

Cabinet

Thursday 13 October 2022

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

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

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillors Peter Butlin and Kam Kaur.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 8 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

(4) Public Speaking

Mrs Amanda Burford, PACC Secretary for the Priory Area Community, attended to speak on item 3 on the agenda: Former Priory Road Medical Centre. Mrs Buford stated:

“I am here to talk on behalf of the Packmores Community residents and their need for the old Priory Medical Centre to become their community centre.

It is recognised by the council in their own report in 2005 (I have a copy with me) that the Packmores is the only deprived area in Warwickshire without their own standalone community centre and still over this 15-year period we are without a community space.

We are on the frontline and can see first-hand the needs of our residents and because of this we recognise the requirement for a warm safe community hub that is inclusive to everyone.

The Priory medical Centre is a Ready To Go building that means we would be able to provide wrap around care and serve all residents from cradle to grave. The Priory Medical Centre building is already well established in Warwick and known by residents and is also located near to the town centre. The building has adequate parking facilities and disabled access is already there.

We would be able to justify your initial spend by generating revenue by renting out some space for various social and well being groups, like, Fitness for the over 60's, Dementia Cafes, Parenting Clubs, Well Women Menopausal Clinics, just to name a few. The smaller rooms would provide separate spaces for secure, confidential, and safe meetings and conversations.

If you do refuse us the Medical Centre, we would want to know what you will be providing us with instead so that we can fulfil the community needs.

So please give us the opportunity to make this work and with the use of the old Priory Medical Centre we can look forward to a happier and healthier community for our estate and its residents.”

To provide better continuity, consideration of the Former Priory Road Medical Centre report followed Mrs Burford's speech.

2. Cost of Living

Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture) introduced this paper which set out the support activity that already existed for those members of the community needing support due to the cost of living crisis, and presented a support package which could be summarised into three main areas:

- allocation of the Government funded Household Support Fund (HSF) via the Local Welfare Scheme – circa £3.473 m.
- delivery of a Council funded support package of up to £1million one off funding, funded from the Revenue and Investment Fund; and
- a range of extended support which could be delivered within existing available budgets based on repurposing and reprioritisation of existing resources.

Councillor Timms welcomed the proposals which aligned with the council's community powered approach.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe noted that Cabinet had been aware that this report was coming forward when the topic was debated at Council on 29 September 2022. She advised that a meeting had taken place with district and borough leaders and chief executives and that a Summit was being planned to take place in the near future. Councillor Seccombe referenced the creation of an online signposting facility and also noted that discussions with town and parish councils were

being facilitated by Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) and efforts were being made to reach all areas.

Councillor Sarah Boad welcomed the report, applauding the role of community pantries and warm hubs. Referencing the desire to set up an online signposting facility, Councillor Boad noted that not all residents could access the internet, or only had intermittent access due to mobile phone credit running out. She welcomed the summit and efforts to reduce duplication of information. In conclusion, Councillor Boad requested that Members receive regular updates on progress and any specific events in their divisions.

Councillor Sarah Feeney welcomed the commitment to extend the community supermarket scheme and lamented that such facilities were required. She similarly welcomed support for county foodbanks and the linkage with energy costs as she noted that foodbanks were now making different types of provision depending on whether the recipient had the means to cook. She also applauded the promotion of credit unions but recognised that not all residents would meet credit union criteria.

Councillor Andy Jenns noted that fuel poverty was a real concern and welcomed the use of libraries as warm hubs, where people could use internet facilities whilst they were visiting. He suggested that some consideration could be given to extending opening hours and noted work was taking place with community groups to open up facilities in villages where there were no council buildings. Councillor Jenns also noted the impact of the crisis on local village stores.

Councillor Secombe noted the comments that had been made regarding the provision of facilities in rural villages and ensuring access to inexpensive food supplies. She considered that the pandemic had equipped the Council to understand how to identify vulnerable people in the community.

Councillor Heather Timms advised that the community pantry initiative had taken a lot of planning and commended the foresight that had been shown in bringing the project to bear. She recognised the need to be inclusive and that organisations would be encouraged to take part in the proposed Summit which she noted was likely to take place in November 2022.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Supports the Council's approach and support package aimed at alleviating the cost-of-living pressures in Warwickshire as set out in Section 3 of the report.
2. Endorses the proposed allocation of the £3.47m Household Support Grant (HSG) for use between October 2022 and March 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and authorises the Strategic Director for Resources to make such allocations.
3. Approves a funding package of up to £1m, funded from the Revenue Investment Fund, to be allocated by the Strategic Director for Resources, in consultation with the Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property and the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture on a range of support initiatives as he considers necessary, to include those themes set out at Appendix 2 to the report, to alleviate the cost-of-living pressures for Warwickshire.

3. Former Priory Road Medical Centre

The business for the meeting was reordered so that this item was brought forward to be considered immediately after Public Speaking.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe, (Leader of the Council) reminded Cabinet that a report earlier in the year had sought permission to purchase the Priory Road Medical Centre. Following that purchase, an options appraisal for use of the building had been conducted as comprehensively detailed in the report and appendices. The options appraisal had resulted in a recommendation to lease the site to South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust (NHS SWFT) to enable its short to medium term use for the delivery of outpatient support in Warwick. The reasons to support this option and reject the other options were set out in the report.

Councillor Seccombe reflected on the issues that had been raised by the Public Speaker, noting the importance of Packmores to support the community in an identified area of need. Councillor Seccombe noted crossover with the adult social care and health and communities portfolios of Councillors Margaret Bell and Heather Timms and gave a commitment to to meet with Packmores as, after considering the appraisal in the report, she did not believe that this site presented a solution to the problems faced by the community.

Councillor Margaret Bell considered the provision of outpatient facilities at this site would be of some benefit to the community. She had opened a dialogue with the Managing Director of SWFT about provision for Packmores and was open to supporting the Leader to seek a solution. Councillor Heather Timms was similarly supportive of efforts to work together to find a solution which would be helpful to Packmores.

Councillor John Holland considered that the venue had been the subject of a long running project to deliver services in a way that the community wished to receive them and which could be accessed locally. Referring to the options appraisal set out in the report, he considered that if previous discussions as part of the JSNA had been referenced which suggested that stakeholders would take on refurbishment of the building, Packmores would have been the preferred option. He did not consider that administrative or outpatient services targeted the local community and that a project which maximised the expertise of The Gap who ran the centre at Packmores, and had committed their support, would be more beneficial.

Councillor Seccombe saw synergies between the issues presented by the Public Speaker and the Cost of Living report considered elsewhere on the agenda and also with the county's levelling up agenda. It was important to limit duplication and map out the facilities available in communities so that support could be provided where needed. She therefore considered that it was appropriate to support the recommendations.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves the lease of the property formerly known as Priory Road Medical Centre (as shown edged red on the plan at Appendix 2 to the report) to South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust (NHS SWFT) on terms and conditions considered acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property to enable its short to medium term use to support delivery of clinical services in Warwick.

4. Sustainable Futures Strategy

Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture) introduced this paper which sought approval for the draft Sustainable Futures Strategy for consultation. Councillor Timms explained that the proposals set out a direction and long-term actions to transform Warwickshire into a place that embraced sustainability in its widest sense with collaborative working being key to its success. She looked forward to the engagement process which would collect views of the public and stakeholders to inform the final strategy for consideration by Cabinet in the Spring of 2023 as set out in the report.

Councillor Andy Crump, portfolio holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety, was supportive of the strategy, noting synergies with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Services and the Chief Fire Officer's lead role on Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change at the National Fire Chief's Council.

Resolved

That Cabinet

1. Approves the commencement of a public and stakeholder engagement programme in respect of the draft Sustainable Futures Strategy at Appendix 1 to the report to be launched in November 2022 with a final draft of the Strategy to be brought back to Cabinet for approval in Spring 2023.

Approves the commencement of next steps as set out in Section 5 of the report.

5. Keyworker Service - Approval to Tender and Award

Councillor Jeff Morgan (Portfolio Holder for Children and Families) introduced this report which set out the procurement process for the Keyworker Service for approval. Councillor Morgan explained that the Keyworker service provided support for Coventry and Warwickshire residents aged 0-25 who were autistic, had a learning disability, or both, who had been identified as at imminent risk of admission to a mental health hospital. The keyworker service had initially been provided on a successful pilot basis and there was now an opportunity to embark on a tender process to procure the service for a further two years from April 2023.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Approves in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Children and Families and Adult Social Care & Health proceeding with an appropriate procurement process for the provision of the Keyworker service by Warwickshire County Council, on behalf of partner organisations Coventry City Council and the Integrated Care Board.
4. Approves and authorises the Strategic Director for People to enter into all relevant contracts for the provision of the Keyworker service on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

6. Marketing and Communications Strategic Framework

Councillor Andy Jenns (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) explained that the Marketing and Communications Strategic Framework articulated how the story of the Council and the County was told. It detailed how the marketing and communications team would support the delivery of the new Council Plan, placing the key themes at the heart of the service and ensuring that all activity was aligned to the corporate priorities. Councillor Jenns noted the success of the Council's communications during the pandemic and that it was important to build upon that success.

Councillor Sarah Boad reflected on the changing face of communications and how many residents now obtained news via social media, noting that she often shared the Council's social media posts in the hope of reaching an even wider audience. She expressed interest in the Council's expansion to the Nextdoor platform which would assist in reaching a wider audience.

Councillor Heather Timms welcomed the report, which she considered linked to the cost of living report considered earlier on the agenda and the importance of ensuring that messages were available in different media formats.

Councillor Marian Humphreys also reflected on the importance of communications for Councillors who served as conduits of information to local residents.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe applauded the report and noted that the pandemic had required reflection on the best ways to reach different groups and audiences. Councillor Andy Jenns echoed these comments, noting that it was easy to share social media but further thought was required to understand how informative messages could be shared by those who did not engage in social media platforms.

Resolved:

That Cabinet endorses the Marketing and Communications Strategic Framework at Appendix 1 to the report.

7. 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.

8. Exempt Minutes of the 8 September 2022 Meeting of Cabinet

The exempt minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

9. Cost of Care & Market Sustainability

Councillor Margaret Bell (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care & Health) introduced this item and summarised the exempt report.

Resolved:

The recommendations as set out in the exempt report were agreed together with an additional resolution.

10.A452 Europa Way / Fords Foundry and Queensway Roundabouts (WCC3) - Request for Authority to Procure

Councillor Wallace Redford (Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport) introduced this report and summarised the exempt report.

Resolved:

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

11. Warwickshire Recovery and Investment Fund Investment Opportunity

This report had been withdrawn.

The meeting rose at 3.09pm

.....
Chair