

Cabinet

Thursday 9 September 2021

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Margaret Bell
Councillor Peter Butlin
Councillor Andy Crump
Councillor Kam Kaur
Councillor Jeff Morgan
Councillor Heather Timms

Others Present

Councillors John Holland, Jerry Roodhouse and Martin Watson

1. General

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader, Finance and Property and Chair of this meeting of Cabinet) made two announcements.

1) Young Authority of the Year. Laura Pain and George McVerry recently represented the County Council at the Young Local Authority of the Year competition. They competed against 16 other teams and won the competition. Congratulations are due to Laura and George.

2) Leamington Fire. The Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service is to be commended for the way it managed a recent industrial fire at Juno Drive in Leamington. Officers of the County Council and Warwick District Council worked closely to manage the situation away from the fire, providing a good example of partnership working. Twenty pumps attended the fire with appliances from neighbouring services attending to back-fill cover. Condolences are extended to the relatives of the individual missing after the fire.

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Izzi Seccombe, Andy Jenns and Wallace Redford.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

No declarations were made at the meeting.

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8 July were agreed as an accurate record to be signed by the Chair.

(4) Public Speaking

None

2. Council Plan 2020-2025 Quarter 1 Performance Progress Report Period under review: 1st April 2021 to 30th June 2021

Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Economy and Place) introduced the published report and highlighted some areas. She explained that the Council is returning to a “business as usual” status with a focus on its core work.

Cabinet was informed that there has been an increase in the number of businesses that have been assisted to start and grow, This is largely due to the large number of economic development programmes being developed.

Although customer satisfaction is high there are nine indicators that are not on track. Amongst those are Children’s Services, Fire and Rescue, the unemployment rate and spending on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Projections of performance are that it will remain static or improve.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) requested that he be provided with data on vacancy rates by directorate. This was agreed.

Resolved:

That Cabinet notes the progress of the delivery of the Council Plan 2020 - 2025 for the period as contained in the report.

3. 2021-22 Financial Monitoring - Forecast Position as at Quarter 1

Councillor Peter Butlin explained to Cabinet that a headline figure of an overspend of £20.995m is misleading. Funding has been put aside for these costs leaving £3.190m to be found. This latter figure is within the threshold variance. Whilst the Council is performing well in terms of its finances there are some areas of concern. These include the DSG and placement costs in Children’s Services. Spending is closely monitored but much of it is beyond the control of the Council.

Regarding capital projects Cabinet was advised that the Councils programme is very ambitious. It has, however, been impacted on by demands on supplies by the HS2 project and building work associated with the Commonwealth Games.

Concerned over DSG spending Cabinet agreed that a further element be added to the resolution. This states,

“Asks the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Education requesting that they urgently review and revise the rules around local authority support to the DSG. The letter to be copied to the Chairs of the Local Government Association and County Councils Network”.

Councillor Butlin concluded by stating that financial reserves are healthy.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- Notes the forecast overspend of £3.190m that would need to be funded from Directorate and General Risk Reserves at the end of 2021/22.
- Notes there is a forecast under-delivery of the 2021/22 savings requirement to the value of £0.874m.
- Notes the forecast capital spend for 2021/22 of £218.8m, of which £175.4m is capital payments controllable by the County Council and the balance, of £43.4m, relates to schemes funded by s278 developer contributions where the timing is not directly controllable by the Council.
- Approves the carry forward of the reprofiled spend on the capital programme of £17.656 in 2021/22 into future years and note the carry forward of S278 contributions of £10.043m that is not directly controllable by the Council.
- Approves the creation of a new earmarked reserve within People Directorate relating to the recently received Domestic Abuse Funding, in order to enable appropriate planning to ensure robust targeting of the funds to a realistic spend profile. Based on current estimates c50% (£0.523m) of the funding received would be transferred into the earmarked reserve to be incurred in future years.
- Asks the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Education requesting that they urgently review and revise the rules around local authority support to the DSG. The letter to be copied to the Chairs of the Local Government Association and County Councils Network.

4. Warwickshire Youth Justice Plan 2021-2022

Councillor Jeff Morgan (Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education) explained that the Youth Justice Service exists to help young people who have become involved with the criminal system. It is important to remember that these are young people first and criminals second. The Council is required to annually submit a service plan. This should set out the principles agreed with partners. Warwickshire's Youth Justice Service is rated highly. At one time its performance was well ahead of that of its statistical neighbours. Now those neighbours are catching up although this

may be because they have been copying the techniques used in Warwickshire and have improved correspondingly. Councillor Peter Butlin agreed that Warwickshire is used as a benchmark by others.

Councillor Jeff Morgan closed stating that the Fire and Rescue Service operates a citizenship course that targets young people who may be on the verge of becoming involved with crime.

Resolved:

That Cabinet supports and recommends to Council the Warwickshire Youth Justice Plan.

5. Education (Schools) Capital Programme 2021/22

Councillor Jeff Morgan opened this item explaining the need for a new all-through school to the south of Leamington Spa. A shortage of places caused by extensive house building in the area is forecast. The County Council has secured a site for the school at no cost, but the construction of the school will require the provision of funding by the Council. The site is not perfect. It has a pronounced slope and will require regrading. This will add to the overall cost.

A request has been made for an uplift to allow some community use of the facilities on the site. However, this would require additional funding. The principal objective is to get the school constructed and operational on time.

Councillor Peter Butlin observed that with the difficulties presented by the site and complications in securing materials caused by HS2 there is a need to expedite the project. The school can be constructed using available funding but there will be a need to be mindful of potential future challenges concerning costs.

Councillor John Holland (Leader of the Labour Group) observed that the developments being referenced are in Warwick and not Leamington. He reminded Cabinet of the objections that had been raised in the past to the scale and location of the developments, observing that these had been ruled out by the Planning Inspector. He felt that a better outcome could have been secured particularly around the transporting of pupils.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Recommends to Council that £49.5 million be added to the capital programme to deliver the new all-through provision in South Leamington/ Warwick (Oakley Grove).
- 2) Authorises, subject to Council approving the necessary addition to the Capital Programme, 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.

6. Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 - 2024

Councillor Margaret Bell (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health) summarised the published report explaining that the Strategy needs to be in place by October 2021. To get to this stage a great deal of negotiation had been required especially with neighbouring organisations.

Five objectives were described to the meeting. These are early interventions, accessible services, appropriate accommodation, increased multiagency delivery and options for people who have received support.

Councillor Peter Butlin stated that the strategy is a good example of multi- agency working. More work in this area will be conducted through the Blue Light Collaboration Joint Advisory Board.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approve the Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021-2024.

7. Review of Overview and Scrutiny

Cabinet was reminded of the background to the review undertaken by Dr Jane Martin in October 2020. It was acknowledged that the outcome has been shared by a range of bodies and individuals. Members had expressed a range of views and it was recognised that there were some areas that could be improved.

Resolved:

That Cabinet recommends to Council the proposals for scrutiny reform as set out in Appendix 2

8. Local Transport Plan Refresh

Cabinet was informed that from consultation to date four themes have emerged. These are environment, wellbeing, economy and place.

Councillor Martin Watson recognised that only through a great deal of hard work has this point been reached.

Resolved:

That Cabinet

- 1) Notes the outcomes of the formal consultation and Citizens' Panel processes that took place in the first half of 2021.
- 2) Approves in principle the adoption of a flexible and easily updatable suite of LTP documents and authorises the Strategic Director for Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport & Planning, to determine the most suitable structure of documents for this purpose to inform the next phase of consultation.

3) Approves the drafting of Local Transport Plan 4 using the four key themes consulted upon as the basis for the document and authorises the Strategic Director for Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Transport & Planning, to approve materials for public consultation at the earliest opportunity in 2022.

9. Warwickshire Waterway & Canal Strategy 2020-2026

Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture) expressed her pleasure at being able to present this item. The pandemic, she stated, had brought the value of canals and waterways into sharp focus. It is important that work to secure their future is undertaken and that they be recognised for their value to tourism, wildlife and the economy.

Councillor Peter Butlin echoed that the canals and waterways in Warwickshire are an important cultural asset.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves:

- 1) the Warwickshire Waterways Strategy 2021 – 2026 at the Appendix
- 2) £50,000 funding from the Place Shaping and Economic Growth Fund to support the implementation of the Strategy including the commissioning of a county-wide towpath survey.

10. Warwickshire County Council Social Value Policy

Councillor Heather Timms stated that social value will feed into the Council's procurement policy. A tool is being developed to measure social value and this will be used to ensure that the Council is moving in the correct direction.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves the Warwickshire County Council Social Value Policy.

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Agreed

12. Exempt Minutes of the 8 July 2021 Meeting of Cabinet

The exempt minutes were agreed.

13. The Procurement of a New Professional Services Contract for Communities 2022

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

The meeting rose at 14.38

.....
Chair