

Cabinet

Thursday, 17 November 2016, County Hall, Worcester, 10.00 a.m.

Present:**Minutes**

Mr S E Geraghty (Chairman), Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr M J Hart, Mrs L C Hodgson, Dr K A Pollock, Mr A C Roberts and Mr J H Smith

Also attended:

Mr P Grove, Mr P McDonald, Mr A Miller and Mrs E B Tucker were also in attendance.

Available papers

The Members had before them:

- A The Agenda Papers (previously circulated); and
- B The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13 October 2016 (previously circulated).

A copy of document A will be attached to the signed Minutes.

**1755 Apologies and
Declarations of
Interest
(Agenda item 1)**

No apologies.

Mr M L Bayliss declared an interest as he had a family member employed by the County Council.

**1756 Public
Participation
(Agenda item 2)**

None.

**1757 Confirmation of
the Minutes of
the previous
meeting
(Agenda item 3)**

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**1758 FutureFit -
Proposals for
Change and
Reform to
support the
Medium Term**

The Cabinet considered the progress of the Council's FutureFit Programme together with proposals for change and reform to support the Medium Term Financial Plan. The details were set out in the report and Appendices.

In the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

Financial Plan (Agenda item 4)

- (a) The Cabinet Member for Transformation and Commissioning introduced the report. He commented that the Corporate Plan set out the Council's wider strategy and vision. It specified certain initiatives going forward in the next 2 years as well as giving an indication of the things that had already been done. Savings had been made whilst improving services and without losing the vision of making Worcestershire a better place to live, work and invest in. The Council had reached out to the public through a number of surveys and roadshows and their input was valued. The public had noticed the improved value for money and had expressed a greater level of satisfaction with Council services than previously. There remained challenges particularly in relation to the vulnerable old and young which were being addressed through extra care units and increased technology to allow people to live independent lives. The contribution of the public should be recognised for example Dementia Care volunteers. The Council was investing in major infrastructure projects as well as general day-to-day maintenance. There was a commitment to invest in highly skilled and committed employees and to attract the best people from outside the county. A number of contracts were being examined with a view to driving up efficiencies and savings. The transformation and change rationale was cross-directorate and he considered that the Council was free of barriers between directorates;
- (b) The Leader of the Council stated that the proposals were based on engagement and consultation with the public and business community. The financial challenge of £34m had been set out in the budget and the report set out how the Council would address that. The Council would look to invest the additional transitional funds of £5m received from the Government. The Council would look to optimise Council tax receipts through working with district councils. The Council would look at aspects of growth and inflation and already had plans for £13m of growth. The Council had an extra £6m worth of proposals for income generation, better use of assets and efficiency and reform. Some of the proposals were long term in nature and would be rolled forward to 2018/19. However there remained a financial gap of £2.9m. There would be time for further consultation before the budget

was finalised;

- (c) The relevant Cabinet Member considered that Adult Social Care had benefited from additional funds in the budget. The provision of Supported Living accommodation was vital for people with learning disabilities to enable them to lead independent lives, and to date 340 people had been supported. In response to the findings of the Winterborne View Inquiry, the Council had successfully brought people back into county accommodation albeit at extra cost. The Council would continue to explore the purpose-built and conversion of accommodation to help more people maintain their independence as they became frail, including the potential for the first care village in the county. The Council was also working with providers to see how the offer had changed in terms of private sector provision;
- (d) The Council had been successful and would continue to seek additional and alternative sources of funding. There remained capacity to increase recycling in the county and the Council would facilitate this. Any measures introduced for the public would not be punitive in nature but educational. Mercia Waste Management had employed an officer to undertake training and work with other organisations - for example a session was held with parish councils to identify ways in which the community could contribute. The impact of housing growth on waste management was a major area that needed monitoring. There was potential to review the size of waste bins on a voluntary basis. The PFI resource would be spent, as the Government intended, on the EfW plant at Hartlebury;
- (e) The national Dementia Friends Scheme had given the Council greater awareness of the impact of dementia how to recognise the signs of dementia and how to help people living with it. Every member of the Council should be encouraged to take part;
- (f) The proposals were about change and reform rather than service reduction. The Council's financial resource envelope was shrinking year by year and therefore FutureFit included proposals to grow the Council's income;

- (g) Improving connectivity was important and the Council should be proud of the progress made to date although there remained some gaps in the service. It was also recognised that mobile coverage was not good throughout the county. The Broadband Stakeholder Group had agreed to expand its remit to embrace mobile connectivity;
- (h) A Member from outside the Cabinet expressed concern about the reference in the report to the provision of high quality services despite what he saw as short 15 minute home visits, the closure of 2 Children's Centres, the lack of control over the employment of staff following the commissioning out of services, the rise in charges and the £2m budget reduction for Learning Disability services. The Council had also failed to set a target for its use of agency staff;
- (i) The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care suggested that those criticising the report needed to come up with alternative proposals. The Council had raised £65m in income generation, and next year a further £200k was expected to be raised and although this was a modest sum in itself, it was a proactive way to address the financial gap;
- (j) A Member from outside the Cabinet (who was also a district member) queried the support the County Council would provide to district councils in relation to changes to the household waste collection service. The Cabinet Member for the Environment responded that a joint officer body had been established together with closer member relations in order to address environmental waste issues with district councils. Work continued to reduce the amount of waste produced but any changes to the waste collection service needed to be mutually beneficial to all parties;
- (k) The Cabinet Member for Health indicated that the Council had no plans to close its Children's Centres or reduce the number of health visitors. The Health Visitor service had been commissioned out to the Health and Care Trust and although there had been a 10% reduction in the financial envelope, work was underway in consultation with the Health and Care team to redesign the service. The Director of Public Health was working with other directorates and partner organisations to progress and underline the

importance of public health, which was a long term process; and

- (l) The Cabinet for Adult Social Care responded with regard to the £2m reduction in the Learning Disability budget for 2018/19 that the plan was to work with Health to identify additional resources such as from the Better Care Fund. The '15 minute' home visits which had been referenced was only a small part of the service, and followed NICE guidance that they were not to be used for personal care. The service was constantly reviewed to ensure that it was appropriate for the needs of its clients. Some of these calls would eventually become unnecessary as a result of the use of technological advancements.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) the significant progress of the FutureFit Programme and its achievements over the last 12 months be noted;**
- (b) the Cabinet supports, in principle, the proposals outlined in the report and supporting papers, that are intended to deliver £8.8 million through additional income generation opportunities, better use of assets, efficiencies and reform for 2017/18 and a further £4.6 million in 2018/19; and**
- (c) the Strategic Leadership Team be requested to work with Cabinet Members to develop further proposals to close the emerging potential financial gap of up to £2.9 million to balance the 2017/18 budget.**

**1759 Worcestershire
Safeguarding
Children Board
Annual Report
2015/16
(Agenda item 5)**

The Cabinet considered the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) Annual Report 2015/16 and the progress of the work of the Board. The details were set out in the report and its Appendix.

Derek Benson, the independent Chair of WSCB, presented the Annual Report 2015/16. He commented that he had taken up the position of Independent Chairman from 1 April 2016. The Board could not in 2015/16 be assured of the effectiveness and robustness of the Council's child protection system. The processes had demonstrated a strong commitment to safeguarding and arrangements were in place but they needed to improve be more co-ordinated to deliver a better service

for the children and young people of Worcestershire.

There had been improvements in some areas but not at the pace expected. The improvements had had to be delivered against the backdrop of a reduced resource base and increased demand. There had been investment but this needed to be replicated in service provision. It was important that partnership work was effective and the Board would hold partners to account. The Council also needed to be mindful of the Implications of the Wood Review and the Government's response would impact on local arrangements particularly with the possible removal of statutory status for local safeguarding boards. As part of its work the Board focussed on the following key areas: the implications of the Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy, Early Help, the Integrated Family Front Door, and Children's Social Care Back to Basics Improvement Programme.

As of November, he was optimistic that the Council was adopting the right approach. He had seen a step change since the summer and improved stability in senior leadership. The Board would be looking to seek assurances going forward in relation to monitoring the level of staff turnover, the ratio of experienced staff to newly qualified staff, caseloads and the complexity of work. The Board had seen improvements in practice and case load reduction. There were no Serious Case Reviews to report. The multi-agency case file audit had seen improved information sharing. In terms of the audit process, compliance and commitment from partners was good but there still needed to be better use of the phasing system. Since April, the Board had streamlined governance and upped the pace of change. He noted that safeguarding was not the responsibility just of the Council and the Board would continue to challenge practices in a constructive manner.

In the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

- (a) The Cabinet Member for Children and Families commented that he was pleased with the feedback in terms of the Council's progress. The report was a fair assessment of the Council's approach to safeguarding and reaffirmed the progress made so far whilst recognising that there areas of work that required improvement in the future. The report looked back to 2015/16 and he was pleased with the comments made about recent improvements, whilst recognising the need to improve;

- (b) The Leader stated that it was important to ensure that progress continued in improving safeguarding services and at pace. The approach to safeguarding needed to be a multi-agency whole Worcestershire approach. How did the Independent Chairman consider that the Council was progressing and how was partnership work evolving?
- (c) Derek Benson stated that the Integrated Family Front Door initiative was in its infancy in terms of bringing agencies together but he was encouraged by progress in tackling risks to date. There was a lack of input from the education representatives and this was something that needed to be rectified. He recognised that relationships between the Children Safeguarding Board and the Health and Well-being Board, the Corporate Parenting Board, the Adult Safeguarding Board and the Community Safety Board were good but could be strengthened. A constructive relationship with the Director of Children and Families was important and since the summer, he had had increased access to Chief Officers and the Cabinet Member;
- (d) What could be done to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation in the community? Derek Benson responded that the Police had a role in gathering information but this was not yet complete. There was a Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy which needed further work to re-energise it. There was a delicate balance between raising awareness and increasing fear. The position needed to be reached where the complete picture in Worcestershire was understood to establish where there were areas of vulnerability, who needed to be engaged with and create an environment where victims were encouraged to come forward;
- (e) Children who had been sexually abused were often less likely to disclose the fact to anyone. Was there a role for schools in identifying changes in behaviour as a sign post of potential abuse? Derek Benson indicated that the Board had a good engagement with officers in educational services although there was always room for improvement. In terms of the triage process, education had access to valuable information about children. It was important to access that information and as well as share information with schools to help them.

The Board had a responsibility and on-going commitment to provide multi agency training;

- (f) A Member from outside the Cabinet raised a query about the success of the Early Help Strategy given that referrals to Children Social Care were still increasing and the demand outweighing the capacity of commissioned-out services. Derek Benson indicated that the Board acknowledged that the Early Help Service was under pressure and the Board would monitor progress. The Board would seek reassurance about what was being done to address the risks;
- (g) How well was the problem of vulnerable young people on line being addressed? Derek Benson acknowledged that the vulnerability of young people on line was a major issue. The key was to speak to young people and understand their vulnerabilities. A lot of work had been undertaken to spread awareness about the risks and how to tackle them. Young people were more vulnerable in their own home than ever before and that required a multi-agency approach with the Police and education having a key role. The Board's role was to monitor the work and ensure that it was as effective as possible;
- (h) The Council was seeking to provide a more effective and targeted Early Help Service. What was the Board's view on progress made to date? Derek Benson commented that work had been undertaken with Children's social care in relation to the guidance/threshold provided to frontline practitioners so they understood the services available and how they best met the needs of young people; and
- (i) The Leader proposed and it was agreed that Cabinet should expressly confirm its commitment to supporting the recommendations in the Report to improve the safeguarding of children. He thanked Derek Benson for all of his work as Independent Chair of the Board and the impact he had made since his appointment.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) **the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2015/16 be received;**

1760 Fair Funding Consultation Outcomes 2017-18 - National and Local Changes to the Funding Arrangements for Schools (Agenda item 6)

- (b) the progress of the work of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board be noted; and
- (c) the Council's commitment to supporting the recommendations in the Report to improve the safeguarding of children be confirmed.

The Cabinet considered responding to the Fair Funding Consultation for 2017/18 and the Local Schools Funding Formula for Worcestershire mainstream schools for 2017/18. The details were set out in the report and its Appendices.

In the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

- (a) The Cabinet Member for Children and Families introduced the report. He commented that he was seeking to maintain stability in the system whilst the Government reviewed the Fairer Funding System. The Council had consulted the Worcestershire Schools Forum as well as directly with schools. The key message received was to keep the Fairer Funding Formula as it was last year for stability. He was working with local MPs and making representations to the Government to get a fair funding outcome as soon as possible. He confirmed that the Minimum Funding Guarantee remained unchanged; and
- (b) There had been very little feedback following the consultation exercise but this was to be expected given that very little had changed. The continued work with local MPs to lobby the Government was welcomed.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) Cabinet had regard to the consultation undertaken in September and October 2016;
- (b) the consultation feedback in Appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5 to the report be noted;
- (c) the involvement of the Worcestershire Schools Forum members and schools during the consultation be noted;
- (d) the views of the Worcestershire Schools Forum on the Local Schools Funding Formula issues

1761 Energy and Carbon Management Plan 2016-2021 (Agenda item 7)

for 2017-18 and other matters which are outlined in Appendix 6 to the report be noted;

- (e) the Local Schools Funding Formula for Worcestershire mainstream schools from April 2017 to apply for 2017-18 and other matters as detailed in paragraphs 35 to 45 of the report be approved having regard to the consultation feedback from schools detailed in Appendix 3, 4 and 5 to the report and views of the Worcestershire Schools Forum in Appendix 6 to the report;
- (f) the Director of Children, Families and Communities be authorised to make the required submission to the national executive body, the Education Funding Agency by 20 January 2017 for the Local Schools Funding Formula for 2017-18 taking account of any impact and change on the approved units of resource in paragraph 37 of the report as a consequence of the October 2016 census and other 2016 data, any other data changes and the final 2017-18 Dedicated School Grant; and
- (g) the continuing unfair funding for Worcestershire and its schools be noted and that the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families will continue to have dialogue with the Government for Fairer Funding.

The Cabinet considered the new Energy and Carbon Management Plan 2016 -2021 and proposals to reduce CO₂ emissions from the Council's operations and activities. The details were set out in the report and its Appendices.

In the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

- (a) The Cabinet Member for the Environment introduced the report. He commented that reductions in emissions for street lighting, gas, electricity, liquid petroleum gas, fleet fuel and staff mileage had led to a total reduction of £700k per annum. The Carbon Reduction Plan would be scrapped in 2019 with the Climate Change Levy being increased but he was not anticipating any major change in the Council's finances as a result. The Council continued to work with partner

**1762 Resources
Report
(Agenda item 8)**

agencies to meet its carbon emission targets. The Council only just failed to meet its aspirational target last year. The next target would be a 20% reduction in carbon emissions from the current baseline which represented projected savings of £240k per year based on current energy prices; and

- (b) The Council had been successful in its approach to making savings in street lighting and despite concerns expressed about switching off lights, very few objections had been received. It was important that the Council complied with the international carbon emissions policy.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) the implementation of the new Energy and Carbon Management Plan 2016-2021 set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved; and**
- (b) the proposed 20% reduction target in CO₂ emissions from the Council's operations and activities for which it is directly responsible from 2015/16 baseline by the end of March 2021 as set out in that plan be approved.**

The Cabinet considered a Resources Report. The details were set out in the report and its Appendix.

In the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

- (a) The Leader of the Council introduced the report. He anticipated that the forecast for the remaining half of the financial year was an overall pressure of £300k by the end of financial year. The Council was performing well within cash limits. The report set out the financial pressures and how they would be addressed. The Council had set out an ambitious capital programme which would benefit the residents of the County including the completion of the Hoobrook Link Road, work commencing on the Eastham Bridge and the EfW plant at Hartlebury. The financial settlement would allow the Council some degree of certainty going forward. The update on the Treasury Management Statement noted the very low interest rates for Council borrowing; and
- (b) The Cabinet Member for the Environment commented that the Energy from Waste plant at

Hartlebury was on target for its completion date. The plant was currently burning waste and it was anticipated that it would be delivering electricity to the National Grid before Christmas.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) the Cabinet Member's conclusions concerning revenue budget monitoring up to 30 September 2016 be endorsed;**
- (b) the current progress regarding the FutureFit programme be noted;**
- (c) the Cabinet Member's conclusions concerning capital budget monitoring up to 30 September 2016 be endorsed;**
- (d) the County Council's acceptance of a four-year financial settlement deal from the Department for Communities and Local Government be noted; and**
- (e) the Cabinet Member's conclusions regarding the treasury management half yearly progress report be endorsed.**

The meeting ended at 11.35am

Chairman