

Portfolio Holder Decisions/Leader Decisions

Wednesday, 9 September 2020

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Izzi Seccombe

1. Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper


Resolved:

That the decision of Cabinet taken on 27th August 2020 is not implemented by the Chief Executive and that the Council's position on local government reform for Warwickshire be further considered by Cabinet after and in the light of the full Council's consideration on 22nd September 2020.

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Decision made under the Council's Urgency Procedure on 9th September 2020

Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper

Portfolio Holder	Cllr Izzi Seccombe, Leader
Date of decision	9 September 2020
	Signed 

Decision taken

That the decision of Cabinet taken on 27th August 2020 is not implemented by the Chief Executive and that the Council's position on local government reform for Warwickshire be further considered by Cabinet after and in the light of the full Council's consideration on 22nd September 2020.

Reasons for decision

- 1.1. In anticipation of the White Paper on Devolution and Local Recovery being published in September 2020, and in order to preserve the Council's position to be able to be considered for the early tranche pending consideration by Council on 22nd September 2020, the Cabinet made a decision on 27th August 2020 to submit a Strategic Case for Change for a single unitary council for Warwickshire. The Chief Executive was mandated to submit the Strategic Case for Change.
- 1.2. Since that time, indications are that the timeframe for the expected release of the White Paper has changed. In addition, some Members have expressed a strong preference that any proposals for local government reform in Warwickshire are submitted only after the Council has considered the matter on 22nd September 2020.
- 1.3. In light of this, this report asks the Leader to decide that the decision of Cabinet taken on 27th August 2020 should not be implemented, and that the Council's position on local government reform for Warwickshire should be further considered by Cabinet after and in the light of the full Council's consideration of this matter on 22nd September 2020.

Background information

2.0 Supporting information

- 2.1 On 27th August 2020, the Cabinet took a decision to submit to Government a Strategic Case for Change for a single unitary council for Warwickshire. This decision was taken to preserve the opportunity for Warwickshire to be considered in an early tranche of local government reform pending consideration by full Council on 22nd September 2020. The effect of the decision was to mandate the Chief Executive to submit the Strategic Case to the Government, and it was envisaged that this would be done in advance of the full Council meeting on 22nd September 2020.
- 2.2 At the time of the decision it was understood that the White Paper would be published in September 2020. Since that time, and following dialogue with MHCLG officials, there have been indications that the forthcoming White Paper is not likely to be released until early October. This change in timescale makes any action to preserve the Council's position less pressing.
- 2.3 In addition, the Leader is aware of the strength of Members' feelings on the issue of local government reform for Warwickshire and has become aware of the growing preference on the part of some Members for any proposals to Government to be made only after full Council has had the opportunity to consider its position on this issue.
- 2.4 In light of the above and in order to provide all members with sufficient time to consider their own position on this important issue and to express their views at a full Council meeting before any proposals are made to MHCLG, this report asks the Leader to decide that the decision of Cabinet taken on 27th August 2020 should not be implemented and that the Council's position on local government reform for Warwickshire should be further considered by Cabinet following and in the light of the full Council's consideration on 22nd September 2020.
- 2.5 The Cabinet decision currently has effect and, in order to override that decision, it is necessary for the Leader to take an urgent decision to ensure that the Case for Change is not submitted to Government at this time. The decision is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred, and it is impracticable to comply with Council Standing Orders 16 and 17, because by its decision of 27 August 2020 the Cabinet mandated the Chief Executive to submit the Strategic Case for Change to MHCLG and, unless and until the present decision is taken, the Chief Executive remains subject to that mandate, potentially requiring her to submit the Strategic Case for Change in circumstances where it would no longer be appropriate for her to do so. Any delay that would be likely to be caused by a call-in of the present decision would seriously prejudice the Council and the public interest because it would perpetuate this state of affairs.

Financial implications

None

Environmental implications

None

Report Author	Sarah Duxbury – Assistant Director Governance & Policy
Assistant Director	Sarah Duxbury – Assistant Director Governance & Policy
Lead Director	Monica Fogarty – Chief Executive
Lead Member	Cllr Izzi Seccombe – Leader of the Council

Urgent matter?	Yes
Confidential or exempt?	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of background papers (If applicable)
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None

Members and officers consulted and informed
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Corporate Board – Chief Executive, Strategic Director for Resources

Legal – Assistant Director, Governance & Policy

Finance – Assistant Director, Finance

Democratic Services – Paul Williams

Councillors – Group Leaders

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