

COUNCIL
16 MAY 2019**REPORT OF CABINET - SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN**

Development of Worcestershire Children First

1. Further to the report to Council in January 2019, the Cabinet has considered the further development of Worcestershire Children First (WCF), the wholly-owned Council Company model chosen to deliver children's social care. Members will recall that Cabinet agreed to consider broadening the scope of services transferred to WCF to include the full range of Children's Services. This decision subsequently triggered a refresh of the Full Business Case (FBC) originally approved in March 2018, a more detailed analysis of the proposals to extend the responsibility of WCF to include education and early help and a re-design of the Programme Plan.
2. The Cabinet has approved the refreshed FBC which has been updated to ensure it accurately reflects the intentions of the Council in relation to the services provided by WCF. It has also approved the recommendations in the refreshed FBC in relation to the size and scope of WCF. The updated version of the FBC will be used to inform the remaining implementation phase. Broadening the scope of WCF has increased the amount of contracts and frameworks in scope of novation to WCF. Excluding the regional frameworks, the largest contract is with the provider Babcock Prime. The Cabinet has approved the proposal not to extend the current contract with Babcock Prime beyond October 2020 when the contract is anticipated to come to a natural break at the end of the initial five-year term. The Director of Children, Families and Communities has been authorised to initiate and implement a programme of work with Babcock Prime in order to transfer Education Services into WCF at the earliest opportunity.
3. The Cabinet has also authorised the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Department for Education-appointed Children's Commissioner, Chairperson of Worcestershire Children First, Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Education and Skills and Children and Families, to agree the final details of and terms upon which services transfer to WCF. The Chief Executive has been given authority to take all appropriate steps on behalf of the Council in relation to the development of WCF.
4. Progress made in developing WCF, including the confirmation of Company Board appointments, has been noted together with the re-worked Programme Plan which forms part of the Management Case of the FBC. A further report will be received by the Cabinet in Autumn 2019 which will include approval of WCF's Business Plan.

Progress Update on Joint Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Written Statement of Action/Improvement Plan

5. Further to the report to Council in July 2018 the Cabinet has received a progress update on the Joint Local Area SEND Written Statement of Action (WSOA). The WSOA

(Improvement Plan) has five workstreams each led jointly by representatives from the Council, Health and Partners. It has a detailed reporting and governance process to ensure accountability at all levels including the SEND Improvement (Strategic) Board, Health and Well-being Board, ICEOG, CCG Governing Body and Cabinet updates. The five workstreams are: The Local Offer; Embedding the Graduated Response; Assessment and Planning; Joint Commissioning and Leadership, and Workforce and Engagement. There is also a section on Safeguarding actions. The Cabinet has endorsed progress made by partners in all these areas to deliver the WSoA in order to improve outcomes for all children and young people with SEND by helping them to achieve their full potential.

6. The Department for Education and NHS England monitoring visits and feedback provided, including the guidance on re-inspections, has been acknowledged by the Cabinet. It has also authorised the Director of Children, Families and Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills to continue to take all appropriate steps to deliver the Improvement Plan.

Resources Report – Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring to Period 10 (Month ending 31 January 2019)

7. The Cabinet considered a detailed Resources Report at its meeting in March 2019. The main highlights included the following areas.

8. The conclusions of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Finance concerning revenue budget monitoring up to 31 January 2019 have been endorsed by the Cabinet. The outturn forecast for the Council's £324m net revenue budget as at Period 10 and progress to date on the savings and reform programme was reported. A forecast overspend of £2.9m, after management action, had been identified. There remained a risk that this could rise to £6.2m at the end of the financial year due to the underlying cost pressures around Children's Social Care Placements and Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block. The Cabinet noted the current progress regarding savings plans and additional management actions to reduce expenditure.

9. The Cabinet has also endorsed the Cabinet Member's conclusions concerning capital budget monitoring up to 31 January 2019. Overall the forecast expenditure for the Capital Programme is within the budget limit. The Cabinet has received a treasury management update and endorsed the Cabinet Member's conclusions that the management of debt and short-term investments continues to be cost effective.

10. Funding approval from Highways England totalling £2.68m was announced in January 2019 to support works to reduce congestion on the A38 at Bromsgrove. The funding will allow junction improvements around the A38 as part of the wider A38 Bromsgrove Corridor scheme. Finally, the Council has responded to the Government's consultations on the Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention Reform.

Mr S E Geraghty
Chairman

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this report

Nichola Garner, Committee and Appellate Officer

Tel: 01905 846626

Email: ngarner2@worcestershire.gov.uk

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 14 March 2019.