

**Cabinet****Thursday, 11 July 2019, County Hall, Worcester,  
10.00 am****Present:****Minutes**

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

**Also attended:**

Mr A D Kent, Mr R C Lunn, M A Rayner and  
Mrs E B Tucker

**Available Papers**

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated); and
- B. The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2019 (previously circulated).

**1915 Apologies and  
Declaration of  
Interest**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A C Roberts.

**1916 Public  
Participation**

None

**1917 Confirmation of  
the Minutes of  
the Previous  
Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**1918 Adult Services -  
Care and  
Support  
Services -  
Direction of  
Travel**

Cabinet considered the Adult Services strategy for the provision of Worcestershire County Council Care and Support Services. The Cabinet Member for Adult Services introduced the report. The development of the strategy was described as an exciting opportunity to create a reablement service by using the Business Rates pilot scheme money to help those on the edge of needing further intervention. £750,000 would be used to provide community reablement to people with the aim of enabling them to avoid having to be admitted to acute hospital services or care homes.

It was important to ensure that the Council was meeting the core purpose of Adult Social Care as described by the Care Act 2014; to help people to achieve the outcomes which matter to them in life and to shape the local care market based on the needs of the local population. Services needed to be sustainable, provide choice and meet local need. Adult services had been challenged over the last few years and it was right that services went through the commissioning cycle. Other Local Authority areas would be consulted to see how they provided services, as well as building on the ground-breaking work that has been done with Newcastle University on managing the aging process. The market had been found to be weak in this area, so the service would probably be provided in-house.

The vision for an in-house service would be to maximise the health and Well-being of people, that adults were healthier, live longer and have a better quality life and to ensure the right care was available at the right time and that best practice was shared among Councils.

To do this the services needed to meet the key principles of being value for money, provide better quality (meeting CQC quality levels at least), and to develop the market. However, the Council Service would not be a threat to the market but would collaborate with it to improve quality of services. Worcestershire Care and Support would provide services which would be safe, caring and personalised and enable individuals to have control over their own care. Respite and recovery care would be provided in a range of settings. Howbury needed updating and therefore investment would be needed to bring it up to the required standard.

In response to a query from outside the Cabinet regarding why the market was weak in this area the Cabinet Member for Adult Services explained that he suspected that the market for these services was weak across the country and not just within the local area as businesses concentrated on self-funders; a lot of care homes were run by individuals meaning that the service was lost when owners retired or wished to give up the business.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- (a) approved in principle the creation of a community re-ablement service and delegated the final decision upon it to the Director of**

**Adult Services in consultation with the said Cabinet Member;**

- (b) approved the strategy for the direct provision of services by the Council to adults who are eligible under the Care Act 2014; and**
- (c) noted that capital expenditure will be required in future years relating to Howbury House, and a further report will be submitted to Cabinet subject to the development of a viable business case.**

**1919 Libraries Re-modelling**

Cabinet considered proposals put forward for the Libraries Service following the public consultation and Peer Review of the service. The Cabinet Member for Communities explained that the Council had a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service as set out in the report. Since 2011 £3.9 million of savings had already been made, but further savings and transformation had been agreed in 2018. As well as a consultation, which involved public meetings and an on-line survey, a peer review was undertaken.

Following the consultation, changes were made to the isolation index and the rankings of libraries were amended due to the length of time it took public transport to reach the library as well as their opening hours. The consultation also found that the public believed that library profiles should be raised and a substantial amount of people used the computers or Wifi.

The Peer Review asked specific questions around best value, contribution to the corporate agenda, serving the local community and finding good practice from other authorities. The Review concluded that a new library strategy should be developed and there should be more engagement with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. There needed to be more innovation such as with Open Libraries Plus. The savings target had been remodelled following savings that had already been achieved from the deletion of vacant posts and improved I.T., and contributions to the running costs of two libraries by Worcester City Council. The development and implementation of the Libraries Strategy would deliver the necessary savings by 2021. Partnership working such as with DWP continued to be important.

Finally, the Cabinet Member thanked the Corporate and Communities Scrutiny Panel for the work they had done on looking at the re-modelling of the library service. She explained that the remodelling was not about closing libraries but rather modernising the service to ensure it was efficient and met the needs of the local community.

The Cabinet Member for Highways paid tribute to the Cabinet Member for communities for her hard work in overseeing the exercise which was about modernising the service without impacting on front line provision. The Cabinet Member also thanked Councillor Marc Bayliss, Leader of Worcester City Council for contributing to the support of St John's and Warndon libraries.

The Chairman of the Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel presented the views of the Scrutiny Panel who had considered the Cabinet report.

The Panel:

- Welcomed the positive consultation and Peer Review, and supported the approach that Libraries should support the Corporate Agenda
- Agreed with the vision for re-modelling libraries by assessing each setting for the needs of their own communities. Tackling social isolation was important, as was considering commercial opportunities. The Hive was a vital asset, which needed to be a leader for the rest of the service
- Was pleased that the development of the strategy would involve residents, communities, partners and Local Members
- Believed an improved marketing and communication approach to promote library use was required
- Supported the likely areas for inclusion in the strategy; improved connection between libraries and other council agendas, skilled workforce, the Hive attracting investment for service initiatives which could be cascaded around the County and being open to new ways of working and growth
- Welcomed that all Councillors would have an opportunity to contribute to the development of the strategy and agreed that the Panel would consider the draft strategy before it was brought back to Cabinet.

Members of the Cabinet commented that they were pleased that Scrutiny supported the process and were particularly pleased that libraries were helping with the issue of social isolation and keeping people mobile. It

was also clarified that the process had not been about closing libraries but about modernising services and working with partners to continue to provide an effective library service for communities.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- (a) noted the feedback and findings from the public consultation held from 29 October 2018 to 28 February 2019;**
- (b) noted the feedback from the Local Government Association Peer Review held in May 2019;**
- (c) agreed to adopt the proposed updated definition of Library need as described in paragraph 14 and in more detail in the Libraries' Needs Assessment;**
- (d) agreed to use the Libraries' Needs Assessment, the findings from the public consultation, the Peer Review and discussions with the DCMS to inform the development of a Worcestershire Libraries Strategy that sets out the longer-term vision for the service across Worcestershire which continues to meet the statutory duty;**
- (e) approved the proposed plan to realise the necessary in-year savings for Libraries as outlined in paragraphs 29-30 of the report;**
- (f) agreed to use the proposed Libraries Strategy to then inform the decisions around change and resource allocation for front-line library provision from 2020/21; and**
- (g) agreed to receive a further report in Autumn 2019 to consider and approve the Libraries Strategy and implementation plan.**

**1920    Recommissioning the Council's Customer Services**

The Cabinet considered the proposal to terminate the contract with the current Customer Services provider and the development of an updated Customer Services Strategy. The Cabinet Member for Transformation and Commissioning explained that the Council had entered

the contract with Civica in 2015 along with Malvern Hills District Council and Worcester City Council. Civica had delivered a successful service and helped to deliver planned savings. However, the volume of calls had fallen by 50% and the District Councils had either left or were in the process of leaving the agreement; this meant the Council was planning to look at the customer services strategy and take the service through the commissioning cycle. All customer service contact centres would be looked at across the Council.

A large volume of contacts were moving to a digital platform but there were still a reasonably high proportion of the public who preferred to speak to someone on the phone as opposed to conducting all their business via email. All contacts were important to the Council so it was necessary to have a customer service provider which was fit for the future and the commissioning cycle allowed the Council to identify what was needed and ensure the best provider was in place.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- (a) approved serving of the required 12 months' notice for termination 'by convenience' of the Council's contract with Civica Ltd for the provision of the Customer Service Contact Centre;**
- (b) delegated to the Director of Commercial and Commissioning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning, the authority to approve the terms of exit from this contract; and**
- (c) delegated to the Director of Commercial and Commissioning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning, the development of an updated Customer Services Strategy and the recommissioning of Customer Services, to support the objectives of the Council's Organisational Redesign Programme.**

## Corporate Risk Update - Q4

refresh of the Corporate Risk Register. The Cabinet Member for Transformation and Commissioning explained that there were 61 indicators; 24 were Green, 11 Amber, 7 Red and 19 unrated. One notable improvement was in sickness rates from high rates in 2013/14 to much lower rates in 2018/19.

Of 127 risks listed, 14 were rated as high risk, 69 as medium and 44 as low. The high risks were grouped into 5 themes: vulnerable children, education, adult social care, the Council estate and business continuity. Staffing had been a red risk but had moved to Amber following appointments to leadership positions and social care posts.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills noted that there had been a decrease in the number of schools which were rated outstanding or good, which would need to be watched, although it was unclear why that had occurred it was perhaps due to changes in the Ofsted inspection framework. However, schools which had been judged inadequate at their inspection had shown improvement after working with the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services pointed out that the numbers being admitted to care homes were still high despite that situation being contrary to the basic philosophy of the Directorate. Also, the number of people with a Learning Disability in paid employment, was at 6.86%, which although above the national average had not reached the ambitious target of 8%.

### **RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- (a) received the latest update of the Corporate Balanced Scorecard for Quarter Four 2018/19, noting the 24 indicators rated as 'green', including an indicator that has been highlighted as demonstrating positive progress in performance and considered actions being taken to improve performance for the six indicators rated 'red' where there has been an update in Quarter Four 2018/19; and**
- (b) noted the latest update of the Corporate Risk Register including actions to mitigate the risk areas that are rated 'red'.**

**1922 Quality of Utility Works on the Public Highway - Notice of Motion**

Cabinet considered the information provided regarding the quality of utility works on the public highway following a Notice of Motion agreed by Council on 14 February 2019 as set out in the report to Cabinet. The Cabinet Member for Highways explained that one of his main tasks was dealing with congestion and this was often caused by road works for which many motorists erroneously blame the Council. In fact, utility companies were responsible for carrying out roadworks and minimising their impact while the Council co-ordinated the works through its permit scheme.

Around 300 applications for roadworks were received each day and the resources were available to inspect around 10% of them. Contractors were checked to ensure that the work was up to standard and they were completed within the given timescales. Utility companies were held to account and they were responsible for rectifying any problems. Fines could be imposed but these were often meaningless. Around 30% of roadworks were classed as emergency and did not require the usual period of notice

In the past year, 15% of roadworks had been inspected rather than 10% and meetings had been held with utility companies which had led to improvements, unfortunately they had only lasted for the short term. If urgent or dangerous issues were not resolved by utility companies within two hours then the Council would sort problems and re-charge the utility company.

In future a system of lane rentals would be introduced which would introduce a daily fee for road space occupation; that would be more expensive for utilities in rush hours and therefore provide greater income, a quicker conclusion and reduce congestion.

Various comments were made during the discussion:

- It was believed that the Council suffered reputational damage from roadworks as members of the public believed the Council was responsible for all roadworks. Individual Councillors were also blamed but in reality there was very little they could do about problem roadworks
- Contractors should display signage stating who was carrying out each set of roadworks in a format which was readable to motorists. It was also necessary that utility companies answered calls to telephone numbers put on the signs
- It was pointed out that it was very annoying to

motorists to come across speed restrictions, traffic lights or road closures when no work was on-going

- Cabinet felt that developers should ensure that the contractors they used were doing things correctly. Developers should ensure that all roadworks were sorted before they began building, even if this meant a change to the legislation was required
- The 27% increase in income from fines to utility companies was welcomed by a member from outside the Cabinet
- It was pointed out that some contractors asked for permits for unreasonable lengths of time to ensure that they did not get fined if the works took longer than anticipated. It was suggested that the Council should have the power to estimate the length of time for works and penalise contractors or developers if they asked for unreasonable length of time for roadworks
- Tighter control of licensing utilities would be welcomed
- The definition of emergency works needed to be published and enforced and the usage of emergency permits more tightly controlled
- The Leader was pleased that the Council could step in where dangerous situations occur out of hours and re-charge the utility companies.

The Cabinet Member for Highways stated that roadworks affected everyone. He confirmed that there was a requirement for all roadworks to have signs with a contact telephone number on them and utility companies would be fined £80 if signage was not there. The Cabinet Member thanked colleagues for their comments and urged them to report any problems to the Highways Liaison Engineers.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- (a) noted the information in the report in response to the Notice of Motion submitted to Council on 14 February 2019; and**
- (b) endorsed the approach to holding those undertaking utility works on the highway to financial account and scrutiny.**

The meeting ended at 11.25am

Chairman .....