

Cabinet

Thursday 15 February 2024

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE (Chair)
Councillor Peter Butlin
Councillor Andy Crump
Councillor Yousef Dahmash
Councillor Kam Kaur
Councillor Sue Markham
Councillor Jan Matecki
Councillor Heather Timms
Councillor Martin Watson

Officers

Monica Fogarty, Chief Executive
Nigel Minns, Executive Director for Children and Young People
Mark Ryder, Executive Director for Communities
Becky Hale, Executive Director for Social Care and Health
Steve Smith, Director of Strategic Infrastructure & Climate Change
Rob Powell, Executive Director for Resources

Others Present

Councillor John Holland
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse
Councillor Tim Sinclair

1. General

The Leader of the Council welcomed everyone to the meeting.

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Margaret Bell.

(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 23 January 2024 were agreed as an accurate

record.

(4) Public Speaking

There was none.

2. Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services

Councillor Sue Markham, Portfolio Holder for Children & Families, introduced the report which requested approval to extend the current Section 75 agreement with Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board for the provision of Children and Young People Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services (known locally as Rise) for a further period of up to two-years from 1 August 2024.

Councillor Markham provided an overview of the service and explained the reasons for requesting an extension. She advised that a joint review of the current arrangements was underway, with both the contract and Section 75 agreement due to expire at the end of July 2024. Councillor Markham concluded by signposting Members to the two options being considered as detailed at paragraph 3.6 of the report.

Councillor John Holland noted that a number of complaints were being considered relating to this area of work and requested that the independent inquiry be completed as a matter of urgency. He also referred to the Complaints Procedure which was due to be considered later in the agenda.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse felt this was an extremely important report and welcomed the extension as proposed to allow a level footing for the service whilst it progressed through the relevant process. He queried the timescales and how closely scrutiny would get involved, as he felt that was a role for elected Members to play.

In response, Councillor Izzy Seccombe agreed to discuss this with Councillor Roodhouse in his capacity as Vice-Chair of the relevant scrutiny Committee. She reiterated the importance of having a provision that worked well for the Council, highlighting the benefit that early intervention and support for young people could have.

Councillor Markham assured that this would be an in-depth process and proposed the recommendations as laid out.

Resolved

That Cabinet

- 1) Supports the extension of the existing Section 75 agreement with Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board for the provision of Children and Young People Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services (known locally as Rise) for a further period of up to two-years from 1 August 2024, to facilitate re-commissioning of the Rise service; and

Authorises the Executive Director for Social Care and Health in consultation with the Executive Director for Children and Young People and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Families to finalise the service delivery model, to undertake a re-commissioning (joint or otherwise) of the

service and to enter into such agreements for the provision of Children and Young People Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services as she considers necessary on terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director for Resources.

3. Improved Better Care Fund 2024/25

Councillor Seccombe introduced the report which detailed the list of schemes to be funded from the Improved Better Care Fund (BCF) for 2024/25. She reminded Members that the fund had been agreed by Cabinet last summer, noting that there was no inflationary lift.

Councillor Seccombe explained that the BCF was a joint programme with the NHS which aimed to enable people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer and ensured the provision of care was in the right place at the right time. She requested approval of the allocations as identified in the report.

Councillor Roodhouse asked if there was any news on social prescribing and recognised the restrictions placed on the Council in this area as a result of only receiving annual funding. He asked how Cabinet would reprioritise the list of allocations if there were issues in the future.

Councillor Peter Butlin explained that commissioning was time limited with exit clauses built in and agreed that further projection for finances would be preferable but unfortunately, the current situation dictated short term funding only.

Councillor Seccombe supported the comments made regarding one year funding which meant that officers could not forward plan or future proof schemes. She advised that hospital social prescribing had agreed partnership contributors for six months, with the Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to review this.

The recommendations were outlined as per the report.

Resolved

That Cabinet

- 1) approves the list of schemes to be funded from the Improved Better Care Fund including the pooled contribution of £15.133m by the Council for 2024/25 (as agreed between the Council and the Warwickshire Integrated Care Board) and the plan for resources as set out in paragraph 2.6 and Appendix 1, and

authorises the Executive Director for Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health, to make such changes to the list of schemes as she considers necessary as a result of any amendments to the Better Care Fund Policy Framework.

4. Determination of Admission Arrangements, Co-ordinated Scheme and In Year process for school admissions for the 2025/2026 Academic year

Councillor Kam Kaur, Portfolio Holder for Education, introduced the report which explained that all schools must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children would be admitted,

including the criteria that will be applied if there were more applications than places at the school. This report outlined the process for school admissions during the 2025/26 academic year.

Councillor Kaur advised that Warwickshire County Council was the admission authority for 91 schools and explained that academy schools were their own decision maker. She provided an overview of the benefits of the process in relation to pupil safeguarding and the ability to track vulnerable children. In addition, she highlighted the information in the report relating to the student intake at Kingsbury Primary and Newbury Primary Schools. Details of the consultation and any relevant changes by the Department for Education were reflected in the report.

Having received no questions from Members, Councillor Kaur outlined the recommendations as detailed in the report.

Resolved

That Cabinet

- 1) Approves the Admission Arrangements, Co-ordinated Scheme and In Year process for school admissions during the 2025/2026 Academic year, as outlined in Appendix 1, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3; and

Authorises the Executive Director for Children and Young People 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.

5. Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Councillor Jan Matecki, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning, introduced the report which described the Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and summarised the information gathering and consultation process that had taken place.

Councillor Matecki explained that the plan would build on the work currently underway, whilst supporting and responding to the demands for more cycling, walking and active travel provision. In addition, the proposals assisted with the reduction of Co2 emissions and demonstrated commitment to the LTP4 programme.

Councillor Tim Sinclair addressed the meeting as Chair of the cross-party Cycling Group, acknowledging the work undertaken to get the plan to this stage and recognising the meaningful consultation that had taken place. He highlighted the need for action now and thanked all officers and Members involved in pushing this work forwards.

Councillor Roodhouse also welcomed the document and recognised how hard officers had worked with the consultation groups. He looked forward to taking the plan back to Rugby Town Council and hoped the funding would be forthcoming to match the ambitions.

Councillor Heather Timms, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture, praised the officers involved in the work and highlighted the links to the Sustainable Futures Strategy. She

noted that additional funding would help to drive the rural economy in Warwickshire and hoped the projects would encourage healthier living.

Councillor Matecki therefore proposed the recommendations as laid out.

Resolved

That Cabinet approves the Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

6. Quarter 3 Integrated Performance Report

Councillor Yousef Dahmash, Portfolio Holder for Customer & Transformation, introduced the report which provided a retrospective summary of the Council's performance at the end of Quarter 3 (April – December 2023) against the strategic priorities and Areas of Focus set out in the Council Plan 2022-2027.

Councillor Dahmash encouraged Members to look at the PowerBI Dashboards for more detailed information and outlined some key highlights including childcare entitlement for 3 to 4 year olds being above average and economic growth which continued to do well.

Challenges included the increased costs in SEND and Home to School Transport services, data relating to the number of overweight children in year 6, increased demand in social care and an increase in sickness absence figures from HR. However, Council vacancies were reducing as a result of successful recruitment activity.

Councillor Roodhouse acknowledged the pressures experienced by the Child Friendly Warwickshire teams with demand increasing. He also felt more could be done to address the number of hospital admissions as a result of self-harm as well as children being admitted as a result of alcohol related issues. He recognised how hard officers were working to address the challenges.

Councillor Seccombe agreed with the comments and reiterated how important services such as Rise were. She assured that officers and Cabinet Members were fully aware of the impact that demand led pressures brought and noted the comments made regarding obesity in children. She advised that Councillor Bell would be taking this issue forward with Public Health colleagues.

Councillor Dahmash proposed the recommendations.

Resolved

That Cabinet

1) Considers and comments on the Quarter 3 2023/24 organisational performance; and

Agrees to refer the report to Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider, in detail, the information relevant to their individual remits.

7. Customer Complaints Policy

Councillor Yousef Dahmash, Portfolio Holder for Customer & Transformation, outlined the report proposing the revised Customer Complaints Policy for approval. He provided background information about the project which had been undertaken over recent months, highlighting that a key driver had been to ensure the complainant was aware of the processes and timelines involved. The approach remained one of dealing with complaints efficiently and transparently.

Whilst there were no significant changes to the policy, this was now split into three standalone documents dealing with Adults Social Care Statutory Complaints, Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints and the overarching Customer Complaints Policy.

Councillor Dahmash highlighted the provision that dealt with unreasonable behaviour towards officers, which he reiterated was unacceptable and abuse would not be tolerated. He signposted Members to paragraph 1.6 of the report which provided further detail.

Councillor Secombe noted that this policy dealt with customer service complaints and not Members complaints. The report was seeking to improve the existing provision and deliver a better service.

Councillor Holland supported the aim of the changes but advised that he would like further clarification on how neighbour issues were managed. He provided an example of an existing dispute regarding Cape Road Car Park which appeared to remain unresolved. The Leader advised that as this issue was under the judicial process, it would be inappropriate to discuss it in this forum. She assured Councillor Holland that she would be happy to assist with his query outside of the meeting.

Councillor Sinclair recognised that commercial organisations embraced complaints as a way to improve services. Councillor Dahmash agreed and assured that the focus was to become receptive and not defensive. He outlined the recommendations as detailed in the report.

Resolved

That Cabinet approves the revised Customer Complaints Policy, incorporating the updated Childrens and Adults Social Care Statutory Procedures, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

8. Reports Containing Exempt or Confidential Information

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 Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

9. Exempt Minutes of the 23 January 2023 Meeting of Cabinet

The exempt minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 23 January 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

10. Estates Master Planning Programme Capital Investment Funding request

Councillor Peter Butlin, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property, introduced the exempt report.

Resolved

That the recommendations as set out in the report be approved.

The meeting rose at 14:29

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Chair