

**COUNCIL**  
**9 NOVEMBER 2017****REPORT OF CABINET - SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN**  
**- CONTINUED**

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**Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) Annual Report 2016/17**

13. The Independent Chair of the WSCB is responsible for publishing an annual report that provides a public assessment of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Worcestershire and also recognises achievements and is realistic about the challenges that remain. The Report has been considered by the Health and Well-Being Board and the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

14. During 2016/17 WSCB had a particular focus on a number of priorities including:

- Healthy relationships
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Early Help
- Integrated Family Front Door and Thresholds
- Young people at the point of transition (with specific focus on sexual exploitation)
- Children with disabilities
- Strengthening of the Board's Learning and Improvement Framework.

15. The Board concluded that at a strategic level there was a strong commitment to safeguarding in Worcestershire but whilst the Board had received assurances safeguarding arrangements were generally in place in most key partner agencies, there remained work to be done to improve collaborative efforts, in particular with regard to early help provision. Demand for services continued to grow and the Board had been reassured that strategies were in place to improve frontline practice. The Board however could not be certain about the impact of these and therefore the child protection system remained at risk. Further assurance was required as to the effectiveness of the wider early help offer and the Board needed to be confident that practitioners understood the thresholds for accessing statutory services from Children's Social Care. The Board recognised that these were challenging times for the Council and remained committed to working with all partners to bring about the necessary change required to improve outcomes for children in Worcestershire.

16. The Cabinet has received the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17 and noted the progress of the work of the Board.

**Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy Update (JMWMS)**

17. The Cabinet has approved an Addendum to the JMWMS for Herefordshire and Worcestershire 2004-2034. The update was required to reflect the changes in national policy, local provision and projections for future demand that have occurred since the

Strategy was originally adopted and ensure the Strategy remained relevant and fit for purpose. The Addendum included the following updates and information:

- information on changes to national waste management policy
- an update of waste management data including waste growth predictions
- an update on recycling, recovery and disposal performance.

18. A light touch approach had been taken to reviewing the JMWMS focusing on refreshing the waste growth and performance data. The Addendum did not attempt to set new objectives or policy and needed to be read in conjunction with the existing JMWMS. The Strategic Waste Management Board, consisting of senior officers and members, including the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment, had been consulted and updated throughout the review process. The six Worcestershire district councils and Herefordshire Council were all currently progressing the adoption of the addendum to the JMWMS via their local processes. The next review of the JMWMS would be in 2022 or earlier if a significant change was required.

### **Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy**

19. In 2016 the Council commissioned the development of a Rail Investment Strategy for Worcestershire (WRIS). The document was intended to set the economic context for rail investment, inform the development of the Local Transport Plan 4 and underpin the future pipeline of projects over the current and emerging plan period. Investing in the rail infrastructure was an important element of supporting sustained economic growth, investment that would increase capacity, connectivity and transport choice across Worcestershire and beyond. The draft WRIS had undergone a public consultation exercise, the outcomes of which had assisted in shaping revisions to the Strategy.

20. The Cabinet has formally endorsed and adopted the WRIS. The Strategy proposed four overarching Conditional Outputs for rail service development which would deliver £50.42m GVA per annum and 1,000 new jobs in the county:

- (i) Two trains per hour Worcester-Oxford-Paddington - £21.22m GVA and 475 new jobs;
- (ii) One train per hour Kidderminster-Droitwich Spa-Worcester-Paddington - £13.8m GVA and 275 new jobs;
- (iii) Calls at Worcestershire Parkway in Bristol-Manchester and Plymouth-Newcastle services - £9.6m GVA and 250 new jobs;
- (iv) Regional service between Kidderminster/Bromsgrove-Worcester and Cheltenham Spa, Gloucester and Bristol - £5,73m GVA and 150 new jobs.

The infrastructure schemes essential to facilitate this new connectivity were the North Cotswolds line capacity upgrade, Worcester area and Droitwich Spa to Stoke Works capacity upgrade, new car park capacity and/or new stations and Worcester Shrub Hill station regeneration.

### **Kidderminster Railway Station**

21. The Cabinet has considered the progress to date in the delivery of the Kidderminster Railway Station scheme. The scheme provided a strategic fit with both national and local policy and had been specifically included in the emerging Local Transport Plan 4 document. It was also detailed as a priority project within the Local

Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan. The scheme would improve accessibility to the Wyre Forest area for employment, health, education, leisure, retail and tourism. The budget for the scheme was £4.3m. The scheme would replace Kidderminster's inadequate railway interchange to provide a redeveloped and revised layout for the station which would double the current size and provide seating, retail/café, toilets and improved access.

22. The Business Case for the scheme showed the Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) was 4.81 based on a low growth in patronage scenario, which placed it in the very high value for money category. The BCR was 13.4 in a high growth of patronage scenario. The Business Case also included an assessment of the wider economic impact, including improved labour market balance leading to an increase in productivity and increases in economic output valued at £2.4m per annum by 2040. Design Work was underway and meetings had been held with all key stakeholders. Award of the contract was anticipated for Spring 2018 with the project being completed by Summer 2019. The Cabinet has delegated authority to the Director of Economy and Infrastructure, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, to award the contract and associated agreements to deliver the scheme.

### **Infrastructure Engineering Term Contract**

23. The Council currently had an existing Term Civil Engineering Contract (TCEC) for delivering a range of infrastructure works, from small maintenance schemes to large projects. The current TCEC had a financial ceiling of circa £50m and a term of four years with the potential to extend for up to a further two years (ending February 2019). Extensions of twelve months had been awarded to date making the current end date February 2018. It was anticipated the financial ceiling would be met by known projects and works and therefore the contract could not be used for significant projects beyond those currently envisaged.

24. Likely emerging and future infrastructure projects and works included Churchfields, Pershore Infrastructure Improvements, A38 Bromsgrove, Structural maintenance and public realm. A new Term Engineering Contract was required to deliver these schemes. The recommended procurement route was a similar contract to that used previously with target cost arrangements for a duration of four years with the potential to extend for a further three years dependent upon performance and value to the Council. The potential value of the contract was £75m but this did not commit the Council to that total value of work. Individual projects and pieces of work would only be awarded where a budget was available. There would be no obligation to award work.

25. The Cabinet has endorsed the approach to commissioning an Infrastructure Engineering Term Contract and approved the commencement of the procurement process. It has also delegated authority to the Director of Economy and Infrastructure, in consultation with relevant Cabinet Member, to finalise and execute a Contract.

### **Updated Policy on Delayed and Accelerated Transfer - Placement of Pupils out of their Chronological Age Group including Summer Born Children starting school**

26. Admission authorities must ensure that admission arrangements were compliant with the School Admissions Code. The arrangements for delayed and accelerated entry into schools in Worcestershire formed part of the admission arrangements. To ensure the Council complied with the legislation and did not find itself the subject of any

objections to the Office of the School Adjudicator, the Cabinet has approved the updated policy and authorised its publication and implementation with immediate effect. Summer born children could continue to receive Nursery Education Funding up to the term following their 5th birthday, they would continue to be submitted on the Early Years Census therefore the Council would receive funding for them.

### **Adoption Regionalisation**

27. The Cabinet has considered proposals for the Council's participation in a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) to be known as Adoption Central England (ACE) via a shared service agreement with Solihull Metropolitan Council, Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council. ACE would deliver the adoption agency functions of the four local authorities including the assessment, training and approval of adopters, the identification of prospective adopters for children in need of a new adoptive family and adoption support to adoptive families and special guardianship support services. It was hoped that ACE would deliver excellence in practice through innovation and stakeholder agreement.

28. The Cabinet has noted the options for a RAA outlined in the Business Case and considered the outcomes of staff engagement and service consultation and the equality impact assessment. It has approved, in principle, the Council entering into a Partnership and Hosting Agreement and partnership arrangement for ACE to undertake delivery of Worcestershire County Council's adoption service and Special Guardianship services alongside Solihull Metropolitan Council, Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council. Cabinet has delegated authority to the Director of Children, Families and Communities to approve the final details of these arrangements. It has also approved Warwickshire County Council becoming the host authority to facilitate the operational delivery of these services on behalf of Worcestershire County Council.

29. The Cabinet has agreed provisional financial proposals to fund ACE as agreed by the ACE Executive Board and to delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Director of Children, Families and Communities, to agree the final value of the total cash limit. The Director has also been authorised to progress staffing secondments to Warwickshire County Council as the host authority and to review the status of those agreements within the first twelve months. The implementation of these decisions was subject to the agreement of the Secretary of State, as a result of the Secretary of State's Direction with respect to child care services at Worcestershire County Council. It was hoped that a fully operational RAA would go live on 1 February 2018.

### **Proposed Engagement on Options for Future Delivery - Connect Short-Term Service and Council-Provided Day Services for Adults with a Learning Disability**

30. As part of its duties under the Care Act 2014, the Council funded a wide range of day services and opportunities for adults with learning disabilities who were eligible under the Act for care and support. Day services were commissioned from two types of provision – external providers, through a Dynamic Purchasing System contract and services provided internally by the Council's Adult Social Care Provider Services. In-house provision consisted of 12 separate Day Services across the county for adults with learning disabilities comprising Resource Centres, Connects and the Leisure Link service. In order to be financially sustainable and maximise value for money the Council's in-house Learning Disability day services should not cost more than it would to

purchase similar services from the external market. It was therefore imperative in the interests of Worcestershire taxpayers and residents and the individuals needing to use those services that they were constantly evaluated and reviewed to ensure outcomes were improved and maximum value for money achieved.

31. The emphasis was on the continued effort to encourage a vibrant and varied range of day service provision across Worcestershire in order to maximise choice, independence and well-being for individual service users and the related need to resolve the current issues regarding the ongoing financial sustainability of Council-provided day services for adults with a Learning Disability (Resources Centres, Connects and Leisure Link) and the Connect Short-term Service. To this end the Cabinet has endorsed the intention to use a co-production approach to future service development and delivery, engaging with people using services, family carers and staff to gather ideas which would inform future proposals for how services were to be delivered.

32. Specifically the Cabinet has authorised the Director of Adult Services to carry out engagement with individuals using the Resource Centre service, family carers and staff to explore options to increase usage, options for income generation and ideas for more efficient operation of the services. It has also authorised the Director to explore the option and potential impacts of partially reducing or fully closing the Connect Short-term Service to new referrals, through engagement with partner organisations and staff and detailed impact assessment. Further, it has authorised the Director to carry out engagement with individuals using the Connect Learning Disability day services and the Leisure Link service, family carers and staff to explore alternative delivery options for each of the services.

33. A further report will be brought to Cabinet by April 2018, informed by the proposed engagement exercises and detailed impact assessments, with proposals for future service delivery, including proposals for formal consultation where required.

## **Resources Report**

34. Further to the Report of Cabinet circulated with agenda papers, the November Cabinet has now received a report showing that in terms of the Council's revenue budget 2017/18, an overall financial pressure of £6.8m was anticipated (a £0.7m reduction from last month's forecast). An increased level of financial pressure had been identified in Adult Services due to an increased level of demand for services. This represented a key risk to the delivery within cash limits in 2017/18 and as a consequence it would be closely monitored. The Council was working hard across all services to identify ways in which further efficiencies could be achieved in 2017/18. However, it was still likely the Council would need to deliver the reforms included within the Transformation Programme and consider other means of delivering its services within budget, in addition to these efficiencies, prior to the end of the 2017/18 financial year. If this could not be achieved, with the requirement to identify and deliver savings of £60m across the following three years, this could present a risk to the delivery of a balanced budget in the future.

35. The Cabinet has considered the treasury management half-yearly progress report. In terms of borrowing, Council debt was £420.1m at 30 September 2017, of which £107.5m was to finance the Energy from Waste project. The level of debt was well within the Capital Financing Requirement estimated for 2017/18 of £559.8m. During the half year the level of long-term debt increased by £27.7m. Short-term debt

totalled £0.328m at 30 September 2017. In terms of lending, the balance at 30 September 2017 was £43m. The average rate earned on investments for the first half of 2017/18 was 0.28% and the gross interest earned on investments was £0.108m.

**Mr S E Geraghty**  
**Chairman**

### **Contact Points**

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### **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and background papers for the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 November 2017.