

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 27 January 2015

Present

Cabinet Members:

Councillors

Izzi Seccombe	Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet
Les Caborn	Community Safety
Jeff Clarke	Environment
Alan Cockburn	Deputy Leader
Jose Compton	Adult Social Care
Colin Hayfield	Education & Learning
Kam Kaur	Customers
Bob Stevens	Health

Other Councillors:

Councillors Chattaway, N. Davies, Hicks, Holland, Kondakor, Roberts, Roodhouse, St John, Tandy, Whitehouse, Williams

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Peter Butlin

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

With reference to item 4 Councillor Richard Chattaway (Deputy Leader of the Labour Group) declared an interest as his daughter is employed at St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Bedworth.

With reference to item 4 Councillor Bob Hicks declared an interest as his daughter is employed at St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Bedworth.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2014 and Matters Arising

The minutes for the meeting held on 11 December 2014 were agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

(4) Public Speaking

No requests had been made to speak.

Before commencing the business of the meeting Councillor Izzi Seccombe welcomed John Dixon in his role as Interim Strategic Director, People Group.

2. 2015/16 Budget and 2015-18 Medium Term Financial Plan – An Update

Councillor Alan Cockburn (Deputy Leader of the Council) drew the meetings attention to an updated version (tabled at the meeting) of the published report. (Clerk's note – The updated report along with that originally published can be found on the Council's website). It was noted that as well as containing updated information the revised report included an additional recommendation. Councillor Cockburn explained that a note on the Conservative Group's spending priorities would be circulated to other members of the Council on Friday 30th January. This will provide time for consideration ahead of the meeting of the County Council on Thursday 5th February. Cabinet was briefed on the changes within the revised report concerning the Council Tax Taxbase and specifically information from the five district and borough councils contained in tables 2 and 3. John Betts (Head of Finance) noted that the information from the district and borough councils provided good news to the County Council as it indicated an increase in income. No information regarding the Business Rates Taxbase had yet been received but it was noted that the County Council receives only 10% of the business tax collected.

Councillor Keith Kondakor (Leader of the Green Group) welcomed the prospect of an increase of Council Tax income but questioned the house build figures provided by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. Councillor Kondakor expressed concern that the County Council appeared to have overcut it's savings by £7m. (See also para 3.1.1 of item 3) He was informed that capacity is required in the financial management system and that by way of example £5m of additional costs had been imposed on the County Council in the preceding six months.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Endorses and continue to support the delivery of the outcomes as set out in the One Organisation Plan 2014-18 as agreed by Council in February 2014;
- 2) Notes the latest resource and spending information and the impact on the emerging budget proposals, as summarised in Appendix A and Section 10 of the report;
- 3) Supports the use of the government grant to meet the costs associated with the implementation of the Care Act, as outlined in Table 5 and Appendix B of the report;
- 4) Notes the Head of Finance's risk assessment on the level of general reserves, as detailed in Appendix C of the report;
- 5) Agrees, in light of the information provided, their 2015/16 budget resolutions for recommendation to Council on 5 February 2015; and
- 6) Authorises the Head of Finance to incorporate the outstanding resource information into the budget resolutions to be considered by Council on f February 2015.

3. One Organisational Plan Quarterly Progress Report - April-December 2014

Councillor Alan Cockburn informed the meeting that the progress report had been considered by the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee adding that an underspend of £7m constituted only 3% of the County Council's overall budget. Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder – Customers) observed that with overall performance at amber this is as would be expected two years into a four year plan.

In response to a question from Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) Cabinet was informed that it is not unusual for sickness levels to rise in quarter three. This is due in part to the season and an increase in winter viruses. However it has been recognised that mental health and stress are major causes of absenteeism and a range of approaches are being adopted to address this. Managers are being trained to spot stress and counselling is provided either via self-referral or referral by managers. It was pointed out that doctors are increasingly prepared to sign patients off sick for prolonged periods compounding the impact on absence levels.

Councillor Richard Chattaway requested clearer information regarding absences due to musculo-skeletal issues. He was informed that detailed reports on absence are presented to the Staff and Pensions Committee and that the information can be found there. Comparisons with other local authorities or the private sector are not always possible owing to variations in how absences are recorded.

Regarding the overall performance of the Council as reported graphically on the dashboard Cabinet was informed that whilst some indicators remain amber it is expected that as the four year plan progresses so these will move towards green.

Concerning the reported £ 0.322m income from Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company the meeting was informed that this was a one-off payment.

The impact of “winter pressures” was explored. Cabinet was informed that £520k had been made available to Warwickshire by government to address these. However, even without this grant Cabinet and senior officers acknowledged the efforts made by staff and partners to address the pressures particularly over the Christmas period. Councillor Jose Compton (Portfolio Holder–Adults) requested that the Cabinet's recognition of the good work of officers be recorded.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the progress on the delivery of the One Organisational Plan as at the end of December 2014, as summarised in Sections 1 to 3 of the report and detailed in Appendix A of the report;
- 2) Approves the transfer of £4.973 million from 2014/15 budgets to Business Unit reserves to support the delivery of services in future years, as outline in paragraph 3.2.1 of the report;
- 3) Approves the use of £1.217 million of reserves to support plans for the delivery of services in 2014/15, as outlined in paragraph 3.2.2 of the report;

- 4) Approves the revised capital payments totals and the revised financing of the 2014/15 capital programme, as detailed in the table in paragraph 3.3.4 of the report; and
- 5) Notes the Corporate Board recommendation on dealing with overspends in excess of Business Unit reserves.

4. Education and Learning (Schools) Capital Programme 2014/15

Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio Holder – Education and Learning) outlined the published report explaining that it was principally concerned with the reallocation of Targeted Basic needs funding.

In response to a question from Councillor June Tandy the meeting was informed that funding for Milby School had been withdrawn in recognition of a reduced need for expansion.

It was agreed that Councillor Roodhouse would receive a written response concerning delays to “Safer Routes to Schools” expenditure.

Resolved

That Cabinet agrees:

- 1) Changes to the previously published Schools Capital Programme, set out in section 2 and detailed in Appendix A of the report, and recommends to Council that it approve the necessary changes to the Capital Programme;
- 2) The omission of proposals to expand Milby Primary School, Nuneaton; Milverton Primary School, Leamington Spa; Henry Hinde Infant School, Rugby; and St. Michael's CE Primary School, Bedworth;
- 3) The reallocation of £928,563 of Targeted Basic Need funding to Aylesford Primary School Provision, as detailed in paragraph 2.11 of the report;
- 4) The reallocation of £1,694,542 of Targeted Basic Need funding to proposals for Cawston Grange and All Saint's Schools, as detailed in paragraphs 2.17 and 2.30 of the report;
- 5) That unused resources from the omission of projects and/or the substitution of Targeted Basic Need funding are made available to Education and Learning for reallocation to further proposals; and
- 6) That the Strategic Directors for Resources and the Strategic Director for Communities undertake negotiations and seek the appropriate approvals for the potential disposal of land at Campion School which will be the subject of a further review.

5. Customer Service Strategy 2015-2018

Councillor Kam Kaur briefed Cabinet on the report stressing that the Customer Service Strategy is a “live document” that will adapt to reflect the rapid technological changes being witnessed in service delivery.

Resolved

That Cabinet endorses the Customer Service Strategy for 2015-2018 and reconfirms the Customer Service Charter.

6. Fire and Rescue Service Future Estate

Councillor Les Caborn (Portfolio Holder – Community Safety) introduced the report and explained the decision to retain the fire station and headquarters in the centre of Leamington Spa. He stated that this had been informed by senior officers and by the opportunity to develop a response centre at Gaydon. Councillor Caborn noted that whilst the centre of Leamington was considered the best location for a response centre, changes in techniques meant that a new location was required for a training facility. There is an imperative to identify the site for a new training facility as soon as possible with practical and operational considerations being paramount in its selection.

Councillor Keith Kondakor acknowledged that the training facility in Bedworth was no longer fit for purpose but noted that its closure would lead to more job losses in the town.

Councillor John Whitehouse drew Cabinet’s attention to the potential for a wider impact of its decisions concerning the fire station in Leamington Spa noting that this may have implications for Kenilworth fire station. The current draft of the Warwick District Local Plan assumes the move of the Leamington Fire Station and the development of a new facility to serve Kenilworth at Thickthorn. In response Councillor Les Caborn (speaking in his role as a member of Warwick District Council) stated that any movement of the fire station at Kenilworth would be based on operational considerations.

Resolved

That Cabinet:

- 1) Recommends Council approves revisions to the Fire and Rescue Service Estate, as set out in the report; and
- 2) Recommends Council approves the necessary changes to the Capital Programme to facilitate the revision in recommendation 1.

7. Any Other Urgent Items

There were no items of urgent business.

8. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt 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.

EXEMPT ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE (PURPLE PAPERS)

9. Old Shire Hall and Courts

Councillor Alan Cockburn summarised the published report explaining the need to establish a viable future for the Old Shire Hall complex following its vacation by the Courts Service. Following discussion Cabinet agreed the recommendations as set out in the exempt minutes.

The meeting rose at 2.45 pm

..... Chair