

Cabinet

Thursday, 8 October 2020

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

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

Also present.

Councillors Adkins, Bell, Singh Birdi, Boad Chilvers, Cooke, N.Davies, Falp, Holland, Kondakor, Parsons, Roodhouse, Webb

Public Speakers,

Mr Bob Reeve
Mrs Michele Kondakor

1. General

Before the commencement of the meeting Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet) informed the meeting that Lorna Dirveiks, the wife of Councillor Neil Dirveiks had passed away. She expressed her sympathy to Neil and his family. A minute's silence was held in memory of Lorna Dirveiks

(1) Apologies

No apologies were given.

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

Regarding agenda item 13, Councillor Judy Falp declared an interest as District, Town and County Councillor.

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 29 September 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

(4) Public Speaking

Councillor Izzi Seccombe welcomed two public speakers to the meeting.

1) Bob Reeve, speaking regarding agenda item 2 stated,

Rugby residents, on the whole, welcome the revised parking permit proposals, as detailed in today's Agenda Item 2, but wish to make the following observations/comments:

Para 1.5 States - broad agreement with the move away from paper-based permitting to digital virtual permits. - agreement to control visitor permit misuse through the introduction of online virtual permitting We challenge the accuracy of these two statements as being 'broad agreement', bearing in mind that at paragraph 1.2 you state: with a response rate of close to 15%. (i.e. 85% of those contacted did not respond). No inference of acceptance of the proposed changes is taken from this.

Para 2.3. States Other civil parking enforcement income effectively subsidises the permit scheme. We contend that parking permit schemes in Rugby were introduced to force non-residents to utilise the pay & display car parks / Parking meters in the town itself and therefore the income generated from the parking meter charges should be taken into account when analysing the cost of the parking permit schemes.

Para 2.4. States The proposed price rises should be considered therefore against both local and national charges. Likewise at para 2.10 you state.....benchmarking with other Local Authorities, We question as to WHY should other national charges be considered, as this is not mandated in The Government's Guidance for Local Authorities on Enforcing Parking Restrictions.

Para 2.19. States It is proposed to formally consult upon the introduction of the online digital permitting system. The introduction would be from the start of the next financial year 2021/22. Likewise....Proposals – Visitors Permits We would like to know who will be consulted and we question the time-frame in which this can be properly conducted if the proposal to implement this proposal remains as April 2021.

Para 2.25. States We intend to address any concerns over ease of use with detailed communication before the new system goes live. We will also monitor usage of the online and phone systems and review as necessary.

We would like to know how you intend to provide detailed communication, how you intend to monitor usage and how you intend to communicate the findings of any review.

Para 2.26. States The current system of one visitor vehicle at a time will be reflected in the new online virtual permitting process. We seek confirmation that as per current practice in our neighbourhoods, as and when a resident is expecting more than 1 visitor they borrow a visitor's pass/passes from their neighbours, that this can be implemented using the online system?

Para 2.28. States The registration of visitor's vehicle details will go a small way to reducing the misuse of visitor's permits We question the validity of this statement. The online system will not prevent an unscrupulous resident from entering the VRN details of another person's vehicle to whom they currently are supposedly providing a visitors permit to! The actions of an extremely small number of alleged offenders should not be used a sledge hammer to crack a nut! WCC, in conjunction with NSL should be taking proactive measures to identify and cancel any such permits.

Para 2.50. Proposals – Cross-Party Working Group

We request that if the Cross-Party Working Group is formed, that the Rugby Borough Council representative undertakes dialogue with representatives from our group (via Zoom Online) in order that he/she can better represent Rugby residents' views to the Working Group.

2) Michele Kondakor, referencing agenda item 12 welcomed that investment is being made in Nuneaton but counselled that it should be wisely spent. She stated that the proposals for the A444 in Nuneaton that were subject of the report to be considered at the meeting run contrary to government guidance on walking and cycling. The County Council had declared a Climate Emergency but the proposals to be considered would result in little modal shift; missing the target set out in the Local Plan. Cabinet was informed that the local cycling forum had not been consulted on the proposals. The proposal would see the demolition of property currently occupied by businesses. This would cause disruption to them at a time when trading conditions are challenging. Mrs Kondakor noted that severe congestion is encountered at the Asda roundabout and yet there are no proposals to improve the highway at that point. It was noted that there is a need for good public transport in Nuneaton. In closing, Mrs Kondakor observed that the proposals before Cabinet run contrary to the stated objectives of the transport plan.

Councillor Seccombe thanked the speakers for their contributions.

2. On-street Parking Management Changes

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning) introduced this report and summarised its key elements. He explained that the matter of changes to parking management had been under debate since April 2019 and thanked stakeholders, including district and borough councils, for their input.

Councillor Helen Adkins (Leader of the Labour Group) agreed with the public speaker, Bob Reeve. She considered that the process had been rushed and that there had been insufficient consultation undertaken. She also felt that there was not

a strong financial case for increasing charges and that the move to greater online working would result in more problems than it sought to avoid.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse sought reassurance that the Council would work with communities when developing and implementing the scheme. Engaging with the community sooner would have avoided many of the problems encountered. Councillor Roodhouse suggested that the financial position is now very different to how it was pre-Pandemic. There will be people now who find themselves less able to pay for permits etc than they could before the current crisis.

Councillor Alan Webb considered that the proposal before members eased a lot of peoples' concerns. It was clear that they had been listened to. He observed that any reorganisation of local government would bring parking services under one roof. This would be welcomed but it would also be useful if parking enforcement could be localised and delivered by local people who understood the area in which they worked.

Councillor Keith Kondakor observed that Nuneaton and Bedworth is very different to Stratford on Avon. People's capacity to pay for parking is also different. He suggested that the majority of the funding for parking management should come from those who fail to obey the rules ie in fines.

Councillor Nicola Davies thanked the Portfolio Holder and officers for listening to peoples' concerns. She suggested that any cross-party working group should aim to complete its work prior to the May 2021 election or wait to commence its work after the election.

In response to members' comments Councillor Clarke stated that the working group will engage with district and borough council colleagues. The working group is required to finalise the details. It is important to ensure that parking management is effective if businesses are to be encouraged back into towns. He denied that the process had been rushed adding that consultation had been underway since 2019. Attempts had been made to be equitable and to work as much as possible with residents. He hoped that the working group would be able to complete its work by may 2021.

A vote was held.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves:

- 1) the variation of charges for on-street parking throughout the Civil Parking Enforcement areas of Warwickshire pursuant to section 46A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 in accordance with the pricing structure proposed in this report.
- 2) drafting and consulting on the necessary variation orders pursuant to sections 45 and 46 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 throughout

the Civil Parking Enforcement areas of Warwickshire to introduce a virtual permit system and make the other changes to that system proposed in this report.

3) the maintenance of the current permit pricing scheme.

4) establishing a short-duration Cross-Party Working Group as proposed in paragraphs 2.45-2.50 to make recommendations as to the future basis of permit pricing and the opportunities for parking management to promote environmental sustainability and the visitor and general economy.

3. Local Transport Plan Refresh

Councillor Jeff Clarke summarised the published report emphasising the importance of consultation in the development of the new Local Transport Plan.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers (Leader of the Green Group) welcomed the published timescale for the review adding that he hoped it would be adhered to.

Councillor Keith Kondakor expressed the view that a document such as the LTP needs to be used and not left on a shelf. It should cover the planning of railways and cycling and would benefit if supplemented by more local transport plans.

Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Heritage & Culture) stated that as the Climate Change Champion for Warwickshire she would welcome a refreshed LTP. It would be good if the County Council and District and Borough Councils could collaborate on it.

Councillor Helen Adkins considered that the timescale for the review is too long. A Climate Change emergency has been declared but too little is being done to address it. Measurable outcomes for the strategy will be required. Overall, however, the strategy is to be welcomed.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse emphasised the need for the new plan to be aligned with other strategies that exist or are being developed. The Combined Authority and the LEP are already well advanced with their strategies so progress with the LTP will need to be rapid.

Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) challenged speakers on whether they felt progress was too fast or too slow. Conflicting messages were being given. She observed that work on climate change will take time adding that the new performance framework will allow intelligence-led decisions to be made.

Responding to members' comments Councillor Jeff Clarke agreed that it is important to move at the right pace. Work will need to be aligned with that of the District and Borough Councils. He reassured that the LTP would not be ignored; officers are obliged to refer to it. Railways will be included in the LTP as will consideration

around air quality. Consultation will be a key element of the plan's development, but this will take time if it is to be done properly.

A vote was held.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1) endorses the proposals in this report regarding democratic oversight and decision making, timescales, and financing of the Local Transport Plan refresh project.

2) approves the further development of the Issues and Opportunities that the next Local Transport Plan could address and authorises the Strategic Director for Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport & Planning, to approve materials for public consultation at the earliest opportunity in 2021.

3) establishes a Cross-Party Working Group to be consulted on the refresh, chaired by the Portfolioholder for Transport & Planning and with other members nominated by the Group Leaders, in accordance with the Terms of Reference attached as Appendix B.

4. Revenue Investment Funds 2020/21 Quarter 2 Report

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader – Finance and Property) explained that the fund had been set up early in 2020 with four areas of focus and a four-stage approval process. Covid-19 is particularly impacting on young people and it had been identified that more needs to be done to assist them in finding employment. The second element of the report covered climate change.

Councillor Heather Timms welcomed the proposals around climate change stating that it was indicative of the commitment being shown by the County Council in this field. Community groups should be encouraged to come forward and more should be done to change people's minds around climate change.

Councillor Keith Kondakor welcomed the climate change element, stressing the need for high quality climate change schemes to be pursued. He noted that some people may not be good at bidding for funds. They will need additional support if they are not to miss out.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe commented on the role of the digital market place for securing jobs. She recognised that climate change could be a channel for new job creation adding that Warwickshire needs to emerge from the Covid-19 Pandemic in a strong position.

A vote was held.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Support the progress made on the Economic Recovery Strategy with a new Digital Marketplace project approved by Corporate Board under the under the authorisation delegated to Chief Executive at a cost of £0.050m.
- 2) Approve the creation of an external Community Investment fund using £1m funds from the Revenue Investment Fund for Climate Change, to be managed by the Climate Change Delivery Group and allocated as per the process detailed in this report.

5. Adult and Community Learning Proposed Advisory Board

This report was introduced by Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning). He recognised that the work of the board would touch on a number of services delivered by the Council. Councillor les Caborn (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health) welcomed the paper and stressed the need to work to help people lead independent lives.

A vote was held.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves the formation of an Advisory Board to have oversight of, and support the development of, the Council's Adult and Community Learning service.

6. Education Sufficiency Annual Update 2020

This matter was deferred to a later meeting.

7. Warwickshire Education Strategy Update and Refresh

In introducing this report, Councillor Colin Hayfield drew members' attention to paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5. These highlight the importance of the SEND programme and early years.

Councillor Kondakor expressed concern over the lack of progress in terms of attainment at schools in Nuneaton and Bedworth.

Councillor Roodhouse welcomed that the strategy focused on SEND and early years. However, the key would be to translate the strategy into action on the ground. This is particularly the case at present with the Covid-19 pandemic. Close scrutiny of performance will be required with greater visibility of this being provided by the dashboard.

In response to Councillor Kondakor, Cabinet was informed that the Challenge Board had been set up in Nuneaton to improve the performance of schools there. To Councillor Roodhouse, Councillor Hayfield replied that a task and finish group was being set up to review SEND provision.

A vote was held.

Resolved:

That Cabinet notes the updates on the Warwickshire Education (WE) Strategy and endorses the recommendations to refresh it as set out in Appendices 3 and 4.

8. Integrated Risk Management Plan: Assurance Panel

Councillor Andy Crump (Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety) explained that the establishment of an assurance panel demonstrated the way in which the Fire and Rescue Service was prepared to open itself up to challenge. Cabinet was informed of the recent assessment of the service regarding its response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. What is required now is a cross party group that will complement the critical friend work that is undertaken with two other fire and rescue services.

Councillor Sarah Boad welcome the establishment of a permanent oversight body such as the assurance panel.

A vote was held.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet approve the proposals set out within this paper to oversee the delivery of WFRS' new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and to monitor progress against the subsequent annual action plans.

2. That Cabinet establishes an Integrated Risk Management Plan: Assurance Panel as set out in paragraph 2.1 chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Fire and Rescue and Community Safety with nominations to the Panel to be sought from the Group Leaders.

9. Strategic Framework 2020-2025 - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Provision in Warwickshire

Councillor Heather Timms explained the background to the report adding that a number of financial decisions will be required in view of the framework.

Councillor Adkins reminded Cabinet that Roma people, Gypsies and Travellers are part of the Black and Minority Ethnic community. It is important to ensure that communication with these communities is effective, she added.

Councillor Jeff Morgan commented on problems encountered with illegal encampments in Bulkington. He stressed the need to address the issues and for better communication between Travellers and the community.

Councillor Dave Parsons welcomed the proposed priorities but echoed the concerns expressed by Councillor Morgan. He questioned how effective the framework would be given the limited number of staff in the Gypsy and Traveller unit. A number of particular concerns were highlighted at Alvecote.

Councillor Heather Timms assured members that the framework will be used to address inequalities. Regarding problems being encountered around the County, a hub is required that can report into the Safer Warwickshire Partnership.

A vote was held.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1) Approve the strategic priorities for Gypsy and Traveller Provision, set out in this report as the Strategic Framework for Gypsies and Travellers 2020-2025.

2) Approve the intention to establish a Warwickshire Multi Agency Gypsy and Traveller Hub which:-

Provides a consistent countywide approach to addressing unauthorised encampments.

Provides a co-ordinated approach to all other forms of management of local authority sites, including welfare, education, employment support, addressing discrimination and the use of enforcement powers to tackle anti-social and criminal behaviour;

Works with planning services and private landowners to provide adequate site provision.

3) Agrees that a policy for long and short term site provision for Gypsies and Travellers together with an allocations policy will be developed with key partners and representatives of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community with a view to a further report being presented to Cabinet for approval in the Spring 2021.

10. Establishment of a Residents' Panel

Councillor Kam Kaur thanked Councillor Roodhouse for his contributions to the report. In introducing the report, Councillor Kaur explained that the proposals are linked to the Customer Experience Strategy. Cabinet was informed that the Council wishes to be an intelligence led organisation that uses, amongst other things, a polling approach and workshops to gather data. The panel will inform policy

development and will have a close link with the Council Plan. Any consultation regarding local government reform will be organised by an independent body.

Councillor Roodhouse reminded the meeting of the previous use of MORI and a citizen's panel. He welcomed that the work of the new panel would be regarded as independent.

Councillor Keith Kondakor called for a balance to be sought between demographics and geography. It would be important not to be asking questions just to obtain the answer that is sought.

Councillor Seccombe suggested that the Youth Parliament be used on occasions to feed into the work of the panel.

Councillor Parsons expressed some reservations over the establishment of a standing panel. Such bodies, he suggested, tend to attract a certain type of person who may not be representative of others. To address this, random sampling could be undertaken.

Councillor Timms welcomed the establishment of the panel adding that she looked forward to receiving its feedback on climate change.

In closing Councillor Kaur confirmed that your people will be encouraged to join the panel. Membership will not be static. This may change depending on the topic being reviewed.

A vote was held.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. approves the proposal to develop a standing Warwickshire Residents' Panel to inform the Council's policy making, in order to deliver the action set out in the Customer Experience Strategy;
2. authorises the Strategic Director for Resources to finalise the procurement strategy and any associated procurement and award the contract, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation;
3. notes that costs will be managed through the existing Change Fund where additional spend is required; and
4. agrees, having regard to the resolution of Full Council on 22nd September, to the establishment of a separate Residents' Panel for specific engagement on local government reform proposals for Warwickshire, and notes that the Leader has invited the District and Borough Councils to commission this jointly with the County Council.

11. Addition of Capital Scheme at Henley-in-Arden CE Primary School to the Education (Schools) Capital Programme 2020/21

Councillor Colin Hayfield explained that the proposal before Cabinet was similar to that the proposal before Cabinet was similar to that agreed for Paddox School in Rugby. Members welcomed the proposal stating that it was the right direction of travel for children with special needs.

A vote was held.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves the addition of £572,666 to the education schools capital programme 2020/21 to create specialist resourced provision at Henley-in-Arden CE Primary School funded from existing unallocated Education capital resource.

12. Transforming Nuneaton (Highway Improvements) CIF Bid

Councillor Jeff Clarke summarised the key elements of the proposal as set out in the report.

In response to the proposal Councillor Keith Kondakor observed that over time some good highway projects have been undertaken. He cited the Coton Arches scheme as a good example. However, a number of schemes had been poorly executed eg Rugby Western Relief Road and Bermuda Connectivity. Councillor Kondakor stated that the proposals before Cabinet will serve to reduce air quality in some locations. There is no planned provision to improve cycling and walking and little to support the climate change agenda. The project would only serve to draw traffic into town and the location of the bus station should be considered ahead of changes to the road network. Cabinet was called upon to defer its decision.

Councillor Dave Parsons shared some of Councillor Kondakor's concerns noting that the scheme will serve to draw traffic into the town. More consultation with local residents will be needed before any final decisions are made.

Councillor Timms welcomed the investment in Nuneaton adding that increased housing development will require additional infrastructure improvements.

Councillor Peter Butlin noted that up to £35.4m could be invested in Nuneaton town centre. There is a desire to see Nuneaton grow and that growth will bring additional traffic. The solution is to plan how that traffic is managed. Councillor Morgan added that the investment in Nuneaton reflected the Council's commitment to the town.

Councillor Seccombe noted Councillor Kondakor's observations adding that Cabinet is duty bound to look at all options. She reminded the meeting that the proposals are at an early stage and stated that opportunities to promote modal shift will be explored.

In closing Councillor Clarke suggested that public and active transport enhancements can only be brought about as part of the road scheme. He offered the opportunity for members to have briefings on the scheme.

A vote was held.

Resolved:

That Cabinet recommend that Council;

1. Approves the investment of £21,704,000 to deliver four highway mitigation schemes along the A444 Nuneaton Ring Road, as detailed in section 1.5, as part of the overall Transforming Nuneaton (Highway Improvements) Project.
2. Subject to the approval of recommendation 1 above, add the overall Transforming Nuneaton (Highway Improvements) scheme to the capital programme at a cost of £29.6M.

That (subject to Council agreeing the above recommendations), Cabinet;

3. Authorise the Strategic Director for Communities to invite tenders and enter into the appropriate contracts and grant agreements on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources for the implementation and construction of the highway mitigation schemes.
4. Authorise the Strategic Director for Communities to submit funding applications to support the delivery of the overall Transforming Nuneaton (Highway Improvements) Project subject to acceptable terms and conditions as confirmed by the Strategic Director for Resources.

13. WCC response to Government "Planning for the Future" Consultation

Councillor Clarke introduced the report stating that that this marks a major shake up in planning. In his introduction he proposed a further recommendation that would see the response being shared with District and Borough Councils and published on the Council's website.

Councillor Seccombe noted that the proposals have significant implications for the Council. As well as providing highway infrastructure the Council will be required to provide schools.

Councillor Kondakor observed that housing allocations have been reduced for Nuneaton and Bedworth. He stated that he would be concerned if these were increased. With property prices lower in Nuneaton and Bedworth than elsewhere increased building could impact on viability for the builders.

Councillor Seccombe noted that difference in house prices and availability can lead to greater commuting.

Councillor Butlin welcomed the report. He considered that reform in planning policy is long overdue and there is now a need to regard development with more flexibility.

A vote was held.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet agree the proposed response wording in the Appendix.
2. That the Strategic Director for Communities in consultation with the Leader be authorised to finalise the report to government.
3. That the Chief Executive be asked to share the Council's response with District and Borough Councils and also publish it on the County Council's website.

14.Exclusion of the Press and Members of the Public

Agreed

15.(Exempt) Warwickshire Property and Development Company

Councillor Peter Butlin introduced this item after which there was a discussion. The recommendations were agreed as printed.

16.(Exempt) Economic Outlook and Warwickshire Recovery and Investment Fund (WRIF)

Councillor Peter Butlin introduced this item after which there was a discussion. The recommendations were agreed as printed.

17.(Exempt) Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Continual Improvement and Change: Consultation update on Risk management and Mitigation for Day Crewing Plus Arrangements.

Councillor Andy Crump introduced the report. The recommendations were agreed as printed.

The meeting rose at xxx

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Chair