

**Cabinet**

**Friday, 20 December 2019, County Hall, Worcester,  
10.00 am**

**Present:****Minutes**

Mr S E Geraghty (Chairman), Mr A T Amos,  
Mr A I Hardman, Mrs L C Hodgson, Ms K J May,  
Mr A P Miller, Dr K A Pollock, Mr A C Roberts and  
Mr J H Smith

**Also attended:**

Mrs E A Eyre, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs E B Tucker, and Mr  
P A Tuthill

**Available papers**

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated); and
- B. The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2019 (previously circulated).

**1950 Apologies and  
Declarations of  
Interest  
(Agenda item 1)**

An apology was received from Mr M J Hart.

**1951 Public  
Participation  
(Agenda item 2)**

None.

**1952 Confirmation of  
the Minutes of  
the previous  
meeting  
(Agenda item 3)**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held  
on 14 November 2019 be confirmed as a correct  
record and signed by the Chairman.

**1953 2020/21 Draft  
Budget and  
Medium-Term  
Financial Plan  
Update 2020-22  
(Agenda item 4)**

Cabinet considered the 2020/21 Draft Budget and  
Medium-Term Financial Plan Update 2020-22.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report. He  
commented that the Council had grown its income by  
£14.5m. The Government had recognised the extra  
pressures facing councils and this Council would be  
receiving an extra grant allocation of £8.5m for children  
and adult social care. The Council's income had  
therefore increased by £23m in total. However, the  
Council was facing total cost pressures of £32m. This

meant that the Council would continue to need to reform and make itself more efficient and effective in line with the Council for the Future model.

The Leader added that the budget was not just aimed at protecting the most vulnerable in society but also investing in those services that the public felt needed improvement: roads and pavements, cutting congestion and improving public transport. The budget also addressed flood mitigation particularly local flooding issues and included a programme to upgrade street lighting with more efficient LED lights. A woodland planting scheme would lead to 150k trees being planted. In order to meet additional budget demands, Council Tax would need to be raised which equated to £1 per week for a Band D property. However, the proposed rate remained one of the lowest levels of council tax for county councils in the country. There would be an opportunity to scrutinise the budget prior to consideration at the Cabinet meeting in January with the final decision taken at Council in February.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care commented that he was encouraged by the Government's intention to move at pace to find a funding solution for social care issues. The budget addressed the demand-led pressures in adult social care, providing additional resources albeit not to the desired extent. One of the challenges moving forward was addressing the needs of adults with complex needs who were now living longer. 81% of the Council's income was reliant on council taxpayers and this created a greater democratic link between them and the Council. The Local Government settlement was still awaited but he did not expect any great changes.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Well-being welcomed the additional £5m for cutting congestion as traffic issues were the main source of public complaint. In relation to street lighting, he hoped that the inefficient high-pressure sodium lights would be replaced as part of the street lighting replacement programme. The Leader of the Council added that the street lighting programme had been introduced on an incremental basis to achieve best results.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Infrastructure highlighted the inclusion in the budget of improvements to infrastructure, particularly the investment in Worcestershire Parkway and the North Cotswold Railway Line Task Force, for which this Council acted as lead for plans to dual the rail line to establish 2 train services per

hour from Worcester to London.

The Cabinet Member for Environment indicated that the LED light replacement programme included the introduction of controllable, reliable and therefore more cost-effective lighting. The planting of 150k trees was a great plus for Worcestershire with the Council acting as a community leader involving local communities and children as well as opening up other opportunities. The flood mitigation proposals would allow the Council to access other sources of funding. The Leader added that he hoped that the Council taking the lead on tree planting, would encourage others to follow.

The Cabinet Member for Highways commented that the budget included increased spending on roads, footways and pavements, buses and street lighting. It would not only maintain the existing network but increase the capacity to tackle congestion issues, in particular to improve unclassified roads and pavements. There was further funding for a footways improvement scheme to recognise the importance of ensuring footpaths were maintained to a high standard. Local councillors would be at the heart of this scheme to ensure that those footpaths in most need of repair were prioritised. The budget recognised that congestion was the public's biggest concern and funding had been provided to allow 4 priority schemes to commence: Hoobrook Roundabout, Kidderminster, A38 near Upton, Bromsgrove Town Centre and Evesham Town Centre. A 10% increase in the bus subsidy was proposed and any efficiency savings would be added to this budget. It was also likely that the Government would receive extra funding for public transport from the Government. The street lighting budget had been increased to raise the quality, reliability and safety of the network. Funding would also be invested to maintain broken gullies.

A Member from outside the Cabinet commented that although the details of the budget would need to be examined, overall the budget was welcomed. The increase in Council Tax was necessary although it should have been implemented a number of years ago. The recognition of the funding pressures in adult social care and the additional funding for roads and footways was particularly welcomed.

A Member from outside the Cabinet welcomed the proposed funding for highways and footways improvements, particularly the Hoobrook Roundabout. It was hoped that the bus subsidy would not only focus on

services in Worcester. The Council needed to recognise the issues facing adults with learning difficulties who were experiencing dementia at an early age.

The Vice-Chairman of the Overview Scrutiny and Performance Board commented that the scrutiny programme for examining the budget was well-established and the budget would be examined in great detail. The Leader of the Council welcomed the input from scrutiny.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care commented that social care was starting to move up the agenda and beginning to be recognised as an issue by the public. It had been suggested that the LGA chair a cross-party discussion on the issue. Adults with learning difficulties with early onset dementia was recognised as an issue and a report on the matter would be brought to Cabinet next year.

**RESOLVED that the Cabinet:**

- a) **approved for consultation the draft budget set out at Appendix 1B of the report of £346.068 million which includes the proposed Transformation and Reforms programme set out in Appendix 1C to the report;**
- b) **approved for consultation the capital programme of £305.4 million as set out at Appendix 1D to the report;**
- c) **approved for consultation an earmarked reserves schedule as set out at Appendix 2 to the report;**
- d) **agreed that it is minded to recommend to Council in February 2020 an increase in Council Tax Precept by 3.99% in relation to two parts:**
  - **1.99% to provide financial support for the delivery of outcomes in line with the Corporate Plan Shaping Worcestershire's Future and the priorities identified by the public and business community**
  - **2.00% Adult Social Care Precept ring-fenced for Adult Social Care services in order to contribute to existing cost pressures due to Worcestershire's ageing population;**

- e) approved the use of £0.750 million from the Transformation reserve to support the delivery of the redesign saving plans as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report; and
- f) approved the updates to the 2019/20 capital programme as set out in paragraph 4.9 of the report.

**1954 Libraries Strategy (Agenda item 5)**

Cabinet considered the Libraries Strategy.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities introduced the report and confirmed that all libraries would be kept open. This proposal was concerned with the modernisation, digitalisation and community use of the service. The Strategy recognised that libraries were at the centre of the community and the aim was to grow them with partner organisations. She thanked library service staff for their efforts in drawing up the Strategy. The Strategy took on board feedback from the extensive public consultation and engagement exercise as well as the recommendations of the peer review. She thanked members of the Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel for their contribution, particularly those that visited other libraries.

She added that the plan was to create a Library First approach that put libraries at the heart of the community with a more sustainable and innovative approach that would future-proof the service. The Council had listened to the strong public message about prioritising the sharing of space within libraries. The Council had also recognised the low level of public support for voluntary libraries and instead would look at establishing the community supported approach.

The Cabinet Member for Highways commented that the Strategy was about modernising the library service over the next 5 years to meet any future challenges and enable it to play a strong role in the local community

The Leader of the Council emphasised that the Strategy was not about closing libraries but making libraries the first port of call for services to the community.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care paid tribute to the dedication and hard work of the Cabinet Member for Communities in bringing this Strategy to fruition.

The Vice-Chairman of the Overview Scrutiny and

Performance Board acknowledged the hard work that had gone into preparing the Strategy and recognised the excellent scrutiny support during its development.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- a) **noted the feedback captured throughout the development of Worcestershire's Libraries Strategy;**
- b) **approved Worcestershire's Libraries Strategy which sets out the vision, ambition and high-level transformation for the service over the next five years; and**
- c) **authorised the relevant Strategic Director to take all appropriate action to implement the Libraries Strategy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities in relation to strategic matters.**

**1955 Fair Funding Consultation Outcomes for 2020-21 - National and Local Changes to the Funding Arrangements for Schools (Agenda item 6)**

Cabinet considered the Fair Funding Consultation Outcomes for 2020-21 - National and Local Changes to the Funding Arrangements for Schools.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families introduced the report and commented that over the last 5 years funding to schools had been allocated through a local schools funding formula which was closely aligned with the national model. The Government would be undertaking a comprehensive spending review including funding to schools. The Council therefore needed to determine whether it wished to adopt the national model next year or continue with the local system. The Council had consulted widely on this issue.

The Leader of the Council commented it was sensible to align the funding arrangements for schools with the national formula. He welcomed the significant additional resources provided by the Government.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care indicated that there were so many local factors that had to be taken into account in calculating a local schools funding formula that it made sense to align funding with the national funding formula. The Council and local MPs had lobbied the Government and although this proposal changed little in terms of the formula, it did increase the funding per pupil in the county.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- a) had regard to the consultation undertaken between 1 October and 18 November 2019;
- b) noted the consultation feedback in Appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5 to the report;
- c) noted the involvement of the Worcestershire Schools Forum members and schools during the consultation;
- d) noted the views of the Worcestershire Schools Forum on the Local Schools Funding Formula issues for 2020-21 and other matters outlined in Appendix 6 to the report;
- e) approved the Local Schools Funding Formula for Worcestershire mainstream schools from April 2020 to apply for 2020-21 and other matters as detailed in paragraphs 33 to 43 of the report having regard to the consultation feedback from schools detailed in Appendix 3, 4 and 5 and views of the Worcestershire Schools Forum in Appendix 6 to the report, to be based as far as is practicable and affordable upon the Department for Education (DfE) National Funding Formula (NFF) parameters; and
- f) authorised the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Children and Families and with Responsibility for Education and Skills to make the required submission to the national executive body, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by 21 January 2020 for the approved Local Schools Funding Formula for 2020-21, taking account of any impact and change on the approved units of resource, Minimum Funding Guarantee and capping arrangements in paragraph 35 of the report as a consequence of the October 2019 census and other 2019 data changes and the final 2020-21 Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

**1956      Balanced  
Scorecard  
Performance  
and Corporate  
Risk Update**

Cabinet considered the Balanced Scorecard Performance and Corporate Risk Update.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning introduced the report. She commented that of the 61 indicators reported

**(Agenda item 7)**

in quarter 2, 27 had been rated as green, 17 as amber and 4 as red. Of the 4 red indicators, 1 had received a performance update (schools rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted). Of the 126 risks logged in the risk register, 15 had been rated as high. There were 6 themes: vulnerable children, education, adult social care, the Council's estate, business continuity and financial control. Mitigation to address these themes included the implementation of Worcestershire Children First, replacement of the adult social care case management system, agreement and implementation of the SEND action plan, the delivery of improved demand-profiling in adult social care, the further roll out of the Three Conversations Model, capital investment remedial work on the Council's estate, and a programme to review the Council's business continuity arrangements. Staff capacity, capability and productivity and the Council's preparations for EU exit were now rated as an amber risk.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- a) received the latest update of the Corporate Balanced Scorecard for Quarter Two 2019/20, noting the 27 indicators rated as 'green', and considered actions being taken to improve performance for the one indicator rated 'red' where there has been an update in Quarter Two 2019/20; and**
- b) noted the latest update of the Corporate Risk Register including actions to mitigate the risk areas that are rated 'red'.**

**1957 Decision to Award Contract for an Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service for Adults and Young People (Agenda item 8)**

Cabinet considered the decision to Award Contract for an Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service for Adults and Young People.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Public Health introduced the report. He commented that the procurement of the contract was in line with the Council's procedures. The cost of the service over a 5 year period was £4m pa funded from the Public Health Ring-fenced Grant with further funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner of £106k. The contract was performance based and could be terminated after 3 years if necessary.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families emphasised the personal impact of drug and alcohol abuse highlighting its impact on mental and physical health and criminality and as a trigger for children



entering care.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet:

- a) noted the progress regarding the development and procurement of an Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service for Adults and Young People (the Service) in line with the decision of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Wellbeing (CMR) 13 September 2019;
- b) noted the final specification and tendering process which had been carried out in accordance with that CMR decision;
- c) authorised the CMR to agree the outcome of the procurement process; and
- d) authorised the Interim Director of Public Health to finalise the terms of the contract by 1 April 2020 for commencement of the new service in consultation with the Interim Director of People and the Director of Commercial and Change and to take all necessary steps to put it into effect including cancelling the current contracts by 31 March 2020.

**1958 Treasury Management Mid-Year Update to 30 September 2019 (Agenda item 9)**

Cabinet considered the Treasury Management Mid-Year Update to 30 September 2019.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report. He commented that the Council had undertaken its latest round of borrowing in advance of the changes to the PWLB loan rate which had resulted in a £300k recurring cost saving. This Council worked within its operating limits and borrowing took place over a period of 10 years or more.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care congratulated the Treasury Management Team for borrowing at the appropriate time before the 1% interest rate rise for loans by the PWLB. The Council remained within its maturity structure of borrowing and would continue to do so in the future. The Council was well under its prudential borrowing limit.

The Leader of the Council emphasised that the Council did not undertake speculative borrowing.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet:

- a) noted the report, recognising that the Council is operating within its approved Treasury Management Strategy; and
- b) endorsed the conclusions of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Finance that the Treasury Management activities continue to be cost effective.

The meeting ended at 11.20 am.

Chairman .....