

Cabinet

Thursday 16 February 2023

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE (Chair)
Councillor Margaret Bell
Councillor Peter Butlin
Councillor Andy Crump
Councillor Andy Jenns
Councillor Jeff Morgan
Councillor Heather Timms
Councillor Martin Watson

Officers

Amy Bridgewater-Carnall – Senior Democratic Services Officer
Benjamin Brook, Chief Fire Officer
Sarah Duxbury, Assistant Director for Governance and Policy
Monica Fogarty, Chief Executive
Nigel Minns, Strategic Director for People
Rob Powell, Strategic Director for Resources
Virginia Rennie, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Strategic Finance)
Steve Smith, Assistant Director - Commissioning Support Unit

Others Present

Councillor John Holland
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse

1. General

The Leader welcomed everyone to the meeting.

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Kam Kaur and Wallace Redford.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 27 January 2023 were agreed as an accurate

record.

(4) Public Speaking

None.

2. Council Plan 2022-2027 - Integrated Performance Report Quarter 3 2022/23

Councillor Andy Jenns introduced the report which asked Cabinet to consider the Quarter 3 organisational performance, progress against the Integrated Delivery Plan and management of Human Resources and Risk.

This was a retrospective summary of the Council's performance at the end of the third quarter from April to December 2022.

Councillor Jenns reminded Members that they had access to the Power BI Dashboards if they wanted to drill down into the data in more detail and he noted some of the positive aspects of performance. These included 99% of Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme applications being supported, a decrease in the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan and the data relating to the percentage of in year applications that had a school place offered within target deadlines.

Councillor Jenns also outlined the positive performance relating to the Management of Human Resources which included the continued decrease in the annual sickness absence rate, stabilisation of absences attributed to Covid-19 and the successful winter flu vaccination programme for Council employees.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse stated that he was pleased to see, via the Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee, that investment was beginning to make a difference to services but noted there was still volatility in the system. He suggested that Cabinet may want to consider how it approached partnership working, with key partners getting round the table to deliver solutions and he made reference to Domestic Abuse in particular. He also noted the challenges that existed with HR and the workforce plan overall.

Councillor Andy Crump thanked him for highlighting the important issue of Domestic Abuse and referred to the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy which would be discussed later on the agenda. He felt this was a great example of multi-agency working and the report detailed the list of partners and groups set up to tackle it. Councillor Crump recognised that the decrease in the number of incidents being reported could be for a variety of reasons, but he reiterated the importance of encouraging individuals to report any instances of abuse.

Councillor Margaret Bell echoed the comments made and reiterated that domestic abuse was taken very seriously.

Councillor Martin Watson responded to the HR Management data, highlighting the relaunch of the Warwickshire Supported Employment Service (WSES) which encouraged individuals with learning disabilities and autism into the workplace and aimed to help over 400 people into paid and sustainable employment every year. He noted that the performance measures were on track and improving, and extended his congratulations to the officers involved in this work.

The Leader, Councillor Seccombe addressed the meeting reiterating the positive work that partnership working was achieving across a variety of areas including health. She felt this enabled officers and Members to work across the sector, allowing time to focus on the issues that mattered to residents, whilst keeping the work relevant and holding each other to account.

Councillor Jenns thanked everyone for their comments which would be taken on board, and he proposed the recommendations as laid out.

Resolved that the Quarter 3 organisational performance, progress against the Integrated Delivery Plan and management of Human Resources and Risk be noted.

3. Determination of Admission Arrangements, Co-ordinated Scheme and In Year process for school admissions for the 2024/2025 Academic year

Councillor Jeff Morgan introduced the report which sought approval for the Admission Arrangements, Co-ordinated Scheme and In Year process for school admissions during the 2024/25 Academic Year.

The report also sought authorisation for the Strategic Director People to approve the Admission Arrangements, Co-ordinated Scheme and In Year admission process in future years, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education.

Councillor Morgan explained the purpose of the report, which was an annual requirement, detailing the process for handling admissions. He signposted Members to the minor changes proposed for 2024/25 and advised that responses to the consultation had been low.

There were no questions or comments on the report.

Resolved that

- 1) the Admission Arrangements, Co-ordinated Scheme and In Year process for school admissions during the 2024/2025 Academic year, as outlined in Appendix 1, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3, are approved; and
- 2) the Strategic Director for People is authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education, to approve the Admission Arrangements, Co-ordinated Scheme and In Year admission process in future years, unless those arrangements or schemes are subject to consultation as outlined in Section 1.

4. Educational Attainment Working Group Report

Councillor Bell outlined the report which presented the progress and recommendations made by the Educational Attainment Member Working Group.

The Group had been established to examine the inequalities in educational attainment across Warwickshire, following submission of a motion to Full Council in July 2022.

Councillor Bell provided some background to the Group which had been chaired by Councillor Brett Beetham and explained that the Group's work had been held up slightly due to the period of national mourning. She explained that whilst the Group had made good progress, it was felt that

further discussions were required and the report requested permission for the Group to continue to meet. She highlighted the next steps that the Group hoped to make as detailed on page 110 of the document pack. These included visits to schools, a focus on mental health support in schools and encouraging the take up of free school meals.

Councillor Seccombe expressed her thanks to the Group for taking on the work.

Councillor Morgan added his support to the report and agreed that it was important to get underneath the data and find out where the problems really were. He also suggested that the George Eliot School in Nuneaton was a good example of a school that had improved from 'requires improvement' to 'good' under Ofsted.

Councillor Bell thanked Members for their support and proposed the recommendations as laid out.

Resolved that

- 1) the progress made by the Educational Attainment Member Working Group, be noted;
- 2) the recommendations made by the Member Working Group, as set out in Section 3 of the report are approved, and the development of those recommendations into a costed action plan is supported; and
- 3) the continuation of the Member Working Group is approved, to enable it to gather further evidence and to develop the costed action plan for consideration by Cabinet.

5. Warwickshire Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2026

The report presented the Warwickshire Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2023-2026 replacing the previous strategy which had covered the period 2015-2018.

Councillor Bell introduced the report and explained that this work followed on from a report considered at the last Cabinet meeting relating to the Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy. She referred to the updated VAWG strategy published by Government in 2021 and explained that Warwickshire had responded with their own, local version. She highlighted the focus on the delivery of four key priorities and objectives which included Prioritising Prevention, Supporting Victims, Pursuing Perpetrators and Reducing Re-offending and Strengthening the System. The report advised that implementation of the Strategy would be led by the VAWG Strategy Task and Finish Group and overseen by the VAWG Board.

Councillor Crump endorsed the report and gave credit to the officers and partnership working demonstrated. He highlighted the multi-agency approach as outlined in paragraph 2.3 of the report. He reminded everyone present of the damage and devastation that domestic abuse caused and the impact on families, carers and communities. Paragraph 2.7 of the report detailed funding via the Government's Safer Streets initiative and Councillor Crump explained that the total figure should be amended to read £375,000.

Councillor Roodhouse welcomed the report and supported the direction of travel. He went on to highlight that domestic abuse towards males should not be lost sight of and, whilst he recognised that occurrences were lower, coercive behaviour could be experienced on both sides of a relationship.

Councillor Seccombe agreed with the comments made and recognised the investment committed to supporting the service. She agreed with the comments made by Councillor Roodhouse and noted that there were other victim groups, rarely discussed including the abuse of parents by children. She referred to the definition of VAWG on page 128 of the report and recognised that there was a trend of change that everyone needed to be aware of. Councillor Seccombe concluded by encouraging open discussions with partners which would enable the Council to address the safety of residents in Warwickshire. She thanked both portfolio holders and the officers involved for their work.

Councillor Crump thanked everyone for their support and reminded them that domestic violence could occur in any relationship including same sex relationships.

Resolved that the Warwickshire Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2026 is approved.

6. Reports Containing Exempt or Confidential Information

Resolved:

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the item mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

7. Exempt Minutes of the 27 January 2023 Meeting of Cabinet

The exempt minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 27 January 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

The meeting ended at 14:22