

Cabinet

Thursday 15 December 2022

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

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

Officers

Monica Fogarty, Chief Executive
Nigel Minns, Strategic Director for People
Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities
Benjamin Brook, Chief Fire Officer
Sarah Duxbury, Assistant Director - Governance & Policy
Andrew Felton, Assistant Director - Finance
Chris Kaye, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Commercialism)
Rob Powell, Strategic Director for Resources
Steve Smith, Assistant Director - Commissioning Support Unit
Amy Bridgewater-Carnall, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Others Present

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers
Councillor John Holland
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillors Wallace Redford and Isobel Seccombe.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 10 November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

(4) Public Speaking

None.

2. 2023/24 Budget and 2023-28 Medium Term Financial Strategy – Background Information and Options

Councillor Peter Butlin introduced the report which made available the latest financial information that would underpin the 2022/23 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Councillor Butlin explained that this report came forward at a similar time every year and was the Council's opportunity to present, what he described as, a 'ground zero' budget. He highlighted that this was a balanced budget and could now be distributed to all different parties, giving them the opportunity to work on what was being proposed and enabling them to develop their views, to be discussed in preparation for the February Budget Setting meeting. Key issues in the report were the proposed 3% increase in Council Tax, which gave the authority a small surplus of just over £1million. Councillor Butlin passed on his congratulations to officers during what had been a very difficult time as he felt that the last 12 months had been volatile for many reasons, including the increase in inflation, as well as the changes in central government. He empathised with the officers as it had been difficult trying to make sense of the financial landscape. Following the release of the Autumn statement, the Social Care Reform Act had been shelved because it had been recognised that more work was needed. This would result in a two year delay allowing the authority time to identify potential future funding from central government.

Councillor Butlin expressed his concern at the increase of inflation and recognised that the pay settlement had resulted in a 6% pay rise compared to the previously forecast 4%. In addition, there was the concern that the economy was shrinking, and whilst it was recognised that the Warwickshire economy was very resilient, it was noted that it was only a matter of time before the economic impact was reflected across the County. Members were assured that this budget gave the Council options for the future unlike many other authorities in the country. In addition, permission had been given to include an additional 2% in the precept against adult social care which would create some leeway for the Council. Extra funding had been provided in the meantime and further clarity would be provided on 21 December 2022, enabling officers to identify any gaps in knowledge.

Having considered the report, Councillor Butlin proposed the recommendations as laid out.

Resolved:

That Cabinet

- 1) Develop its draft 2023/24 Budget and 2023-28 Medium Term Financial Strategy proposals, taking into account the information and advice presented in this report; and
- 2) Authorise Corporate Board to begin any preparatory work necessary to deliver the budget proposals, prior to the final full Council decision on the budget on 7 February 2023.

3. Electrical Vehicle (EV) Charging Points - Task and Finish Group Findings

In the absence of Councillor Wallace Redford, Councillor Heather Timms introduced the report which set out recommendations from the Electric Vehicle Charging Points Task & Finish Group, following the publication of their Group Findings report.

Members noted that following the work carried out by the Task & Finish Group, a report had been submitted to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee November meeting. Councillor Timms highlighted that the Council had been proactive at obtaining grants to cover the cost of installing electric vehicle charging points across Warwickshire and would be looking to continue this work by investigating what was available nationally.

Councillor Timms applauded the Task and Finish Group for a good piece of work and the report which included well thought out recommendations. She recognised that future progress would be subject to securing national funding, which would allow the Council to pursue the work outlined. She, therefore, proposed the recommendations as laid out in the group's report.

Resolved:

The recommendations set out in the Task and Finish Group's report, as at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

4. Education Capital Programme 2022/23

Councillor Peter Butlin introduced the report which recommended proposals for allocating resources in the Education (Schools) Capital Programme to the project set out in Section 3 of the report.

Councillor Butlin explained that the report proposed the addition to the Capital Programme of £1.028m, funded from the Department for Education grant, to deliver the scheme at the Queen Elizabeth Academy in Atherstone. He reminded the meeting that the decision to allocate funding for the initial project had been approved earlier in the year. Since then, the project had progressed through the procurement process and having reviewed all of the prices submitted, the cost of the works had increased. He signposted members to section 3 of the report which detailed the reasons for the extra funding. As explained in the report, Councillor Butlin felt that the impact of inflation had been one of the biggest drivers for the increased cost, along with additional outlay as explained in paragraph 3.7. Councillor Butlin referred to the information in section 2 of the report which laid out the financial implications along with the remaining funds in the Basic Need capital grant as outlined in the table at paragraph 2.3.

Having opened the floor to questions and having received none, Councillor Butlin requested support to approve the recommendations as per page 91 of the agenda pack.

Resolved

That Cabinet

- 1) Approve the addition to the capital programme of £1.028m funded from the Department for Education grant to deliver the scheme at The Queen Elizabeth Academy, Atherstone; and

- 2) Authorise the Strategic Director for People, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property, to make the necessary funding arrangements for this scheme.

5. Approval to Procure Contracts for Temporary Resources (Agency and Interim Staff) Services

Councillor Jenns outlined the report seeking approval to procure contracts for Temporary Resources (Agency and Interim Staff) Services. He explained that the authorisation would cover the recruitment of temporary resources across all council services as it was often necessary to use temporary staff to support the permanent work force. Councillor Jenns advised that most temporary staff were supplied under the current corporate contract with Pertemps, however, this contract was due to end in November 2023. Members were advised that due to the value of the contract, Cabinet approval was necessary.

Councillor Jenns referred to the detailed options appraisal undertaken which had concluded that the Council's requirement would be most effectively achieved with a refreshed, bespoke process, with a maximum term of seven years on the Council's terms and conditions.

The report outlined the financial implications, including the current annual Council spend of £11.2m per year through the existing contract, which was inclusive of salaries, pensions, national insurance contributions and agency fees. It was estimated that the new contract value would be set at £110m over the seven year term.

Councillor Butlin highlighted that the Council would not be under any obligation to guarantee volume commitments or pay fixed fees. In addition, external use of the DPS would allow greater accessibility, allowing the Council to look for more specialist roles and potentially raise revenue for other public service bodies.

Councillor Butlin recognised the additional flexibility this would offer to the authority. Councillor Jenns, therefore, proposed the recommendations as laid out.

Resolved:

That Cabinet

- 1) authorises the Strategic Director for Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to commence a procurement for recruiting agency and interim staff ('temporary resources') for all Council services as set out in this report: and
- 2) authorises the Strategic Director for Resources to enter into all relevant contracts for the provision of temporary resources on terms and conditions acceptable to him.

6. Tender to Establish a Replacement Bus Services Dynamic Purchasing System

In the absence of Councillor Wallace Redford, Councillor Martin Watson introduced the report which sought approval to commence an appropriate procurement exercise to establish a replacement Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for bus transport contracts.

Councillor Watson explained that the report related to the renewal of a new DPS linked to bus services across Warwickshire. He advised that the existing scheme was due to end on 31 March 2023 and approval for a replacement was sought to ensure the service continued. Members noted that the DPS was a procurement legislation compliant electronic open marketplace system which enabled suppliers to join at any time and gave the Council access to suppliers quickly and efficiently. Councillor Watson advised that this process gave the Council the ability to operate with less restrictions and limitations whilst achieving value and improving efficiency.

The Chair opened the floor to questions and, having received none, Councillor Watson proposed the recommendations as laid out in the report.

Resolved

That Cabinet

- 1) Authorise the Strategic Director for Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning, to commence an appropriate procurement exercise to establish a replacement Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for bus transport contracts; and
- 2) Authorise the Strategic Director for Communities to enter into all necessary contracts and agreements, to establish the DPS for the provision of bus transport on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director of Resources, with subsequent call-off contracts for specific routes awarded under the DPS in line with Contract Standing Orders.

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. Local Authority Trading Company Shareholder Decision

Councillor Peter Butlin introduced the item and summarised the exempt report.

Resolved:

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

9. Warwickshire Property & Development Group (WPDG) - Site Specific Business Case 2

Councillor Peter Butlin introduced the item and summarised the exempt report.

Resolved:

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