

Cabinet

Thursday, 14 May 2020

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Chair)
Councillor Peter Butlin
Councillor Les Caborn
Councillor Colin Hayfield
Councillor Kam Kaur
Councillor Jeff Morgan
Councillor Jeff Clarke
Councillor Andy Crump
Councillor Heather Timms

Officers

Monica Fogarty, Chief Executive
Nigel Minns, Strategic Director for People
Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities
Paul Williams, Democratic Services Team Leader

Others Present

Councillors Chattaway, Adkins, Roodhouse and Kondakor

1. General

Prior to the commencement of the meeting Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet) thanked all officers for their continuing hard work during the Covid-19 crisis. In particular she thanked Corporate Board for its leadership.

That the meeting was the first by Warwickshire County Council to be held and streamed remotely was noted.

(1) Apologies

There were no apologies given for this meeting.

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

None

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 20th February 2020 were agreed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

(4) Public Speaking

No members of the public had registered to speak at this meeting.

2. Complaints Policy

Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) introduced this report explaining that complaints handling is now supported by a case management system. This, she felt would improve support for customers and reduce the number of complaints being made. In addition, it would support the delivery of the Council Plan and the People, Commercial and Digital Strategies.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) reminded the meeting that there are occasions when elected members have cause to submit complaints. He asked that the document be amended to reflect this. In addition, Councillor Roodhouse asked that the timescales for the process of complaints be made clearer and accompanied by a commentary. Finally, recognising that other strategies, including the Council Plan will in the light of Covid-19 need to be reviewed it was suggested that this document will need to take account of that.

Councillor Richard Chattaway (Leader of the Labour Group) requested that an annual report on complaints be produced. Councillor Chattaway also asked that a clearer indication of the time it takes to process a complaint would be welcomed.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves the Complaints Policy attached as an Appendix to the report.

3. Amalgamation of Ridgeway and Round Oak Schools

Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning) introduced the report stating that it had been prompted by a need to increase special education needs provision in Warwickshire. A consultation exercise had been undertaken although the response rate had been low.

Councillor Richard Chattaway and Councillor Helen Adkins raised a number of concerns over leadership at Round Oak School and suggested that a decision at this time would be inappropriate. The reasons behind the establishment of an Interim Executive Board at Round Oak School were explored. Cabinet was informed that this related to financial management and was not a reflection of performance. As some of the matters raised were of a personal nature it was agreed that Councillor Chattaway and Adkins should receive responses after the meeting.

- 1) That Cabinet approves the amalgamation of Round Oak and Ridgeway Schools
- 2) That Cabinet authorises the Strategic Director for Communities to take such steps as he considers necessary to enable the amalgamated school to open from September 2020

4. Review of Care Leaver Offer

Councillor Jeff Morgan (Portfolio Holder for Children's Services) summarised the key elements of the published report. He added that he was proud of the care leaver offer in Warwickshire and that it is looked upon as an exemplar in other parts of the country.

Councillor Keith Kondakor, noting the provision of driving lessons for care leavers, pointed out there exist other forms of transport and that the resources used to provide those lessons could be used for the development of other skills. He welcomed the provision of funds for gym membership but suggested that the heading should change to "physical activity". Finally, it was suggested that the use of gym memberships by care leavers should be monitored.

Councillor Richard Chattaway observed that the present Covid-19 crisis makes now a bad time to be leaving care.

In response to previous statements Councillor Jeff Morgan noted that whilst there may be other skills that young care leavers could be taught the reality is that they want to learn to drive cars. He agreed that gym membership should be monitored and committed to provide a note to Councillor Chattaway regarding support for care leavers during the current pandemic.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves the revised care leaver offer to include:

1. a change in age for payment of council tax for all care leavers from the ages of 18-21 years to the ages 18-25 years old.
2. an increase to the age that a care leaver can claim a university bursary of £1000 up to the age of 25.
3. a winter fuel payment of £100 payable in November each year.
4. a counselling service to young people who wish to access their files should they wish to access this service (for any care leaver aged 18-25).
5. the purchase of a baby box for any eligible care leaver open to the Leaving Care Service who is a new parent including essential items such as nappies etc up to the cost of £50 for any care leaver aged 16-25.
6. the funding of a £200 flat rate payment to purchase essential items such as a cot, buggy, car seat for any eligible care leaver open to the service, aged 16-25, who is becoming a new parent.

5. Parent Carer Support Pathway

Councillor Jeff Morgan introduced the report explaining that the process set out covers the way in which parents and carers of children with disabilities obtain support. He emphasised that in future any assessment would review quality of and the needs of the individual rather than being a "tick box exercise".

That no services are to be taken away was emphasised.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) expressed concern over the digital divide and some people inability to access services. He suggested that any web pages should be designed in consultation with the people who will use them. In addition, if possible, there should be a dialogue with people who have had a negative experience with the service.

Resolved:

That Cabinet authorises the Strategic Director for People to implement the new Parent & Carer Assessment Pathway as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report.

6. Any Other Business

None.

7. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

Agreed.

8. Exempt Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Held on 20 February 2020

The exempt minutes of the 20 February meeting of Cabinet were agreed.

9. Warwickshire Property Company

Following an introduction by Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader – Finance and Property) Cabinet agreed the recommendations as set out in the exempt report.

The meeting rose at 14.58

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Chair