

Council

Thursday, 3 July 2014, 10.00 am County Hall, Worcester

Minutes

Present:

Mrs P E Davey (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 C J Bloore, Mr PJ Bridle, Mr M H Broomfield, Mr J P Champion, Mr S J M Clee, Mr P Denham, Mr N Desmond, Mrs E A Eyre, Ms L R Duffy, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr W P Gretton, 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 I Hopwood, 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 J W Parish, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger MBE, Ms 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. Eleven questions submitted to the Director of Resources (previously circulated);
- C. The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15 May 2014 (previously circulated).

1575 Apologies and declaration of interests (Agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S C Cross, Mr A Fry, Mrs J L M A Griffiths, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs S R Peters and Prof. J Raine.

Five declarations of interest were made:

Mr R W Banks - Agenda item 5(b) Governor of Evesham High School

Mr W P Gretton - Agenda item 7, Notice of Motion 1 (School Provision in Redditch) - Member of the Governing Body of St. Augustine's RC High School, Redditch.

Mr R C Lunn - Agenda item 7, Notice of Motion 1 (School Provision in Redditch) - Member of Webheath First School Academy.

		Mr A C Roberts - Agenda item 5 - Trustee of the St. Richards Hospice Board.
		Mr J H Smith - Agenda item 5(b) Governor of Evesham High School.
1576	Public Participation (Agenda item 2)	There was no public participation at this meeting.
1577	Minutes (Agenda item 3)	RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
1578	Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 4)	The Chairman referred members to the printed announcements circulated and gave details of the contents.
1579	Reports of Cabinet - Matters which require a decision by Council - New Grant Income, Green Deal Communities Fund (Agenda item 5(a))	<p>The Council had before it a report which set out that £3,630,100 had been awarded under the Green Deal Communities Fund to run a solid wall insulation programme for rented homes in eligible communities. The project would be run in partnership with District Councils and Act on Energy and was due for completion by 31 March 2015.</p> <p>Mr P M McDonald queried the geographical distribution of the funding and was promised a written response by the Cabinet Member with Responsibility.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Council's capital and revenue cash limits be increased to accommodate the Green Deal Communities Fund allocation.</p>
1580	Reports of Cabinet - Summary of decisions made (Agenda item 5(b))	<p>The Leader of the Council reported the following topics and answered the questions in relation to a number of them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on Public Transport Reductions • Scrutiny Report: Commissioning • Scrutiny Report: Apprenticeships • Update on Health and Adult Care Integration and the Future Lives Programme • The Commissioning of Construction-Related

1581 Constitutional Matters - Political Balance (Agenda item 6(a))

Design Services

- Proposal to Merge Evesham High School and Simon de Montfort Middle School into a Single School
- Resources Report
 - Provisional Financial Results for the year ending 31 March 2014
 - Proposed Earmarked Reserves, New Investments and General Balances
 - Future Fit Programme Update
 - Borrowing and Lending Transactions 2013/14
 - Funding for School Kitchens
 - Performance Review.

The Council had before it a report on political balance. The report set out that the Council was under a legal duty to ensure that the seats on its ordinary committees were allocated between the respective political Groups on the Council in accordance with the principles of political balance as far as reasonably practicable.

These principles (in descending order) were that a majority group had a majority on each of the Council's ordinary committees; subject to that the overall number of seats allocated to each of the Groups reflected political balance; and finally subject to the above rules, and as far as was practicable that seats on individual committees reflected political balance between the Groups.

The recent by-election in Redditch Arrow Valley East following the resignation of UKIP Councillor Mr Martin Jenkins, had resulted in the election of Mr Peter Bridle, who had joined the UKIP group. Accordingly, no change was triggered in the Council's seat allocation to UKIP which remained as it was for a Group of 2 members.

Mr Alan Amos had resigned from the Labour Group which had now reduced to 11 members. The consequential political balance recalculations meant that the Labour Group were due to lose one committee seat in total. It was suggested that this came from the Planning and Regulatory Committee where they were currently allocated 3 out of 13 seats, so that their allocation would become 2. No other alterations to seat

allocations were needed to reflect the change in total Group Membership of the Labour Group.

The report set out that Mr Amos had not joined another political Group, and now sat as an ungrouped independent member. Accordingly, no other political Group had increased their size from the last political balance calculation and were not entitled to additional pro rata seats, including that to be vacated by Labour.

As the Council's legal duties of political balance in respect of seat allocation only applied in respect of political groups, Mr Amos had no legal entitlement to be allocated any committee seats. It was open to the Council to allocate a seat to Mr Amos if it so chose as long as it otherwise met the principles of political balance - it was entirely discretionary. It was open to Council to allocate the 'spare' seat vacated by the reduction in the Labour Group to Mr Amos if it so chose. The report suggested that it was slightly preferable for the Planning and Regulatory Committee to remain with odd numbers for the purposes of decisive voting, but it was a matter for the Council whether to allocate its 13th seat to Mr Amos or reduce the size of that Committee by one to a total of 12.

Mr Amos had previously been the Labour Group nominee on the Planning and Regulatory Committee, and had been appointed by the Council as Vice-Chairman of that Committee. Following his resignation from the Labour Group, he was replaced as a member on it, and the Vice-Chairmanship has been held vacant pending Council filling the post. The Council was now requested to appoint the Vice-Chairman of the Planning and Regulatory Committee.

The Council had established a new Waste Credit Governance Committee of nine Members and appointed the Chairman and Vice Chairman. The political balance calculations would be met by the membership of this new Committee being five Conservatives, two Labour, one 2013 Group, and one Independent Alliance Member. Council was therefore recommended to approve formally this seat allocation.

The Council was also asked to ratify the allocation of seats upon the ad hoc Appointments etc. Panel. They were originally three Conservative, one Labour and one 2013 Group. Since the Independent and Alliance Group expanded to have the same number of members as the 2013 Group, the fifth seat on the Panel has alternated between the 2013 and Independent Alliance Groups, and

Council was asked to confirm this.

A motion was moved by Mr A I Hardman and seconded by Mr S E Geraghty.

RESOLVED that Council:

- (a) **notes the reduction in membership of the Labour Group, and the outcome of the Redditch Arrow Valley East by-election;**
- (b) **agrees the proposed allocation of seats on Committees between the political Groups as set out in the report and which meets the requirements of political balance;**
- (c) **notes that no Group is entitled to the vacated 13th seat on the Planning and Regulatory Committee under political balance, and agrees that Mr A Amos (a member not part of a Group) is allocated that seat; and**
- (d) **appoints Mr P Denham as the Vice-Chairman of the Planning and Regulatory Committee.**

1582 Constitutional Matters - Recording of Budget Votes (Agenda item 6(b))

The Council had before it a report on a proposal to change the Procedural Standing Orders to incorporate a provision relating to budget votes.

The report set out that the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 required the Standing Orders of Council to be amended. They required the recording of the names and votes of Members in relation to Budget/Council Tax precept decisions vote at a meeting of the Council with a view to increasing transparency.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services outlined that to reflect the Regulations being recommended that Council adopts a new Procedural Standing Order 24.3.3:

'immediately after any vote on the budget calculations or precept is taken at a budget decision meeting of the Council there must be recorded in the Minutes of the proceedings of that meeting the names of the persons who cast the vote for the decision or against the decision or who abstained from voting'.

This provision would therefore apply to all future budget/precept decisions at February Council, including decisions on amendments. It was likely that the easiest

1583 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 1 - School Provision in Redditch (Agenda item 7)

mechanism for recording names is through the usual named-vote process, but this was not strictly required if the names and votes could otherwise be recorded comprehensively.

RESOLVED that a new Procedural Standing Order in relation to Council Budget decisions as set out in the report be adopted and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to amend the Constitution to reflect the new Regulations.

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Ms P A Hill, Mr R C Lunn, Mr J Baker, Mr V J Vickery, Mr P Denham, Ms P Agar and Mr P M McDonald:

"It is our understanding that the Council expects head teachers and governing bodies of local Academies to ensure the needs of their local communities are considered when considering changes.

If this is the case can we ask that the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families denounces the confusion, consternation and turmoil caused by the Tudor Grange Trust in Redditch and requests the Chief Executive of the said Trust to defer their consultation on changing its age range from 13-18 to 11-18 years and also she requests the Education Funding Agency to seek further clarification on the business case which can be provided to parents, governors and staff of those concerned schools in Redditch?"

The Motion was moved by Ms P A Hill and seconded by Mr R C Lunn who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council agreed to consider the Motion on the day.

A discussion ensued during which the following principal points were made:

- the 3 tier system of education had served the Redditch area well for 40 years and the proposals to change this in an unco-ordinated manner risked the educational outcomes of a generation of school pupils
- the consultation, which had now been temporarily postponed, was premature, rushed and tokenistic
- that any school review had to be conducted in a measured, impartial and inclusive way and the current suggestions did not conform to this model

of consultation. It was suggested that what was required was a totally independent review of school provision in the town.

Other members suggested that

- most of the demands made by the Motion had already been met, making it redundant
- there was much concern in the town, but the Cabinet Member with Responsibility had given assurances that the Council were responding in the correct way
- that proposals had been deferred and this gave the Council an opportunity to engage appropriately in the forthcoming consultation process.

On a named vote the Motion was lost.

Those voting in favour were: Ms P Agar, Mr A T Amos, Mrs S Askin, Mr J Baker, Mr C J Bloore, Mr P J Bridle, Mr P Denham, Ms P A Hill, Mr M E Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mr J Parish, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr R J Sutton, Mr J W R Thomas, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr R M Udall, Mr G J Vickery and Mr T A L Wells (21)

Those voting against were:

Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr M H Broomfield, Mr J Champion, Mr S J M Clee, Mrs P E Davey, Mr N Desmond, Mrs L R Duffy, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr W P Gretton, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr I Hopwood, Mr A P Miller, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr P A Tuthill and Mr G C Yarranton (29).

1584 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 2 - Transport Infrastructure in Bromsgrove (Agenda item 7)

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr L C R Mallett, Mr C J Bloore, Mr R M Udall, Mr P M McDonald, Ms P A Hill, Mr R C Lunn and Mr J Baker.

"Council notes the community concerns within Bromsgrove District in respect of transport infrastructure, in particular around the town. Council notes recent submissions to Bromsgrove District Council from the Bromsgrove Society and other organisations as to the provision of a Western Link Road for the town.

Council requests that the Cabinet Member with Responsibility considers progressing a feasibility study into the costs, funding and benefits of the provision of a Western Link Road in Bromsgrove to relieve congestion in the town and underpin economic and population growth."

The Motion was moved by Mr L C R Mallett and seconded by Mr C J Bloore who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council agreed to consider the Motion on the day.

A discussion ensued during which the following principal points were made:

- traffic flows in Bromsgrove were being constricted by the present insufficient road infrastructure and proposed building developments in the area would exacerbate this and have negative consequences for economic development, commuters using the town and future health and well-being of residents
- that the Council needed to be forward looking to ensure the town was well served and the roads were fit for purpose
- planning of infrastructure should be viewed in a holistic way and the County Council should be proactive in looking at both present and future needs.

Members also suggested that:

- this was a matter for the local district plan which had covered the period to 2022
- the County Council would be involved with these strategic planning issues, but this would be mainly driven by the District Council and its processes
- the Council had to avoid a "one size fits all" solution to perceived
- infrastructure shortfalls and work with the District Council to identify and promote long-term sustainable solutions to present problems and future provision.

On a named vote the Motion was lost.

1585 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 3 - Park and Ride Services and other bus services in Worcester (Agenda item 7)

Those voting in favour were: Ms P Agar, Mrs S Askin, Mr J Baker, Mr C J Bloore, Mr P Denham, Ms P A Hill, Ms R E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mr J Parish, Mrs M A Rayner, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr R M Udall, Mr G J Vickery and Mr T A L Wells (16).

Those voting against were: 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 P J Bridle, Mr M H Broomfield, Mr J Champion, Mr S J M Clee, Mrs P E Davey, Mr N Desmond, Mrs L R Duffy, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr W P Gretton, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr I Hopwood, Mr M E Jenkins, Mr A P Miller, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr R J Sutton, Mr J W R Thomas, Mr P A Tuthill and Mr C G Yarranton (34).

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

"Council is extremely concerned about the decision to terminate the Park and Ride services from Perdiswell and Six Ways in September. In particular, the Council is fearful that increased congestion will occur in Worcester's already heavily-congested streets. We believe that the impact on the city's employers, employees, local residents, hospital workers, school children, students, users of health services, shoppers, potential tourists and other visitors will be harmful to both the city and county economies.

Council further notes with serious concern the decision to remove subsidy to bus routes in the city, believing that the impact of these service cuts on those dependent on public transport has been underestimated.

Council therefore proposes an urgent joint scrutiny review with Worcester City Council of the above decisions, and requests that the agreement of the City Council is sought to such a joint scrutiny."

The Motion was moved by Mr P Denham and seconded by Ms P Agar who both spoke in support of it.

The Council agreed to consider the Motion on the day.

A discussion ensued during which the following principal points were made:

- it was suggested that Worcester was one of the most congested cities in England and would suffer from withdrawal of the Park and Ride Service
- air pollution would increase and quality of life would decrease when these bus services were withdrawn
- other areas of the country had successful park and ride services and members questioned why the concept could not be made to work in Worcester. Apart from Park and Ride other services were being reduced and the city was in danger of being gridlocked with additional traffic
- the timing of the City Council's reduction in car parking charges would compound the problems highlighted and do little to reduce on-street parking especially in residential areas
- removal of Park and Ride and other services was a retrograde step and one which the Council should avoid as a community leader.

Other members spoke against the Motion:

- Park and Ride was experimental. The experiment had been given a fair trial but it had failed and the Council had to cut its losses and avoid spending any more public money in an unproductive way; money which could be focussed on other areas of provision
- Congestion was unlikely to be on the scale suggested by the signatories of the Motion given how much the use of the Park and Ride facility had reduced over a number of years
- reinstatement of the Park and Ride service would mean reductions to services elsewhere and members were invited to identify services in their own divisions which could be reduced to assist in retention of Worcester's Park and Ride facilities
- members drew attention to the low priority given to public transport in Council surveys. The Council were simply acting in a way which reflected that public opinion.

On a named vote the Motion was lost.

1586 Notice of Motion - Notice of Motion 4 - Park and Ride Services in Worcester (Agenda item 7)

Those voting in favour of the Motion were: Ms P Agar, Mrs S Askin, Mr J Baker, Mr C J Bloore, Mr P Denham, Ms P A Hill, Mr M E Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mr J W R Thomas, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr R M Udall, Mr G J Vickery and Mr T A L Wells (16).

Those voting against were: 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 P J Bridle, Mr M H Broomfield, Mr J Champion, Mr S J M Clee, Mrs P E Davey, Mr N Desmond, Mrs L R Duffy, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr W P Gretton, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr I Hopwood, Mr A P Miller, 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 P A Tuthill and Mr C G Yarranton (33).

Mr J Parish abstained

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

"Recent Cabinet and Scrutiny debates on the proposals to scrap the Park and Ride have referred to many towns and cities that have successful schemes. For park and ride to be successful there has to be connection between the cost of car parking in the towns and the provision of Park and Ride. It is apparent that this connection does not exist in Worcester, especially as the current City Council administration has already announced that they will be reducing car parking costs.

This Council asks that the County and City Council Cabinet Members responsible revisit the decision to scrap the Park and Ride schemes and work together with a political will to produce a joined-up policy that will promote their use. This will reduce congestion - we are currently the third most traffic-congested city in the country - and avoid the waste of huge financial resources that have already been spent on existing and future Park and Ride schemes."

The Notice of Motion was moved by Mrs S Askin and seconded by Mr M E Jenkins who both spoke in support of it.

An amendment was proposed by the Labour Group in the

following terms: To replace last paragraph of the original Motion with:

"This Council therefore proposes an urgent scrutiny review with Worcester City Council of the above decisions, and requests that the agreement of the City Council is sought to such a joint scrutiny."

With the agreement of the mover and seconder, and those signatories of the Motion present, this proposed amendment was adopted as the substantive motion.

A point of order was raised under PSO 20.1 suggesting that consideration of Notice of Motion 3 (Minute 1585 above) meant that, as altered, Notice of Motion 4 was in fact a re-consideration of a Motion already disposed of.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the effect of Notice of Motion 4 as it currently stood was indeed the same as Notice of Motion 3 - for there to be a joint scrutiny with the City Council on the closure of the Park and Ride services and in conflict with PSO 20.1 in its present state.

Before further consideration was given to whether Notice of Motion 4 be further altered, it was moved and seconded under PSO 19.11(e) that Council proceed to next business. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that this closure motion could only be put if the Chairman considered that the matter had been sufficiently discussed. The Chairman so indicated and after the Mover's Right of Reply and on being put to the meeting Council **RESOLVED to proceed to next business.**

**1587 Report of
Cabinet
Members with
Responsibility
(Agenda item 8)**

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care presented her report which covered a number of overarching issues:

- The Care Act
- Planning for Increased Demand
- Future Lives
- Independent Living
- Quality Assurance and Standards
- Inspection Monitoring and Safeguarding

- Staffing and Appointments.

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

- Challenges under the Care Act and how the Council were responding to these and how the pressures would be addressed
- Additional funding was being made available for Councils to meet additional calls on services under the Care Act. This was thought to be insufficient and a question was asked how any additional costs were to be met
- the role of Independent financial advisers and whether proper screening and checks were in place to ensure service users were given good, sound advice
- Duty to prisoners to meet their needs - what was the Council doing in this area
- Ensuring the needs of autistic adults were met
- it was suggested that service users were having to use premium rate numbers for contacting service providers
- Sickness rates within DASH and how these were being addressed.

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

**1588 Question Time
(Agenda item 9)**

Eleven questions had been received by the Director of Resources and had been circulated before the meeting. All the questions were asked (or taken as read). All answers are enclosed with these Minutes.

**1589 Reports of
Committees -
Summary of
decisions taken
by the Audit
and
Governance
Committee**

The Council received the report of the Audit and Governance Committee containing a summary of decisions taken.

**(Agenda item
10(a))**

**1590 Reports of
Committees -
Summary of
decisions taken
by the Planning
and Regulatory
Committee
(Agenda item
10(b))**

The Council received the report of the Planning and Regulatory Committee containing a summary of decisions taken.

The Council adjourned for luncheon between 12.55pm and 2.00pm. The meeting ended at 3.15pm.

Chairman

COUNCIL 3 JULY 2014 - 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.

QUESTION 1 - Mr A T Amos asked Mr John Smith:

"Will the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways make a statement on the Council's proposals to cut bus services?"

Answer given

Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet agreed plans at its meeting on 9 June for the future of subsidised bus services in Worcestershire. This followed one of the largest consultations in the Council's history, which gathered around 8,500 responses from residents and businesses.

Originally a full withdrawal of the £3 million of taxpayers' money used to subsidise bus services – usually the less popular or less well-used services – was proposed. This is no longer the case.

We stressed just how important it was for people to have their say during the consultation a few months ago. The feedback we received has shaped the decision on the future plans, which have changed considerably compared with what was first being considered. We have listened to what residents and businesses have told us.

Back in February we took a considered approach as we knew this important decision could not be rushed. Since then we have undertaken a thorough service-by-service review and discussions with operators have taken place. The vast majority of passengers will now still be able to access public transport options, through both commercial and subsidised services, whilst at the same time, realising savings for the taxpayer.

The revised changes agreed will save the taxpayer £1.6million. Around 80 per cent of bus journeys (approx.12 million) in Worcestershire are made on commercial services, which are not part of this review. The changes agreed at Cabinet will be put in place in September 2014.

To confirm the position as it stands today, from the original list of services under threat, 73 services will continue to operate, albeit with slight changes to timetables and routes, 14 of which are to be operated on a commercial basis. 11 services will cease in September, most of which will have some sort of alternative option. Confirmation of all the changes will be available before the end of July.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question Mr Smith promised to meet Mr Amos in six months to review bus services in the Gorse Hill and Warndon Division.

QUESTION 2 – Mr A T Amos asked Mr M J Hart:

"Will the Cabinet Member for Health and Well-being itemise what action the Council is taking to stop smoking; will he also produce figures for county-wide smoking rates over the last 10 years including those specifically for the Gorse Hill & Warndon Division taken during the same period?"

Answer given

The Council and our partners have recently agreed an updated Tobacco Control Plan and this includes a list of actions to reduce smoking set against 3 main aims:

- To stop young people from becoming smokers
- To motivate and help every smoker to stop
- Protecting families and communities from smoking-related harm.

The Plan has been endorsed by the Health Improvement Group of the Health and Well-being Board. I would be very happy to send Councillor Amos a copy of the Plan.

Smoking rates in Worcestershire are below the national average, and the figures vary between Districts. The most recent data from 2012, show that 17.7% of adults in the county smoke, compared with 19.5% in England. Smoking rates are highest in Redditch (24.9%), and lowest in Bromsgrove (13.5%). Over the last ten years smoking rates have fallen steadily from 33.3% of adults in 2002, to 23.5% in 2007, and then to current levels.

Data on smoking rates are not collated at a level smaller than Districts, and so Gorse Hill and Warndon Division cannot be identified within the overall figure for Worcester City, which is 21.0%. However, 89 people from Gorse Hill and Warndon quit smoking in 2013/14 with the support of Council-commissioned Stop Smoking Services, up from 69 in 2011/12, which is an encouraging sign that the service is having a positive impact in this area.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about smoking cessation Mr Hart said this was a matter for consideration by the Health Improvement Sub Group.

QUESTION 3 – Mr P M McDonald asked Mrs E A Eyre:

"Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Young People please inform me how many youth centres throughout the county are receiving funding from the Council and the total amount of that funding?"

Answer given

Centrally from the Directorate budget Positive Activities for young people are delivered by 23 different commissioned organisations across the county. The £1m allocated WCC funding supports staffing and activity delivery and in some cases hire costs of premises for particular sessions. The Council no longer directly or wholly funds the running costs of youth premises. However, the following facilities that previously were funded in whole or part as County Council youth centres are currently being used by organisations to provide activities:

Woodrush Youth & Community Centre

Rubery Youth Centre

(Currently EPIC) - this will move to premises at Beaconside School, Rubery in September following sale of the youth centre building

Ryland Centre

(now run by Sandwell Leisure Trust but weekly commissioned youth activities currently by EPIC)

Arrow Vale Youth Centre

(RSA Arrow Vale Academy)

Kidderminster Youth House

(Kidderminster & District Youth Trust)

Pershore Riverside

(vol org previously substantially funded by WCC Youth Service)

Ourside Evesham

(Young people led voluntary organisation)

Warndon Youth & Community Centre

St Johns Youth Centre, including Youthcomm Radio

(both Worcester Community Trust)

Malvern Cube

(previously Malvern Youth Centre)

Tenbury Café 27

(voluntary organisation previously substantially funded by WCC Youth Service)

Two former youth centres have been disposed of to realise the capital asset: Redditch YC and Rubery Youth Centre (under offer). All others have either been returned to schools, put to alternative use by the Council or leased to other organisations.

And quick summary of Members' budgets 2013/14 seems to show around 60+ organisations, youth activities, targeted youth projects supported. A small amount was used to help with youth premises.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question Mrs Eyre reiterated that positive activities for young people focussed resources on activities and not 'bricks and mortar'.

QUESTION 4 – Mr P M McDonald asked Mr S E Geraghty:

"Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure please inform me of the monies available for businesses to set up in the county or to enhance their existing enterprises; how many applicants have been successful and the numbers of those turned away over the last two years?"

Answer given

First, I would like to thank the Councillor for his question, please find the following answer:

Money available to assist businesses set up in the County or to enhance their existing enterprises	Number of applicants who have or who are currently receiving support	Number of applicants turned away
£ Value of programmes that fit above criteria £15.6m	951 This comprises of 1:1 bespoke business support and grant support at various levels	None – as all enquires will be directed to alternative programmes, some managed by the County Council or District Councils – others to national programmes such as Growth Accelerator.

Available County Council Programmes

Project Name	Description:
Enterprising Worcestershire	Start up and Growth Support for SMEs. Support and grants available.
Worcestershire Loan Fund	SME loan fund, no match needed.
Graduate Programme	Funding to employ 1 year graduate jobs or three month work experience placements. 50 matched.
Cyber sector Support programme	Training and advice on cyber security inc grants to grow cyber sector
Inward Investment	Attract and retain companies to invest in Worcestershire.
Warndon Skills Centre	Building a purpose build construction skills centre in Warndon.
Resource Efficient Worcestershire	Advice, support and grants for SMEs with energy efficiency.
Proof of Concept	Innovation support and grants to bring products to market.
Worcestershire Expansion Programme	Designed to enable companies to realise their growth potential

I will be providing a high level summary, but I am more than happy to meet Mr McDonald to discuss this matter in more detail.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about the number of refused applications Mr Geraghty restated that applicants were 'signposted' to alternative sources of funding but said he was happy to share individual figures to Mr McDonald.

QUESTION 5 – Mr J Baker asked Mrs E A Eyre

"In view of recent homophobic comments made by a former UKIP district councillor it has come to light that nationally there has been an increase in teenage suicide rates in our schools. Could the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families inform me of the number of LGBT students who have attempted suicide within our county schools, and does she agree with me that this is a matter that needs to be addressed by the Council?"

Answer given

Nationally there are comments that some LGBT youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience difficulties in their lives and school environments. Feedback from colleagues within the Health and Care Trust indicates that there has been no noticeable increases for self-harm/and or attempted suicide within the last 12 months. However, this feedback relates to all young people.

I don't have numbers of LGBT individual students who have attempted suicide in our county schools. The Health and Care Trust could provide the information, however it would necessitate extra cost and require additional manual data analysis beyond what is routinely collected. The information would also be an estimate as there is no legal requirement for young people to disclose their sexual orientation and many choose not to.

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board has prioritised work around suicide prevention and has produced guidance. This guidance starts with some disturbing statistic, it also helpfully outlines, for front line professionals (e.g. teachers, youth workers) who may be aware of a young person's suicidal thoughts or intentions, what to do if you believe a children or young person might be at risk of suicide. The guidance is to ensure that the wider children's workforce has an understanding of the process to be followed in Worcestershire where concerns about possible risk of suicide exist. It provides tools for practitioners to support the early identification of risk and supports the development and implementation of co-ordinated risk management plans.

In addition the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) has a key area of focus to help children and young people feel safe wherever they are. This reflects the feedback collected from the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board's Bullying Survey that indicated that 47% of children and young people who responded to the survey said that they had been bullied and 37% has experienced bullying in the last year. The CYPP has highlighted that approaches for supporting those who have been bullied will be promoted through Worcestershire's Health and Well-being Strategy.

In summary, the matter is not one for the Council on its own. It is an important issue that Partners together including carers, schools, health professionals, police etc. need to be aware of, take notice of, be confident to address and know what to do .

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about potential visits to schools Mrs Eyre offered to meet Mr Baker to talk about some of the issues he had raised.

QUESTION 6 – Mr P Denham asked Mr M J Hart:

"Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health & Wellbeing please advise the Council what he has so far achieved to address the harm being caused to people breathing noxious health-threatening fumes in the ten Air Quality Action Zones in Worcestershire, which are this County Council's responsibility?"

Answer given

Worcestershire has an Air Quality Action Plan, which sets out those actions underway and planned to improve air quality in the county's ten Air Quality Management Areas. This has been developed in consultation with local residents. Responsibility for co-overseeing implementation of this Plan sits with the Cabinet Member for the Environment, through Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

With regard to Health and Well-being, I have wanted to understand the links between air quality and local health outcomes. We live in a county where the mortality attributable to air pollution is below the national average, and this holds true in each of our six Districts. I have also been reassured that there is no demonstrable link between the level of recorded respiratory diseases or respiratory hospital admissions and residence in any of the four Air Quality Management Areas in Bromsgrove.

One of the most important ways of reducing air pollution is by reducing emissions from traffic and one of the ways to do this is by promoting alternative forms of travel such as walking and cycling. The Joint Health and Well-being Strategy and the Obesity Plan include promotion of walking and cycling to improve physical fitness and maintain a healthy weight. In addition the Transport Strategy includes action to improve the infrastructure for active travel.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about air quality Mr Hart reiterated that there was no demonstrable link between air quality and health and that Worcestershire did not suffer the problems sometimes experienced in more heavily built-up areas.

QUESTION 7 - Mr R M Udall asked Mr John Smith:

"Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways confirm what are the risks and consequences identified from the decision to scrap the two Worcester Park and Ride sites. Furthermore, what measures will be put in place to reduce the impact of the decision?"

Answer given

Worcestershire County Council is having to re-evaluate its spending priorities in order to meet a significantly reduced budget, and public transport has been identified by the Worcestershire public as not being one of the top three areas to protect. The Council has therefore reviewed its role in supporting such transport provision with a view to reducing expenditure in this area.

Following a major public consultation exercise, a thorough review of all services and discussions with operators, Cabinet decided that the funds available should be used

to give priority to maintaining access to education, health and essential shopping which were the three key areas of public concern, rather than continuing to fund the park and ride services. In addition, Park and Ride users do of course have an alternative travel option, which reinforces our approach in terms of prioritising travel opportunities for those with no alternative option.

It should be noted that consideration has been given to maintaining the Park and Ride services by other actions. However, no approach has been considered to be viable. These proposals included commercial operation, reduction in costs, increase in fares, reduction in fares and, for Perdiswell Park and Ride, diversion of the nearby service 144.

The effect of the withdrawal of the Park and Ride services on the environment and other road users with respect to additional congestion, noise and air quality has also been considered but is limited in effect. There are on average about 200 cars per day parked at Perdiswell and 150 at Sixways.

Note that it has been agreed that the Sixways Park & Ride service (every 10 mins in the morning and afternoon peaks, plus a half hourly service from Sixways between 9.30am and 3.30pm) will be temporarily maintained as the Worcestershire Acute NHS Trust is to provide funding to continue the service for a period of around 6-9 months whilst they explore possible additional parking provision on the Worcestershire Royal Hospital Site.

The Council will work to strengthen the alternative services available to park and ride passengers to ensure these are realistic for as many passengers as possible. The Council is supporting the growth and improvement to public transport services by:

- the production of information and timetable details to assist users;
 - developing infrastructure including bus priority and real time information systems to encourage patronage and enhance commercial operations;
- the financial support for otherwise unviable but socially necessary bus services.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about the effects of removing Park & Ride services Mr Smith reiterated that Worcester City Council were reducing charges for off street parking in an attempt to reduce parking in residential areas.

QUESTION 8 – Mr R C Lunn asked Mr M J Hart:

"Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Wellbeing reassure all those people diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome that Worcestershire's three Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are fully aware of the Autism Act 2009 and the Statutory Guidance that goes with it?"

Are the CCGs meeting the guidance in that Act to his satisfaction?"

Answer given

Yes, all three CCGs and the Council are fully aware of the Autism Act 2009 and associated guidance. An Autism Strategy has been drafted in collaboration with the Worcestershire Autism Partnership Group, which includes people on the autistic spectrum. The Strategy takes account of the Act and guidance and places responsibility on all relevant stakeholders and public bodies [commissioners and providers] to meet the requirements of the Act. The draft Strategy will be considered by the Health and Well-being Board.

QUESTION 9 – Dr K Pollock asked Mr John Smith:

"In the light of the apparently falling public satisfaction with the state of the roads in the county, as measured by the Key Performance Indicators, would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility like to comment on what is being done to rectify this situation?"

Answer given

The Council's Environment and Overview Scrutiny Panel considered this issue in March of this year.

As requested by the Panel, we are currently in the process of developing two pilot areas, where we will trial the following:

- An increased focus on road markings.
- An increased focus on clearance of signing.
- The deployment of the new Highways Local Response team (LRT) to sort smaller scale Highways issues which, whilst not safety related, impact upon the public's perception and satisfaction of our roads. The LRT will liaise closely with the relevant Parish Council and Community to identify issues in relation to roads that matter to them and based around this, complete as much work as practical within the allocated time.

This will then be reviewed and a survey also completed to gauge the level of public satisfaction with the additional work that has taken place and the perception of this.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question Mr Smith gave details of additional resources being spent on pothole repair.

QUESTION 10 – Ms R Jenkins asked Mr John Smith:

*"Would the Cabinet Member with the Responsibility for Highways please state the number of proposed controlled and uncontrolled road crossings situated outside schools that are currently on the waiting list for implementation?
And where on that list is St Kenelm's Primary School's Road Crossing?"*

Answer given

Currently we have requests for 7 controlled and 3 uncontrolled crossings across the county.

With regard to St Kenelm's, Romsley and the request for a controlled crossing the pedestrian crossing survey shows that the overwhelming majority of those crossing take place at the start and end of the school day (8.00 - 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 – 4.00 p.m.) with minimal people crossing in the interim periods. The gap analysis shows that there are adequate gaps in the traffic to allow safe crossing of the road. The data shows that a minimum of 12 gaps in every 15 minute period indicates a road which can be reasonably crossed without undue delay. The analysis demonstrates that there are a minimum of 30 gaps during a 15 minute period during the peak crossing times.

Taking account of the information above and that the current school crossing patrol provides a crossing facility which reflects the crossing needs at this location we would not pursue a crossing at this location.

High profile advisory 20mph school signs which when programmed will flash at school opening and closing times, have been installed outside the school on Bromsgrove Road further to this request.

QUESTION 11 – Mr J W R Thomas asked Mr John Smith:

"Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways comment on why a completed housing estate in my division still has not had its roads and pavements adopted by this County's Highways Authority?"

Answer given

The roads have not been adopted on the Millfields/Mitton Park estate because it is a complex site with numerous issues.

Specifically, negotiations have been protracted as there are 3 developers, involving significant office changes, with 5 different phases. In addition, there have been complex land ownership issues, and significant negotiations with statutory bodies to pursue. The result is that the developers have only just signed agreements without which we have no power to pursue roads to adoption standards and to finalise adoption.

3 of the 5 phases now have agreements in place and are awaiting the final certificate of completion. The other 2 are with the Developers awaiting signing of the agreements. Once returned to Legal Services, those agreements can also be completed.

We are keeping all informed of progress, having overcome most of the major obstacles and expect adoption completion to come on line this year starting with Phase 1.

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