

**Council****Thursday, 11 February 2016, County Hall, Worcester****Minutes****Present:**

Mr I Hopwood (Chairman), Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr A T Amos, Mrs S Askin, Mr J Baker, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr P J Bridle, Mr J P Champion, Mr S J M Clee, Mr S C Cross, Mrs P E Davey, Mr P Denham, Mr N Desmond, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr A Fry, Mr S E Geraghty, Mrs J L M A Griffiths, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Ms P A Hill, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr M E Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mr A P Miller, Mr T A Muir, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr S R Peters, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Prof J W Raine, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr R J Sutton, Mr C B Taylor, Mr J W R Thomas, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall, Mr G J Vickery, Mr T A L Wells and Mr G C Yarranton.

**Available Papers**

The Members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated).
- B. 11 questions submitted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (previously circulated).
- C. The Minutes of the Council held on 14 January 2016 (previously circulated).

**1758 Apologies and Declaration of Interests (Agenda item 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M H Broomfield, Mr C J Bloore, Ms L R Duffy and Mr W P Gretton.

Mr M L Bayliss declared an interest in Agenda item 6(a) as a member of his wider family worked for the County Council; this did not amount to a DPI.

Mr A C Roberts declared an interest in Agenda item 7 as his daughter was employed by Public Health, England.

**1759 Public Participation (Agenda item 2)**

Mr Marshall Moses presented a petition on behalf of residents of the Majors Green area calling for improved road safety in that area. Specifically the documentation sought traffic measures along Tilehouse Lane from Whitlocks End train station along the Haslucks Green Road to the junction of Rushleigh Road.

Mr L C R Mallett presented a petition from residents in his division relating to speeding issues on the Rock Hill Estate. The residents sought reduced speed limits on Breakback Road/Foxwalks Avenue/Alderley road and Whitford Close (20 mph); and a full assessment of the risk to pedestrians and vehicle users on the junction joining Fox Land and Breakback Road. The petition sought whatever safety and traffic calming measures necessary to mitigate risk.

The Chairman thanked both participants for their contribution and promised they would receive a written response from the appropriate Cabinet Member with Responsibility in due course.

**1760 Minutes  
(Agenda item 3)**

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**1761 Chairman's  
Announcements  
(Agenda item 4)**

The Chairman referred members generally to the printed announcements and drew particular attention to Dr Harling's last meeting of the Council. Dr Harling was thanked by the Chairman and the Council for his work in Worcestershire.

The Chairman welcomed Masters students from the University of Birmingham to the meeting.

The Chairman of the Council also made reference to the Civic Service in Worcester Cathedral on 13 March 2016 and to Pershore Town Council's recent achievement of the gold level of Quality Status accreditation.

**1762 Constitutional  
Matters -  
Chairman of the  
Economy and  
Environment  
Overview and  
Scrutiny Panel  
(Agenda item  
5(a))**

**RESOLVED that Mr P A Tuthill be appointed Chairman of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel.**

**1763 Constitutional  
Matters -  
Political  
Balance on  
Committees**

**RESOLVED that the seat on the Waste Credit Governance Committee recently vacated by the Independent Alliance Group following the Stourport-on-Severn by-election, be allocated to the Conservative Group.**

(Agenda item  
5(b))

**1764 Reports of  
Cabinet -  
Matters which  
require a  
decision by  
Council - 2016-  
17 Budget and  
Council Tax  
(Agenda item  
6(a))**

The Council had before it a detailed report on the Budget for 2016-2017 which the Cabinet had considered on 4 February 2016 and which the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet were recommending formally for adoption by the Council.

All Councillors had received a copy of the full report and Appendices considered by the Cabinet on 4 February 2016 and had been requested to bring those to the meeting to allow full consideration of all the issues. Members were reminded that the Appendices referred to were those presented to 4 February Cabinet.

**2016/17 Local Government Finance Settlement**

The final report set out that the figures for the 2016/17 Local Government Finance Settlement were unknown at the time the 4 February 2016 Budget report to Cabinet was drafted and therefore the report to Cabinet was on the basis of the provisional settlement.

**Cabinet Report – 4 February 2016**

The Cabinet had considered the report of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Finance which included details of:

- those recommendations made by the Cabinet on 17 December 2015 on the draft budget for 2016/17
- the budget 2016/17 consultation and engagement. The Council had engaged with a wide range of individuals and organisations through various channels. The draft budget proposals were also considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board and its response had been before the Cabinet on 4 February
- confirmation of areas of investment in the Corporate Plan priorities of Open for Business, Children and Families, Health & Well-being and The Environment in 2016/17 and across the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)
- revenue budget monitoring for 2015/16. The outturn forecast to 30 November 2015 indicated a

cost pressure of £2.3m against authorised cash limits or 0.7% of the overall budget. It was anticipated that this variance would be reduced to ensure services were delivered within the Council's cash limited budget for 2016/17. With this breakeven forecast there still remained, in common with a number of other local authorities, a significant adverse variance and financial pressure with regard to Children's Social Care Placements. The FutureFit transformational programme continued to make good progress and the 2015/16 target of £27.5m was forecast to be achieved. General balances were likely to remain at £13m at the end of the 2015/16 financial year

- the proposal for the virement and transfer of £0.6m to earmarked reserves with regard to the Councillor's Divisional Funds Scheme as part of the December 2015 forecast reporting. This did not require alteration of the net cash limits approved by Full Council
- the work needed to close the provisional financial gap. The requirement to achieve an average annual level of budget reductions, efficiencies and income generation opportunities of £25m remained. However, due to the profile of the Government's proposals for reductions in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) there would be an increased level of budget reductions, efficiencies and income generation required in the 2017/18 financial year
- the budget requirement of £327.8m against funding from the Government and Council Tax of £325.8m leaving an initial funding gap of £2m
- developments since the December 2015 Cabinet report. This included details of the Leader's response to the Government's Local Government Finance Settlement. The Government had at that point still to confirm the final figures for the 2016/17 settlement. The provisional settlement published on 17 December 2015 indicated a £11.4m reduction in Council funding compared with that forecast in the December 2015 Cabinet report and the Spending Review
- the proposed Council Tax increase and the Government's Council Tax Referendum Limit. Central Government announced within the

Spending Review that for the rest of the current Parliament, local authorities responsible for adult social care would be given an additional 2% flexibility on their current Council Tax referendum threshold to be used entirely for adult social care. In anticipation of the core referendum limit being 2% in 2016/17 (as it was in 2015/16), the draft budget considered by Cabinet in December 2015 included a proposal to increase Council Tax by 3.94% (1.94% within the anticipated core 2% referendum limit and 2% ring-fenced for Adult Social Care)

- the changes to Council Tax, Business Rates income and expenditure budgets which had enabled the provisional funding gap 2016/17 of £2m to be fully recovered

#### Summary of changes since December 2015 Cabinet

£m	December 2015	February 2016	Change
Council Tax	223.4	<b>225.0</b>	1.6
Collection Fund Surplus	0.0	<b>3.1</b>	3.1
Revenue Support Grant	43.5	<b>36.3</b>	-7.2
Business Rates Retention	58.9	<b>58.1</b>	-0.8
Better Care Fund	33.5	<b>33.9</b>	0.4
Total Funding Available	359.3	<b>356.4</b>	-2.9
Total Net Expenditure	383.9	<b>381.2</b>	-2.7
Future Fit Programme	-22.6	<b>-24.8</b>	-2.2
Earmarked Reserves Contribution	0.0	<b>0.0</b>	0.0
Funding Shortfall	2.0	<b>0.0</b>	2.0

- the spending requirements which were proposed to become cash limits for each Directorate in 2016/17
- the arrangements for the renewal of the County Council's Section 75 partnership arrangements with Health for the commissioning of services. The Cabinet had authorised the Director of Adult

Services and Health and the Director of Children, Families and Communities to finalise the details in respect of their Directorates and formally execute the Section 75 agreement for commissioning arrangements with Health for 2016/17

- the Dedicated Schools Grant allocation for Worcestershire which totalled £368.9m and the Education Service Grant. The provisional allocation of the latter to Worcestershire for 2016/17 was £4.2m
- the Pay Policy Statement for approval which specified the Council's policies relating to the pay of its workforce. The Statement had to be published on the Council's public website by 31 March each year
- details of the allocations made under the New Homes Bonus (NHB). The County Council received a 20% NHB share, currently for a period of 6 years, on the basis of New Homes built in Worcestershire (the remaining 80% was received by District Councils). £2.0m would be allocated to the County Council's Driving Home initiative. A contribution of £0.4m was also proposed to support investment in Bromsgrove Parkside as well as £1.4m for the Worcester Carrington Bridge and £0.3m for the A38 in Bromsgrove
- the Council's Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2018/19. The Capital Budget for 2015/16 totalled £183.7m. Capital expenditure as at 30 November 2015 was forecast to be £177.4m. In terms of the Local Transport Plan, the Council expected to receive funding of around £93m covering 2015/16 and 2020/21. This included indicative allocations of £14m per year from 2018/19 totalling £42m. With regard to the capital programme for schools the Council was still awaiting details of the funding allocation. Council would be updated when these figures were known. Work had been undertaken on the financial provision within the MTFP for additional prudential borrowing of £5m per year. Further investment was recommended for footways, and Public Realm works. As a result of updates to capital investment allocations, the forecast capital investment over the period 2015/16 to 2018/19 was £430m
- the latest assessment of the Council's MTFP

prospects. Over the medium term, an average annual level of budget reductions, efficiencies and income generation opportunities of £25m remained. However, due to the profile of the Government's proposals for RSG this requirement would need to be increased for 2017/18. Further work would be needed to consider the impact of this and for future years. There were also a number of risks and sensitivities that might have a significant impact on the MTFP such as Government funding, Looked After Children placements, demographic growth and demand pressures, the medium term implications of the Care Act, inflation, the current Business Rates Retention Scheme and reform of the Scheme, the NHB and pensions

- the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2016/17 and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities Statement for 2016/17
- the County Council's Public Sector Equality Duty in relation to setting the budget. An overarching strategic equality relevance assessment had been undertaken in respect of budget proposals for key transformational change programmes. As many programmes were as yet at an early stage of development it was not yet possible to carry out more detailed equality impact analysis. Where necessary equality analysis would be undertaken and findings reported to Cabinet where key decisions were required
- a personal assurance statement from the Chief Financial Officer as Section 151 officer on the robustness of the budget calculations.

The Leader of the Council gave an introduction to the Budget and moved the recommendation as set out in paragraph 1 of the report; this was seconded by Mr A N Blagg. The mover announced that in the last few days the Government had confirmed a £2.5m pa transition grant for the next two years and it was proposed that such monies be placed in reserves. The mover believed that the rise in Council Tax (an average of £42 for a Band D property) was necessary to safeguard services.

An amendment was then moved by Mr P M McDonald and seconded by Mr R C Lunn:

Council February 2016 - Proposed Labour Group Budget Amendment:

<b><i>Increases in expenditure/ Reductions on funding</i></b>	<b>2016/17 (Part Year)</b>	<b>2017/18 (Full Year)</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<i>Increased investment into Positive Activities</i>	1,000	1,000
<i>Increased investment into Domestic Abuse and Violence services</i>	65	65
<i>Remove the proposed Council Tax Increase</i>	8,500	8,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,565</b>	<b>9,565</b>
<b><i>Expenditure reductions</i></b>		
<i>Withdrawal of one-off monies in 2016/17 from Earmarked Reserves</i>	4,550	-
<i>An additional target of 4% reduction in all the Council's significant Contracts excluding Transport, Joint Partnerships with NHS and Social Care</i>	3,420	3,420
<i>Better use of County's Assets and Facilities</i>	100	100
<i>Release of part of the FutureFit Reserve</i>	1,000	-
<i>Accelerating transfer from Private Fostering to the Internal Fostering Service</i>	155	1,000
<i>Reductions in Pay Budgets to reflect reductions in the Use of Consultants</i>	300	300
<i>Reductions in Non-Pay Budgets to reflect reductions in Hospitality expenditure</i>	40	40
<i>Further Withdrawal of Earmarked Reserves in 2017/18 and replaced by other savings from 2018/19 onwards</i>	-	4,705
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,565</b>	<b>9,565</b>

The mover and seconder of the amendment spoke in favour of its adoption. The key points of the debate in favour of the amendment included:

- that there were workable alternatives to the harsh economics of austerity put forward by the controlling group
- that the amendment was an attempt to protect some of the most vulnerable people in the county



and maintain some of the essential services they required

- the amendment's aim was protecting those least able to pay from an increase in Council Tax and at the same time making prudent use of reserves to remove this burden
- the amendment built on the work done by the OSPB without imposing an additional burden on hard-working people.

Members also spoke against the amendment:

- the amendment was unrealistic and was based on the economics of imprudence
- the amendment did not set out to put forward genuine alternatives but was part of an annual political posturing process
- the proposal being put forward did not adhere to the sound principles of local government finance and it was reckless to make suggestions of this kind knowing they had no realistic prospect of success
- that a prudent yet ambitious budget had already been proposed and the amendment should be voted down.

**At the conclusion of the debate and on a named vote this amendment was lost.**

Those voting in favour of the amendment were: Ms P Agar, Mr J Baker, Mr P Denham, Mr A Fry, Ms P A Hill, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mr R M Udall and Mr G J Vickery (10).

Those voting against the amendment were: Mr I Hopwood, Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Mr A T Amos, Mrs S Askin, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr P J Bridle, Mr J P Champion, Mr S J M Clee, Mr S C Cross, Mrs P E Davey, Mr N Desmond, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mrs J M L A Griffiths, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Ms R E Jenkins, Mr A P Miller, Mr T A Muir, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr S R Peters, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr R J Sutton, Mr C B Taylor, Mr J W R Thomas, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr P A

Tuthill, Mr T A L Wells and Mr G C Yarranton (41).

Mr M E Jenkins and Prof J W Raine abstained (2).

An amendment was then moved by Mrs E B Tucker and seconded by Mrs F M Oborski:

*"The 2013 Group are proposing the following amendments that will not affect the Revenue Budget as set out in the February 2016 Cabinet Report.*

- 1) *An allocation of £100,000 to support the Council's Self Sufficient Council strategic theme. The intention is to provide an investment pot to generate new income generation ideas that will support closing the financial planning gap over the medium term.*
- 2) *An allocation of £500,000 to increase the investments set out in Paragraphs 73 and 118 of the February 2016 Cabinet Report to create a £1 million investment for 2016/17 in Footways.*

*The additional Capital Expenditure would not be incurred until the later part of the 2016/17 financial year, given the existing allocations and therefore the interest charge of debt funding would be minimal in 2016/17.*

*The funding for this and the repayment of debt would be drawn from the unallocated headroom that remains in the Capital Programme for 2017/18 (when MRP will be charged against this expenditure) and therefore does not require a change to the Revenue Budget as set out for 2016/17.*

<b>Increase in expenditure</b>	<b>2016/17 (Part Year)</b>	<b>2017/18 (Full Year)</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<i>Creation of an investment pot to support further income generation</i>	100	-
<i>Allocation of the existing Financing Transactions budget in 2017/18 to an increased Capital Investment of £0.5 million in Footways</i>	-	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>To be met by</b>		
<i>Transformation Grant</i>	100	-

<i>Reduction in Headroom for new Capital Investment included in the Medium Term Financial Plan</i>	-	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The mover and seconder of the amendment spoke in favour of its adoption. The key points of the debate in favour of the amendment included:

- the difficulties imposed by the late announcement of the Council's settlement for 2016/17 and how limited were the opportunities to influence the Budget in any meaningful way
- the proposals in the amendment were at least an attempt to explore alternative ways of working
- some attempts had to be made to address the shortfalls in some budget headings and although limited the amendment sought to do this
- despite the bleak economic outlook for local government the Council had to still maintain a constructive stance.

Members also spoke against the amendment:

- the amendment failed to challenge the budget as proposed and was too limited to provide a useful alternative way of moving forward
- the Cabinet had listened to the results of consultations and increased the budget as far as was prudent for footway improvements. A Scrutiny Task and Finish Group was about to report and it was suggested that any further spending proposed at this time was premature. The amendment could not be supported as a result
- there was no real appetite to agree the amendment and in fact it was a lacklustre attempt to be critical of a well-presented and closely crafted budget.

**At the conclusion of the debate and on a named vote this amendment was lost.**

Those voting for the amendment were:

Mrs S Askin, Mr P J Bridle, Mr S C Cross, Mr M E

Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr S R Peters, Prof J W Raine, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr R J Sutton, Mr J W R Thomas, Mrs E B Tucker and Mr T A L Wells (13).

Those voting against the amendment were:

Mr I Hopwood, Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Mr A T Amos, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr J P Campion, Mr S J M Clee, Mrs P E Davey, Mr N Desmond, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mrs J M L A Griffiths, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr A P Miller, Mr T A Muir, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr C B Taylor, Mr P A Tuthill and Mr G C Yarranton (30).

Ms P Agar, Mr J Baker, Mr P Denham, Mr A Fry, Ms P A Hill, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald and Mr G J Vickery (9) abstained.

In debating the Budget, as originally moved and seconded, the following principal points were made:

- the Budget followed a steady and well thought-out process and was the result of a long and challenging creative cycle which had involved wide consultation within the county. The Budget process had been through the Scrutiny process and had given all members the chance to comment at the earliest stage as and when information was available
- the Budget contained a rise in Council Tax which would deal with the most pressing issues facing the Council. This rise was considered to be a prudent measure to continue to protect the county and maintain services
- the Budget was a planned, proportionate and rational response by the Council to meet the constraints imposed by a tight financial envelope, it was also sustainable and provided longer term stability
- as always the Council was delivering value for money whilst maintaining and sustaining services and outcomes for the people of Worcestershire.

**On a named vote RESOLVED that**

- (a) the conclusions concerning revenue budget monitoring up to 31 December 2015 be endorsed;
- (b) the virement and transfers to Earmarked Reserves as detailed in paragraph 4 of the report be approved;
- (c) the budget requirement for 2016/17 be approved at £322.468 million;
- (d) the Council Tax band D equivalent for 2016/17 be set at £1,122.31 and the Council Tax Requirement (precept) be set at £224.968 million;
- (e) consistent with the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement that revenue cash limits be set for each Directorate:

	£m
(i) Adult Services and Health	132.746
(ii) Children, Families and Communities	84.797
(iii) Economy and Infrastructure	64.484
(iv) Commercial and Change / Finance	40.441
	322.468

- (f) that the County Council continues to engage with residents and businesses in shaping the Corporate Plan and spending profile in line with their priorities;
- (g) the Council's Pay Policy Statement as set out in Appendix 8 be approved;
- (h) the conclusions concerning capital budget monitoring up to 31 December 2015 be endorsed;
- (i) the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 9 be approved;
- (j) the Medium Term Financial Plan as set out in Appendix 10 be approved;
- (k) delegated authority be provided to the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council to respond to Central Government and accept the offer of a four-year settlement;

**(l) the Treasury Management Strategy set out in Appendix 11 be adopted; and**

**(m) the Statement of Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Statement as set out in Appendix 12 be approved.**

[NB Appendices referred to in these Minutes are those presented to 4 February 2016 Cabinet]

Those voting in favour were:

Mr I Hopwood, Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Mr A T Amos, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr J-P Champion, Mr S J M Clee, Mrs P E Davey, Mr N Desmond, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mrs J M L A Griffiths, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mr A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr A P Miller, Mr T A Muir, Mr S R Peters, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr R J Sutton, Mr C B Taylor, Mr J W R Thomas, Mr P A Tuthill and Mr G C Yarranton (33).

Those voting against were:

Ms P Agar, Mrs S Askin, Mr J Baker, Mr P Denham, Mr A Fry, Ms P A Hill, Ms R E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mrs F M Oborski, Prof J W Raine, Mrs M A Rayner, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr R M Udall, Mr G J Vickery and Mr T A L Wells (17).

Mr P J Bridle and Mr S C Cross abstained (2).

**1765 Reports of Cabinet - Matters which require a decision by Council - 2017-18 School Place Planning (Agenda item 6(b))**

The Council had before it a report on a suggested addition to the Capital Programme. The report set out that the County Council had a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for all children resident in the county who wished to attend a state-funded school. As part of the annual school place planning and monitoring exercise, officers had identified a need to provide additional permanent places in three areas of the county from September 2017.

This need for additional places was driven by a combination of underlying demographic changes and additional children arising from housing growth. Three schools: Red Hill CE Primary, Worcester; Rushwick CE Primary, Malvern and Wychbold First, Droitwich were identified as candidates for expansion based on their location in relation to the areas of growth and their status

as popular and successful schools.

Consultation took place on the draft proposals between 2 November and 11 December 2015 and included publication of written consultation documents and a consultation event for stakeholders at each school. After taking into account the responses to the consultations for all three schools, the majority of which were in favour of expansion, the Cabinet had approved publication of statutory notices to expand the schools with associated increases in Published Admission Numbers to be implemented by September 2017: The increases were:

- Red Hill CE Primary School, Worcester from 30 to 60 pupils per year
- Rushwick CE Primary School, Malvern from 20 to 30 pupils per year
- Wychbold First School, Droitwich from 20 to 30 pupils per year.

The Cabinet had also authorised the Director of Children, Families & Communities to approve those proposals in respect of which no objections to the Public Notices were received and the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families would decide those proposals in respect of which objections to the Public Notices were received.

The report set out that the capital costs of the proposed expansions would be met from the County Council's Basic Need capital grant for 2016/17. Contributions from housing development would also be used where available and in line with regulations governing the use of such funds. All schools which expand at the request of the Council were entitled to additional revenue support through the mechanism agreed with the Schools' Forum. This support would apply from the date of implementation until all year groups at the school were operating at the new capacity.

The Council was being asked to approve the addition of the necessary building works associated with these expansions to the 2016/17 Children's Services Capital Investment Programme within the Capital Programme.

**RESOLVED that to the extent that proposed expansions at Red Hill CE and Rushwick CE Primary Schools and Wychbold First School are agreed, pursuant to the authorisations given by Cabinet on 4 February 2016, the addition of the necessary building works associated with these expansions to the**

**2016/17 Children's Services Capital Investment Programme within the Capital Programme be approved.**

**1766 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 1 - Public Health (Agenda item 7)**

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr G J Vickery, Mr J Baker, Mr P M McDonald, Mr R C Lunn and Mr P Denham.

The Notice of Motion was moved by Mr G J Vickery and seconded by Mr J Baker who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council then agreed to consider and deal with the Motion on the day.

An amendment was then moved by Mr M J Hart and seconded by Mrs S L Blagg. With the consent of the mover and seconder of the original motion the amendment so moved was adopted as the substantive motion and received general support.

**RESOLVED that the health and wellbeing of the public of Worcestershire is a key priority of this Council and this can be demonstrated by the fact that it was one of the Council's corporate priorities.**

**Council agrees that this should be considered in all major policies and decisions of the Council.**

**Council congratulates the Health and Wellbeing Board for previously considering the issue of Public Health Impact Assessments and developing a process for their completion.**

**Council agrees that all reports presented to Council should have a Public Health Impact Assessment and requests that Cabinet follow the same procedure in its reports.**

**1767 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 2 - Alcohol Free Zone (Agenda item 7)**

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr G J Vickery, Mr J Baker, Mr P M McDonald, Mr R C Lunn and Mr P Denham.

The Notice of Motion was moved by Mr G J Vickery and seconded by Mr P M McDonald who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council agreed to consider and deal with the Motion on the day.

Members speaking in favour of the Motion:



- emphasised the leadership role of the Council and of sending a general message about alcohol reduction and health
- that in addition to this advice direct action would have a very important effect on perception of alcohol and its consumption and over consumption
- suggested there was a continuing presence of alcohol in some parts of the building despite the policy adopted in 2010
- alluded to how a change in how alcohol and alcohol abuse were perceived in society needed to mirror the way in which tobacco's decline had taken place only with much greater swiftness.

Members speaking against the Motion:

- the Leader confirmed that no drinks cabinet had been moved – a display cabinet with no alcohol in it had been moved
- claimed the motion was simply a thinly veiled reference to the former Leader of the Council and was both opportunistic and shallow
- suggested that the thrust of the motion was based on a misinterpretation of a simple furniture moving exercise and the Council already had in place a strong and very workable policy restricting alcohol. There was no evidence that this was not being followed, nor had there been a single complaint to that effect
- that the County Council no longer controlled parts of the County Hall campus and as such the motion would be unworkable.

**On being put to the meeting the Motion was lost.**

**1768 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 3 - Commissioning Council (Agenda item 7)**

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mrs E B Tucker, Mrs F M Oborski, Prof J W Raine, Mrs S Askin, Mr T A L Wells and Mr M E Jenkins.

The Notice of Motion was moved by Mrs E Tucker and seconded by Mr T A L Wells who both spoke in favour of it.

Council agreed to consider and deal with the Motion on the day.

Those speaking in favour of the Motion:

- said there was growing disquiet that methods of scrutinising contracts and commissioned services was not as robust as had been promised at the time these new processes had been introduced
- claimed that transparency and accountability had been lost in a headlong and dogmatic dash to commission services. This left a void and was a dangerous position for the Council
- reiterated that some members had been denied access to some Key Performance Indicators data on the grounds it was commercially sensitive. This was an intolerable situation
- urged the Council to tighten up procedures in order to ensure Council Tax papers were getting best value for money

Those speaking against the Motion:

- emphasised the whole commissioning process was as transparent and fair as possible. Members were involved in briefing meetings and were able to see a great deal of information
- pointed out that the Council operated in a mixed economy and whether services were commissioned or not all were subject to existing robust procedures
- reporting mechanisms were in place and councillors were all in a position to challenge standards of service delivery through reports from Cabinet and Cabinet Members with Responsibility, Question Time, Scrutiny, service and Commissioning briefings.

**On being put to the meeting the Motion was lost.**

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning presented his report which covered a number of overarching issues:

- a retrospective look at the year's work

**1769 Reports of  
Cabinet  
Members with  
Responsibility -  
Transformation**

**and  
Commissioning  
(Agenda item 8)**

- FutureFit - Your Life Your Choice
  - Care Act
  - Superfast Broadband
- Human Resources and Organisational Development
  - support for the Commissioning process
  - Talent Management Framework
  - Lunch and Learn Sessions
- Property
  - Place Partnership
  - One Public Estate Programme
  - Parkside, Bromsgrove
  - County Hall Campus
- Technology and Customer Service
  - 100% online by 2017
  - Contract with HP
  - Contract with Civica
  - greater use of biometrics
- Commercial Team
  - directorate restructuring
  - support for the commissioning process
  - commissioning of transactional HR and finance services
- Communication
  - improved methods
  - plain English
  - excellence in Cyber Security
  - Travel Twitter account
  - inward investment and jobs
- Legal and Democratic Services
  - Democratic Services streamlined
  - processes in Democratic Services sharpened
  - expanded service provision to Academy Schools
  - competitive CIPFA benchmarking
  - Legal Services meet increased demand
  - Legal Services commissioning review shows in-house service best value for money.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility answered questions about the report which included:

- how success was measured
- layers of management and how reductions were achieved
- how experiences to date with services commissioned out would inform ongoing and future commissioning exercises
- energy savings at the new Parkside Development and whether these were as planned or projected
- reliance on digital services was not penalising those not able to access the Internet
- that flexible and mobile working (FAME) was not placing employees under unreasonable stress to work longer and more intensively.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility promised:

- to respond to a specific observation/complaint that the broadband in the Hither Green Lane area was not of 'superfast' quality.
- to give a written response on Parkside in Bromsgrove relating to the heating of the new Council Chamber. This would include what were the actual figures compared to the predicted figures and whether those were in line with the savings promised in the initial and subsequent justification for the project.
- would investigate concerns that 'signposting' by The Hub might be giving advice which was too general and should be more sharply focussed. It was suggested that the default position should not be 'ring your local councillor/CMR'.
- a written response on what are the value/proportions for each sector - commercial sector, social enterprises, partnerships or the voluntary and community sector in commissioning of contracts?

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for his report.

**1770 Question Time  
(Agenda item 9)**

Eleven questions had been received by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and had been circulated before the meeting. Ten questions were asked at the meeting and answered. Question 11 was formally withdrawn. (All answers are enclosed with these Minutes.)

**1771 Reports of  
Committees -**

The Council received the report of the Pensions Committee containing a summary of decisions taken.

**Summary of  
decisions taken  
by the Pensions  
Committee  
(Agenda item  
10)**

The Council adjourned for luncheon between 1.00 p.m. and 1.45 p.m.

The meeting ended at 2.50 p.m.

Chairman .....

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## **COUNCIL 11 FEBRUARY 2016 - AGENDA ITEM 9 – QUESTION TIME**

*Answers given at the meeting may have been a précis of the full answer which is set out below. In some cases additional information is also included. Where, due to time or other constraints, it was not possible for the question to be asked formally the written response is also included below.*

*Where any questions have been withdrawn that is also indicated below.*

**QUESTION 1** – Mr P M McDonald asked Mr J Campion:

*"Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families please inform me of the number of children in care who eventually go to university?"*

**Answer given**

Six per cent of 18/19 year old looked after children started university in September 2015.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about the actions being taken to improve this figure Mr Campion gave a comprehensive list of actions aimed at closing the current attainment gap.

**QUESTION 2** – Mr P M McDonald asked Mrs Hodgson:

*"Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Localism and Communities please inform me how many books are now held in our libraries compared to the number held six years ago?"*

**Answer given (by the Leader in Mrs Hodgson's absence)**

The number of books held in the libraries today is 770,159 (including 2,284 e-books and 255 e-audio books), compared to 678,264 six years ago. For The Hive, analysis shows a current total of 302,001 items, of which 135,085 are University of Worcester items. A similar exercise done at the end of 2013/2014 showed a total of 304,911 items, of which 134,103 were University items. The new library in Bromsgrove brought 870 new books to add to their collection.

**QUESTION 3** – Mr R M Udall asked Mrs S L Blagg:

*"Will the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care confirm if any internal review has taken place into the impact of the reductions in the Supporting People Budget?"*

**Answer given**

There is no Supporting People budget.

Between 2003 and 2009 the Council received a Supporting People Grant. This was subsequently subsumed into the revenue support grant, which has then been progressively reduced by central government.

In November 2013 the Council consulted on a range of proposals for savings from services formerly funded by the Supporting People grant. Following consultation these proposals were amended and a final decision was taken in March 2014.

Anyone directly affected by a reduction in service was reassessed to ensure that if they were eligible for adult social care then their needs continued to be met.

Following implementation of the savings the Council has been monitoring the impact on adult social services. There is no evidence that the savings have led to an increase in demand for adult social care.

The number of new assessments has remained constant or decreased:

5,322 in 2013/14

5,557 in 2014/15

4,424 in 2015/16 (estimate to date).

The number of people in receipt of Council funded care has decreased slightly although the level of care required has tended to increase:

6,196 in 2013/14

5,986 in 2014/15

5,977 currently (to date).

#### Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about a specific provision within the questioner's Division Mrs Blagg set out that eligibility criteria existed for adult social care and applicants making claims would be assessed under those criteria.

**QUESTION 4** – Mr P Denham asked Mr John Smith:

*"Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways please confirm whether or not fire engines are able to negotiate the turning space provided at the new highway layout in front of Worcester Cathedral?"*

#### **Answer given**

A standard HGV chassis fire appliance successfully tested the turning facility before the scheme was opened. This manoeuvre was comfortably achieved. The Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Authority also advises me that larger rescue vehicles have also undergone the same assessment successfully.

#### Supplementary Question

Mr Smith answered a supplementary question about other large vehicles and air quality generally at this location.

**QUESTION 5** – Mr P Denham asked Mr John Smith:

*"I have been given dates by highways officers starting on 3 December last year for the installation of double yellow lines at the western end of Rainbow Hill, Worcester. Last week I was told that the contractor had advised highways that the job had been completed in early January. I personally inspected the location on 4 February and there are no yellow lines to be seen! Will the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways please tell me is the contract between highways and Ringway preventing accurate communication between the two, and is it being properly managed and monitored?"*



## **Answer given**

No, on the contrary, the management of the Highways Maintenance Service Contract encourages good communications. In general this is borne out by the many hundreds of schemes that are delivered each year on time, within target and to specification. The Highways Maintenance Service Contract requires for a Contractor's Plan detailing resources and a works programme to be accepted by the Service Manager each month. This is backed up by regular progress and planning meetings for every area of the Contract.

With regards the works at Rainbow Hill, this had been scheduled in the Contractors Plan. However, the application of thermoplastic lines is very, very weather dependent and due to bad weather the work has not yet been completed. I understand the works is scheduled for completion within the next 2 – 3 weeks, again this is very weather dependent.

## Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about when the work would be completed Mr Smith undertook to provide a written response for Mr Denham.

**QUESTION 6** – Mrs F M Oborski asked Mr Campion:

*"As Corporate Parent the County Council is ultimately responsible for educational placements of Worcestershire Looked After Children (LAC).*

*Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families please tell me under what circumstances, if any, would we allow LAC to be the subject of Elective Home Education and if any current LAC are educated in this way, how many?"*

## **Answer given**

The only circumstances in which Looked After Children have been designated as 'Educated Otherwise' is to enable the young person to access further Education provision as an alternative to full time school education. This is in line with national Guidance for the enrolment of 14-16 year olds in Further Education. We currently have three Worcestershire Looked After Children who are registered as 'Educated Otherwise' all of whom to allow them access further Education provision.

## Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about unregistered educational provision Mr Campion stated that it would not be the Council's practice to use such provision.

**QUESTION 7** – Mrs F M Oborski asked Mr Campion:

*"Recently the Sunday Times exposed Worcestershire in general and Wychavon in particular as one of the worst areas in the country as far as social mobility, life chances and educational outcomes for children from deprived backgrounds are concerned.*

*What steps is the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families initiating to rectify this awful situation?"*

## **Answer given**

While this report is well worth examining, and makes many interesting and indeed some valid points, its methodology is not always well suited to measure mobility in every local area. For example, Wychavon's poor position in the rankings arose because it has

relatively few disadvantaged children in a well performing school system, and relatively more of the adults in highly paid jobs commute to jobs outside the area.

However, the main thrust of the report is one that I completely agree with – we most close the gap in educational attainment and progress between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and the rest. Worcestershire as a whole could improve in this area, and it is one of Babcock's most important objectives.

I would encourage all councillors who are school governors to look at the indicators used by the Commission in their own school, and seek reassurance from the Headteacher that these children are being prioritised. Governors should also ask for information on how the Pupil Premium is being spent, and make sure that is directly impacting on relevant children, using evidence-based interventions.

### Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question Mr Campion said it was recognised that geographical variations did exist but that the Council employed appropriate effort and resources to address these.

**QUESTION 8** – Ms P Agar asked Mr John Smith:

*"What is your purpose in joining the West Midlands Rail Partnership and how will this improve rail services within Worcestershire and inter-regional rail links?"*

### **Answer given**

As set out in the report received by the County Council's Cabinet at its November meeting, we have joined the West Midlands Rail partnership because our view is that devolution of rail services will deliver many benefits to the rail passengers and businesses in the county. Having a targeted, locally accountable rail contract with proper incentives on the operator will in our view, enable West Midlands Rail to specify and manage rail services more effectively than the current national arrangements led by the Department for Transport.

West Midlands Rail will be able to:

- Stimulate economic growth through targeting rail investment and specifying a rail service that is responsive to local needs.
- Create a more efficient railway that is better value for the taxpayer.
- Actively manage the contract and hold the operator to account for delivery.

The proposals cover the services currently operated by London Midland and our view is that those rail services can be improved through:

- Provision of additional **capacity** to reduce overcrowding.
- Improving **connectivity** to other parts of the West Midlands region and Birmingham Airport.
- Becoming more **customer focused**.
- Offering a **clearer** approach to the passenger experience – such as rolling stock, station quality, timetables and fares.
- Delivering a rail service that is **cost – effective** for the taxpayer.

Those five C's are the outputs that West Midlands Rail is concentrating on during the public consultation phase. At the same time West Midlands Rail is working to achieve a network that is responsive to the needs of rail passengers and businesses supporting economic development and job creation.

### Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about the use of new transport technology Mr Smith confirmed that the Partnership would investigate all possible options to obtain the best outcome for local people.

**QUESTION 9** – Ms P Agar asked Mr John Smith:

*"Now that the Council has joined the West Midlands Rail Partnership, are there any plans to extend the West Midlands concessionary rail fares for pensioners' scheme to Worcestershire?"*

### **Answer given**

There are no plans at the current time to extend the West Midlands concessionary rail fares scheme to Worcestershire. Doing so would have significant on-going revenue funding implications for the County Council, which the County Council would be unable to meet.

For regular rail users over 60 years of age the senior citizen's rail card is available for £30 per year, which gives one third off Standard and First Class Anytime, Off Peak and Advance rail fares throughout England, Scotland and Wales. These can be bought online through the National Rail Enquiries website or at any staffed railway station.

### Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about the ease of use of various rail travel sites Mr Smith said one of the benefits of belonging to a group of this kind was the opportunity to look for improvements for travellers across the whole region.

**QUESTION 10** – Mrs E B Tucker asked Mr Hart:

*"A plan for joint delivery of social care and health care in Worcestershire must be in place and agreed with the NHS in 2017 for implementation in 2020. Could the Leader of the Council and/or cabinet members with responsibility indicate what parts of the Children, Families and Communities budget and the Adult Social Care and Public Health budget will remain with the County Council as at present and how much of those budgets will move to joint decision making under the new proposals. Can they assure us that all councillors will be kept informed of progress as this plan is prepared and that the new plan will include mechanisms to ensure that all members are kept up to date on future service policies and developments and are able follow up local issues and casework with regard to this major area of county council responsibilities?"*

### **Answer given**

In December 2015 NHS England issued new planning guidance requiring that the NHS develop place based Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) to cover the period October 2016 – March 2021. STPs are required to have a sub-regional planning footprint larger than Health and Well-Being Board and CCG boundaries. An initial response was submitted to NHS England by the CCGs on 29 January detailing a proposed Worcestershire and Herefordshire planning footprint. A report was submitted to the Worcestershire Health and Well-Being Board on 9 February which described the proposed approach including governance for the development and implementation of the STP which is to be submitted to NHS England by the end of June 2016.

The draft STP is required to reflect local Health and Well-being Strategies and to reference better integration with local authority services, including public health and social care. Whilst the financial aspect of the plan must identify how commissioners and providers will work

together, there are **no** current plans for the County Council to devolve or cede any control over budgets, nor to delegate any of its statutory duties to another agency. The Health and Well-Being Board will have a role in governance of the STP to ensure that it reflects the Worcestershire Health and Well-being Strategy and that it aligns and takes into account the County Council's own plans for public health and social care.

#### Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about the devolution of budgets Mr Hart reiterated that there were no current plans for the County Council to devolve or cede any control over budgets, nor to delegate any of its statutory duties to another agency.

**QUESTION 11** – Mr G J Vickery had planned to ask Mr Hart:

*"In the light of the Health and Well-being Board report on the impact of the Obesity Plan, does the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-being feel that there is further scope for intervention by any organisations to address the fact that over 50% of the adult population of Worcestershire is overweight or obese?"*

In light of the discussion on this subject at the Health and Well-being Board earlier in the week Mr Vickery withdrew his question formally.