour for eligible children for 2020/21 budget allocations for all early year providers.
- 3) Approves the proposed allocation of the High Needs DSG budget for 2020/21, as set out in Section 5 of the published report.
- 4) Requests that a further report is brought to Cabinet in April 2020 on the pressures on the High Needs DSG budget and the detail of the plans for bringing the budget back into balance.
- 5) Agrees the proposals for allocating the Central School Services DSG budget, as set out in Section 6, for 2020/21 that will go forward for approval by the Schools Forum on 19 March 2020.

7. SEND & Inclusion Strategy Update and Peer Review

Councillor Colin Hayfield informed the meeting that the inspection of SEND was still awaited although it was imminent. He explained that the report before Cabinet provided an update for members of progress with the strategy as well as picking up a number of aspects of the recent peer review. Regarding Education Health and Care Plans ((EHCs) he stated that Warwickshire sees slightly more of these compared to its neighbours. EHCs, he added, can set out the future for a child. Schools, however, do not have to wait for an EHC; they can take their own action.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse stated that he felt that the peer review had been “done to” the Council and parents/carers rather than, “done with”. He felt that more co-production is required if services are to be enhanced.

Councillor Richard Chattaway suggested that the report be considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He also proposed the development of an action plan.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe confirmed that areas for improvement have been recognised.

Councillor Parsons recognised that the report contained some good news. He did, however, observe that there remain issues with the CAMHS service.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves the report, updated self-evaluation and SEND & Inclusion strategy delivery plan in response to the Special Education Needs and Disability) (SEND) Peer Review.

8. Adult Direct Payment to Gross Payment

Councillor Les Caborn summarised the purpose behind the report stating that the proposals complied with the overall financial direction of the authority.

Resolved:

That Cabinet agree to commence paying Adult Direct Payments as a Gross payment and invoice all customers for their Social Care financial contribution.

9. Digital and Technology Strategy

Councillor Kam Kaur explained that there is an overall desire for the strategy before Cabinet to be a fundamental part of how the Council delivers its services.

Councillor Richard Chattaway observed that elected members need to be trained in how to use the new digital technology and how to access digital services. Councillor Kaur agreed with this and acknowledged the contribution made by staff in developing and deploying the new technology.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves the continuation of the Digital and Technology Strategy for the period 2018 to 2021 following its annual review.

10. Warwickshire Rail Strategy 2019-2034

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning) explained that the draft strategy before members was long term. He added that the strategy had been subject to extensive consultation and that many responses had been received. The strategy, he added, illustrates the Council's desire to construct new stations and encourage modal shift.

Councillor Sarah Boad recognised the importance of the document adding that there is a need for more sustainable transport with reliable services. She noted that West Midlands Trains is currently struggling to provide a reliable service and that people are returning to using their cars as a result. Councillor Boad concluded that HS2 will be of little benefit to Warwickshire.

In response to a question from Councillor Dave Parsons, Councillor Clarke noted that the strategy has been developed on the assumption that HS2 will proceed. If HS2 is halted, then the strategy will need to be re-worked and brought back to Cabinet.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Note the results of the consultation and the resulting modifications made to the draft Warwickshire Rail Strategy.
- 2) Recommend that the Council endorse the Warwickshire Rail Strategy 2019-2034 and that the document is added to the Warwickshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026.

11. Warwickshire County Record Office Collection Development Policy

Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Heritage & Culture) commenced by thanking officers for putting on a display of historical artefacts prior to the meeting. She then set out the key elements of the report noting the extensive use of digitalisation and the need for additional storage space as the collection grows.

Councillor John Holland noted the success of the Warwick Market Place Museum noting that it was due in part to members' involvement that the lift was installed to provide access to the upper storeys. He added that it is important to encourage people to visit museums and at the same time exhibits should be taken out around Warwickshire.

Councillor Judy Falp expressed her concern over increasing pressures on storage adding that it is important to ensure that storage facilities provide the right environment to ensure that collections are not damaged.

Councillor Timms agreed with the point raised by members.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- 1) endorses the direction for Warwickshire County Record Office (WCRO),
- 2) approves the draft WCRO Collection Development Policy and
- 3) notes officers' plans to investigate options for future records storage.

12. Warwickshire Museum Service Collection Development Policy

Councillor Heather Timms introduced the report and commended the museums service for its innovation and quality of its collection.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Endorses the direction for Warwickshire Museum Service (WMS) and,

2) approves the draft WMS Collection Development Policy.

13. The Report of the Climate Change Mitigation Task and Finish Group

In introducing this report Councillor Heather Timms thanked officers and members for their contributions to the review.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse informed the meeting that he had recently attended a presentation by UK100 at a CCN event. He suggested that UK100 be invited to the County Council to share their knowledge. One of the challenges for shire counties, he added, is the lack of infrastructure to mitigate against climate change.

Regarding recommendation six, Councillor Richard Chattaway questioned the use of the term, “in principle” adding that this can be open to interpretation. Councillor Chattaway proposed Councillor Helen Adkins to be the Labour representative on the member working group (Recommendation four). Regarding transport strategies he observed that there remains much work to do. The target date should be absolute, and the working group should receive regular updates. Councillor Chattaway concluded by adding that air quality requires urgent attention as people’s health is being adversely affected.

Councillor John Holland reminded Cabinet that in July 2019 Council had unanimously supported the declaration of a climate change emergency. He added that Warwickshire should not contribute to making matters worse and that transport strategies should serve to make cycling and walking safer. Finally, Councillor Holland emphasised the need to work with health providers in managing future hot summers.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers (Leader of the Green Group) thanked officers for their input but considered that overall the County Council was not addressing the issue robustly enough. He noted that other local authorities are more advanced in their thinking and called for a clear action plan to be developed soon.

Councillor Sarah Boad welcomed the reference to town and parish councils in recommendation five and asked that the County Council promote its objectives through the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC).

Councillor Timms agreed that there is an urgent requirement to tackle the climate change baseline. The report, she added, focusses primarily on that which has already been done but there remains a need to embed climate change mitigation in everything the Council does. Evidence is required when considering where and when to invest. Meetings have been held with district and borough council leads and town and parish councils will be engaged with also. Councillor Timms concluded by stating that the working group will have to set its own terms of reference and agree when it will report its progress.

Resolved:

That Cabinet agrees to:

- 1) Provide clear direction through the Council Plan 2020-2025 to work alongside our partners to reduce the Council's carbon impact and that appropriate resources are dedicated to this work.
- 2) Make climate change considerations a requirement for all council decisions, including capital investments, projects and commissioning exercises.
- 3) Develop improved baseline data and metrics so that we can make decisions and prioritise based on a continually improving understanding of our own carbon emissions and the wider impacts of Warwickshire.
- 4) Establish a cross party group chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Heritage & Culture, to steer work on both climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 5) Work with all partners including Parish and Town Councils, District and Borough Councils, Government, other authorities and the resident and business communities of Warwickshire to achieve real progress on climate change.
- 6) In principle, adopt the targets and actions set out in the report and in particular Appendix 5, and develop detailed and costed action plans for these, to be agreed and managed as part of the Council's business management processes.

14. Any other Business

None

15. Exclusion of Members of the Public**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.

16. Exempt Minutes from 16 December 2019 Meeting

The exempt minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 16 December 2019 were agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair.

17. Educaterers

Councillor Kam Kaur informed the meeting that Educaterers is a successful, award winning service. It daily provides many hundreds of school children with heathy meals. Changes were, however, required to make the service as sustainable as possible.

Resolved:

That Cabinet agreed the recommendations as laid out in the restricted papers.

18. Land at South West Rugby

Councillor Peter Butlin set out the background to the proposals set out in the report.

Resolved:

That Cabinet agreed the recommendations as laid out in the restricted papers.

The Meeting ended at 15.15.

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Leader of the Council

Action	Responsible Officer/Member
2. 2019/20 Financial Monitoring as at the end of December 2019 - Capital and Revenue Councillor Falp to be provided with information regarding concessionary travel and the possible impact of delayed eligibility for "WASPI" women.	Councillor Butlin/Mark Ryder
5. Allocation of 2020/21 Dedicated Schools Grant In response to members; concerns the Chair agreed to write to all Warwickshire MPs before the March budget with a request for more funds to be made available.	Councillor Seccombe/Ian Budd/Richard Ennis