

Cabinet

Thursday 10 March 2022

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE (Chair)
Councillor Margaret Bell
Councillor Peter Butlin
Councillor Andy Crump
Councillor Andy Jenns
Councillor Kam Kaur
Councillor Wallace Redford
Councillor Heather Timms

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillor Jeff Morgan.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 17 February 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

(4) Public Speaking

None.

2. Education Capital Programme 2021/22

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader of the Council) presented this item in the absence of Councillor Jeff Morgan. Councillor Butlin summarised the report which detailed four projects for addition to the capital programme: The Griffin School in Rugby (existing project), Clopton Nursery Trust in Stratford upon Avon, Radford Semele CE Primary School in Warwick District and the

former Radio Mast Site in Houlton, Rugby. Developer contributions of £1.609 million would be used to fund the projects outlined in the report.

In response to a question from Councillor Barbara Brown regarding whether the Council was on course to meet the schools building target, it was agreed that Councillor Morgan would be asked to provide a written response.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the addition of £1.609 million to the capital programme to deliver the schemes outlined in Section 3 of the report.
2. Approves the proposal to allocate a further £0.297 million (plus indexation) of developer funding to the capital programme to deliver the scheme outlined in Section 3, paragraph 3.18 of the report, when the funding has been received
3. Authorises, subject to the approval of recommendation 1 above, the Strategic Director for Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education, to invite tenders and enter into contracts that he considers necessary on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources

3. Performance Management & Business Planning Framework

Councillor Andy Jenns (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) explained that a revised Performance Management & Business Planning Framework had been developed as part of the organisation's approach to integrated planning. The framework was a critical element of the approach that would enable stakeholders to monitor progress in achieving the objectives set out in the new Council Plan. The paper set out the principles that underpinned the new framework and the specific performance measures that would be monitored during 2022/23 were attached as Appendix 2. Councillor Jenns noted that the process of producing the framework had been informed by the outcomes of a cross-party member working group and he thanked the members of that group for their work which had resulted in a number of specific recommendations that had been used to shape the new framework. Councillor Jenns explained why performance management was important, the types of information that needed to be monitored and how information would be used.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe, Leader of the Council, thanked the members of the working group for their valuable input.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, who had taken part in the cross-party working group, drew attention to appendix 3 to the report which specified the recommendations of the working group. He particularly looked forward to the implementation of a digital library of the Council's strategies and highlighted the importance of using the Overview and Scrutiny Chair & Spokes meetings to introduce reporting and review of performance. He thanked all the officers who had supported the development of the Framework and considered that resources for monitoring the new framework would need to be kept under review.

Councillor Kam Kaur, who had also been a member of the cross-party member working group celebrated the framework as another piece of the jigsaw in the Council's journey of transformation.

Councillor Jenns noted the comments made and reiterated thanks to the working group and the officers who had worked on the framework.

Resolved

1. That Cabinet approves the revised Performance Management & Business Improvement Framework and requests.
2. That regular performance reports be brought to Cabinet to help embed a culture of high performance across the organisation.

4. On-street Parking Management - Cross Party Working Group Recommendations

Councillor Wallace Redford (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning) explained the background to the setting up of the cross party working group, noting that in 2007, Cabinet initially agreed parking policies based on the principle that charges for residents permits should be based on the cost of administering the scheme and should not be profit making. In 2020 Cabinet took the decision to hold permit prices due to the impact of the pandemic but asked that a cross party working group be set up to review the pricing structure. Councillor Redford summarised the recommendations that were set out in the report, particularly noting the recommendation to introduce a tiered charging system for multi-car households which included deletion of the third residents' permit. The group also recommended that charges should be reviewed every three years in line with inflation and that a 25% discount should be available for electric vehicles, with the proviso that only one 25% discount could be applied per household. Whilst the working group's recommendations initially excluded hybrid models from the proposed discount scheme, Councillor Wallace indicated that his subsequent discussions had led him to propose that Cabinet include hybrid models in the discount scheme. Councillor Redford also advised that the working group had recommended that the concept of a business permit be explored further, that the cost of the guesthouse visitor parking scheme should rise as set out in the report and that pay and display charges should at least match those charged by the District and Borough Councils. Councillor Redford stressed that the residents' permit charges should remain non-profit making and stated that the proposed charges would result in an average permit cost of £60 across the entire permit uptake, which was close to the externally assessed value of £63 per permit. Councillor Redford noted the working group's recommendation to review the impact of the increases 12 months after their implementation.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe (Leader of the Council) welcomed the paper and thanked the working group for their efforts. She noted the comparison data on the charges made by other local authorities, which reflected the position of Warwickshire not to increase charges in 2020 as part of the drive to support post-Covid recovery in the town centres, and reflected on the current international situation with residents facing numerous financial increases and that it would be important to now reflect their interests in the scheme alongside those of business and the town centres. She suggested that Cabinet defer implementation of the pricing of on street parking only, not permits, for 12 months so that the impact of cost of living rises could be better understood.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse noted that the working group had undertaken a valuable task but that there was not unanimous agreement on the recommendations set out at paragraph 2.5 and he considered that future reports of this nature should be more clear on voting matters. Councillor Roodhouse highlighted that key workers, such as a domiciliary care worker who had been in touch with him, required their cars to undertake their jobs and the proposed increases would be a blow to

family finances. Therefore, he considered that more account should be taken of the impact of the charges on key workers, particularly in light of the increasing cost of living. He suggested that a deferral would provide time to consider this further and obtain more data about the numbers involved and he suggested the introduction of a discount permit for key workers. Councillor Roodhouse also considered that the report did not address the issue of the high number of cars associated with Houses in Multiple Occupation. He welcomed more in-depth discussions about the affected communities to ensure that key workers were not driven to alternative career paths as a result of the financial burdens being imposed. He concluded by urging Cabinet to defer the whole decision.

Councillor John Holland supported previous comments but raised concern about the vitality and prosperity of town centres. He noted that one of the aims of introducing resident parking schemes was as part of a recovery strategy for town centres by encouraging people to live in them. Opening flats above shops not only created more homes but had the added benefit of driving crime reduction. He noted that residents' parking was a limited resource and a balance was needed between allowing residents to take up space by parking all day or making space for retail customers. He suggested that changing the scheme was inappropriate at a time when closer work was needed with the District and Borough Councils and residents had been encouraged to live in the town centres on the basis that parking permits were available. He supported proposals for the decision to be delayed and welcomed opportunities to link the scheme to the economic activity of town centres and the prosperity of residents.

Whilst the debate was taking place, Councillor Seccombe had entered into some discussion with some of her Cabinet colleagues, and she informed the meeting that if Cabinet chose to move forward with the recommendations, a public consultation would be required. She suggested that, as the cost of living was a key concern and that the working group had not addressed some of the issues being raised, that the statutory consultation be launched on the proposals which would allow Cabinet time to consider those particular areas. In any event, she considered that Cabinet was keen to defer the implementation due to the rising cost of living which would give further time to receive feedback on the impact on key workers and agree the timescale that Cabinet wanted to take forward on the implementation.

Councillor Peter Butlin noted the impact that the international situation was having and expressed the view that the focus of the report was parking habits and the proposed pricing structure was a part of influencing those habits. However, he echoed the view that it was important to be mindful of those who could not afford an increase but still needed a car to conduct their job and he felt that more investigation needed to take place on this issue and supported consultation for that to take place.

Councillor Margaret Bell, also supported a consultation, noting the impact that the proposals would have in North Warwickshire where civil parking enforcement was being introduced and she welcomed the proposal to enter the consultation with further consideration of timescales.

Councillor Heather Timms highlighted that the charging infrastructure for electric vehicles was not present on the streets where the permits were being proposed and more joined up consideration of policies was required going forward.

Councillor Wallace Redford agreed with the proposals above and in response to Councillor Roodhouse's earlier comments, he also noted that it was not unusual for working groups to reach a majority decision and stated that this had been reflected in the report.

Councillor Seccombe clarified the recommendations before the Cabinet and it was **resolved**:

That Cabinet

1. Endorses the recommendations made by the Cross-Party Working Group in sections 2 and 3 of the report, but with the discount for electric vehicles extended to hybrid vehicles, and authorises the Strategic Director for Communities to advertise variations to the on-street parking orders pursuant to sections 45 and 46 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 giving effect to the changes to the residents' and guesthouses' permit structure and charges so recommended;
2. Requests a further report following statutory consultation advising on the issues raised in the debate, any objections or comments received, any proposed modifications, and on an appropriate timescale for implementation of any variations, including the proposal to defer implementation for 12 months.

5. Enhanced Partnership (National Bus Strategy)

Councillor Wallace Redford (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning) summarised this report which explained that the County Council had been working in partnership with bus operators to produce the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), which reflected the vision for bus travel in Warwickshire. The Enhanced Partnership Plan was a summary version of the BSIP which provided the context for improvement to bus services and the supporting infrastructure in the county and an Enhanced Partnership Scheme had also been produced which set out how the Plan objectives would be achieved. The Plan and Scheme had been subject to a successful consultation which had further shaped the content. In January 2022, the Department for Transport (DfT) had announced changes to the Enhanced Partnership timetable as detailed in the report and further information on the grant funding available for the project was awaited. The recommendations set out in the report would enable the County Council to enter an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators by the end of April 2022 presenting benefits to bus passengers across the county and providing a gateway towards receiving investment from the DfT aimed at improving the Warwickshire bus network.

Councillor Peter Butlin welcomed the report, particularly noting that the recommendations were key to ensuring eligibility for DfT funding linked to the National Bus Strategy. The report also proposed the submission of a final rather than draft plan by April 2022 and Councillor Butlin was supportive of the clear approach set out in the report.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse welcomed the work of the cross-party working group that was assisting with the development of the Enhanced Partnership, and lamented the delay to government funding.

Councillor Heather Timms welcomed the report, particularly around demand responsive transport in rural areas to tackle isolation and how that fed into the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the health and wellbeing agenda as access to transport was identified as a barrier to accessing services. Councillor Timms also sought continued support for organisations such as VASA, who

provided a volunteer service to take passengers to medical appointments or social inclusion activities, and considered that there remained a place for them within the transport scheme.

Councillor Kam Kaur thanked the team for their work, particularly Nigel Whyte, for his enthusiasm, engagement and passion for the strategy.

Councillor Wallace Redford also applauded the contribution of VASA, particularly in the south of the county and welcomed the expansion of the service into the north.

Resolved

That Cabinet

1. Authorises the Strategic Director for Communities to make the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme by the end of April 2022.
2. Authorises the Strategic Director for Communities to carry out the appropriate procedures to make the minor modifications to the Scheme mentioned in paragraph 4.2 of the report.
3. Authorises the Strategic Director for Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning, to make the further modifications to the Plan and Scheme mentioned in paragraph 4.5 of the report having consulted with the Department for Transport (DfT) and undertaken the necessary statutory consultations.
4. Authorises the Strategic Director for Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning, to submit the drafts of an Enhanced Partnership Scheme 2 and an Enhanced Partnership Scheme 3 to the DfT later in 2022-23 if he considers it appropriate in light of decisions on the award of external funding and negotiations with operators.

6. Provision of Integrated Mental Health Services

Councillor Margaret Bell (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health) summarised this report which sought approval to enter into a further Section 75 partnership agreement with Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust for the provision of adult mental health services. This represented an extension of existing arrangements, and although the service had national recognition for partnership working, an external review had identified some improvements which would be put forward in a transformation agenda for the first year and those elements that worked well would be embedded into the way the partnership worked.

Councillor John Holland welcomed the report, particularly in terms of the levelling up agenda.

Councillor Isobel Secombe applauded the work of the multi-disciplinary teams in providing help and support to their clients to live their best lives.

Councillor Bell supported a request made by Councillor Jerry Roodhouse for overview and scrutiny involvement in monitoring the delivery of the outcomes of the review and the transformation that was being planned for the first year of the agreement.

Resolved

That Cabinet

1. Agrees to a further Partnership Agreement between Warwickshire County Council and Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust for the provision of integrated community mental health and social care services for a term of 3 years from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2025.
2. Authorises the Strategic Director for People to enter into appropriate Agreements on terms and conditions acceptable to him and the Strategic Director for Resources as described in this report.

7. Developing a Devolution Deal for Warwickshire

Councillor Isobel Seccombe (Leader of the Council) presented this report which followed publication of the government's Levelling Up White Paper on 2 February 2022. The four core objectives of the White Paper were to boost productivity, spread opportunities, restore a sense of community and place, and empower local leaders and communities. Councillor Seccombe noted that the report provided a summary analysis of the key elements of the White Paper, providing linkages to the new Council Plan and the supporting State of Warwickshire report. Councillor Seccombe drew attention to the summary of the White Paper's devolution framework set out in the report and the proposed direction of travel and next steps to ensure Warwickshire was best positioned to benefit from this change in policy. Councillor Seccombe highlighted the headline messages from the White Paper, comprehensively detailed at paragraph 2 of the report, and proposed that work should be undertaken to explore what a devolution deal might look like for the county. She considered that the Council's aims and objectives aligned with the core objectives of the White Paper and supported working with districts and borough colleagues to understand their ambitions, together with those of the Council's wider partners.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse recognised that devolution was part of the national landscape and welcomed conversations with the district and borough leaders. He raised linkages with the future structure of the Local Enterprise Partnership, emphasised the view that this issue had to be considered separately to unitary proposals and the need to focus on the outcome for residents. He suggested that a working group made up of the group leaders could explore the issues involved further. He welcomed further discussion with the district and borough councils and welcomed the opportunities that devolution presented to improve services for residents.

Councillor Barbara Brown emphasised the need to have clarity about what improvements to residents' lives were being sought at the outset, stating that this was essential to understand what the aims and objectives of the proposals would be.

Councillor Seccombe considered that this was an important opportunity for Warwickshire communities. She considered that the Council was aware of inequalities in parts of the county regarding education and health that needed to be addressed but which the Council could not address on its own and a more global view with partners could better address these issues. She considered that it would be appropriate to establish a cross-party member working group to support the development of a devolution deal.

Resolved

That Cabinet

1. Supports and commissions the development of a Devolution Deal for Warwickshire
2. Authorises the Chief Executive to develop a Devolution Deal for consideration by Cabinet, engaging with key stakeholders and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and

Communities and to take such other steps as she considers necessary in consultation with the Leader

3. Requests that a Cross Party Member Working Group be established to support the development of the Devolution Deal.

8. Warwickshire Recovery and Investment Fund - Business Plan

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader of the Council) presented the report, noting that the report followed previous reports to Cabinet and set out the updated Warwickshire Recovery and Investment Fund (WRIF) Business Plan for 2022/23-2026/27. The WRIF was made up of three pillars: the Business Investment Growth (BIG) Fund, the Property and Infrastructure (PIF) Fund and the Local Communities and Enterprise (LCE) Fund, the latter of which was about to launch and was attracting interest from small business. The original Business Plan, included as an appendix to the report, set out the proposals for the WRIF together with detail around its operation and Councillor Butlin summarised the key changes which were identified in Appendix 1 to the report.

Resolved

That Cabinet approves the updated Warwickshire Recovery Investment Fund Business Plan for 2022/23-2026/27 and notes the key changes as summarised in Appendix 1 of the report.

9. Establishment of a WPDG Subsidiary Development Company

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader of the Council) introduced this report which bore similarities to the Cabinet report presented in January 2022 which sought permission to establish the WPDG Management Company subsidiary. This report sought approval to set up the Commercial and Residential Development Company subsidiary to WPDG by April 2022. This provided a tax efficient operating structure for WPDG and only required a small amount of officer time to support the formal establishment of the new subsidiary company.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the establishment of a subsidiary company by Warwickshire Property and Development Group Limited (WPDG) to operate as a commercial and residential development company.
2. Authorises the Strategic Director for Resources to take any steps he considers necessary to implement the above approval.

10. Reports Containing Exempt or Confidential 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 paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

11. Exempt Minutes of the 17 February 2022 Meeting of Cabinet

The exempt minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17 February 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

12. Warwickshire Property and Development Company Limited Site Specific Business Case

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader of the Council) introduced this item and summarised the exempt report.

Resolved

The recommendations as set out in the exempt report were agreed.

The meeting rose at 3.10pm

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Chair