

Cabinet

Thursday 8 July 2021

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 Jeff Morgan
Councillor Wallace Redford
Councillor Heather Timms

Others Present

Councillors Sarah Feeney, John Holland and Jerry Roodhouse

1. General

(1) Apologies

None

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

None

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 17 June 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

(4) Public Speaking

None

2. Council Plan and Integrated Planning 2022 - 2026

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet) opened this item by stating that it is a basic principle that a new administration reviews the council plan, making sure that it is ready to take the council forward. The council has two priorities based around looking after the

most vulnerable and securing a vibrant and growing economy. For these to be realised it will be necessary to ensure that the county is assisted in its recovery from the Pandemic. A major feature of any new plan will be climate change the council having signed up to the climate emergency in July 2019.

Councillor Andy Jenns (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) stated that the new plan will be strategic in nature and will cover a five-year period. It will be supported by a delivery plan that will be reviewed annually. The new plan will incorporate the Covid-19 Recovery Plan and will be enhanced by the use of a revised performance management framework. In developing the plan, the public, partners, staff and members will all have an opportunity to provide input.

Cabinet was informed that it is expected that the new plan and the MTFS will be reported to Cabinet in December.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) welcomed the proposal for cross party working on the plan. There is need to work at a fast pace he added. Referencing paragraph 3.7 of the report Councillor Jerry Roodhouse welcomed the reference to a golden thread adding that it will be necessary to track performance from the plan to action on the ground and back again. Referencing the "Voice of Warwickshire" it was noted that representation should come from across the whole county. Finally, it was suggested that climate change should be referenced when considering environmental issues in reports.

Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture) welcomed references to climate change. Since 2019 the council has been working hard on climate change initiatives and had recently signed up to UK100.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the continuation of the Council's Vision with refinement of our existing priority outcomes and addition of a third outcome related to Climate Change (paragraph 3.4)
- 2) Approves the approach to the development of the Council Plan 2022-26 and the design principles set out in paragraph 3.7 and authorises the Chief Executive to progress development of the Council Plan on this basis
- 3) Recommends that the Overview and Scrutiny Committees programme consideration of the emerging Council Plan into their Autumn work programmes
- 4) Authorises the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation to finalise the arrangements for engagement in relation to the Council Plan
- 5) Supports the ongoing work in relation to Integrated Planning underpinning the Council Plan
- 6) Approves the establishment of a cross party member working group to develop proposals for a refreshed Performance Management Framework

3. A Financial Framework for the 2022/23 MTFS Refresh

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader, Finance and Property) told Cabinet that it is now time to begin to look at next year's budget. The impact of the Pandemic means that a significant reconfiguration of the budget will be required. Pre-Covid the council was in a strong position having a balanced budget. However, pressures have built up and additional savings will now be required. In particular spending pressures exist around adult social care, SEND and children's placements. One area of concern is the uncertainty around the post-pandemic picture and in particular around the funding that will be made available by government. Demand for certain services may increase following the pandemic but it is unclear where these might be or their extent.

Councillor John Holland (Leader of the Labour Group) expressed his concern over those services, many of which assist the most vulnerable, that are struggling to manage financially. He suggested that there is not enough money to go round. Councillor John Holland concluded by stating that whilst investment is to be welcomed there remain areas where cuts are being made and where the impacts will be felt in the longer term.

Referencing section 3.4 of the published report Councillor Sarah Feeney (Deputy Leader of the Labour Group) stated that the "right savings" should not impact on the most vulnerable.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse agreed that it is what the council does not know that is a problem. Announcements are awaited from the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, but the picture will remain unclear for some while. Councillor Jerry Roodhouse proposed that a briefing be held for members in December 2021 concerning savings that will be required. Councillor Izzi Seccombe welcomed this suggestion adding that it could be done by groups taking account of the learning needs of new councillors in particular.

Councillor Peter Butlin agreed with previous speakers that the priority should be to look after the needs of the most vulnerable. He added that whilst savings figures of £20m-£30m are significant they need to be considered in relation to the council's overall spending over the next five years. The tax base is growing, and the economy is showing signs of recovery. A three-year settlement would be useful to allow for longer term financial planning he concluded.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the emerging financial position within which the 2022/23 budget and 2022-27 Medium Term Financial Strategy will be developed;
- 2) Agrees the proposals for the refresh of the 2022/23 MTFS and Capital Strategy, as set out in Sections 3 and 4;
- 3) Notes the requirement for the Authority to set a sustainable balanced budget which shows how income will equal spend over the short- and medium-term; and
- 4) Approves the timetable for agreeing the 2022/23 budget.

4. Warwickshire Joint Procurement Activity for Community Services for Working Age Adults, with Learning Disabilities, Autism, Mental Health or Physical Disabilities; Permission to Formally Consult on Proposals.

Councillor Margaret Bell (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health) summarised the key elements of the published report and explained the nature of the service model being proposed.

The framework for specialist interventions was welcomed by Councillor Jerry Roodhouse who added that with there needs to be a recognition of the incidence of Long Covid within the commissioning intentions. Councillor Jerry Roodhouse concluded by stating that it would be interesting to receive feedback from clients to establish if the new approach is working.

Councillor Bell agreed that Long-Covid should be factored in.

Resolved:

1) That Cabinet authorises the Strategic Director for People to proceed with an appropriate procurement process for the provision of Community Services for Adults with learning disabilities, autism, mental health or physical disabilities and authorises the Strategic Director for People to enter into all relevant contracts for the provision of these services on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

2) That Cabinet authorises the Strategic Director for People to enter into a partnership agreement with NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Clinical Commissioning Group under section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 to manage the joint commissioning, on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

3) That Cabinet authorises the Strategic Director for People to proceed with an appropriate procurement process for the provision of Learning Disability Wellbeing Hubs and authorises the Strategic Director for People or his nominee to enter into all relevant contracts for the provision of these services on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

5. West Midlands Rail Collaboration Agreement

Councillor Wallace Redford (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning) explained the background to the report adding that in effect one agreement is simply being exchanged for another.

Councillor Peter Butlin informed Cabinet that he is the Vice Chair of the West Midlands Rail Ltd Board. The Chair is the Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority. It is expected that ongoing engagement with West Midlands Rail Ltd will provide enhanced exposure to the Minister for Transport.

Resolved:

1) That Cabinet notes the new West Midlands Rail Limited/Department for Transport Collaboration Agreement ("CA2") approved in principle by the West Midlands Rail Limited Board in June

2) That Cabinet endorses the changes made in CA2 and supports the implementation of CA2 from 13th September 2021 as outlined in report.

6. Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

The meeting rose at 15.15hrs

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Chair