

Cabinet**Thursday, 4 June 2020, Online only****10.00 am****Minutes****Present:**

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,
Mr A C Roberts and Mr J H Smith

Also attended:

Mr M Jenkins, Mr R Lunn, Mrs M Rayner, Mrs E B
Tucker, Mr R Udall

**1977 Apologies and
Declarations of
Interest
(Agenda Item 1)**

None.

**1978 Public
Participation
(Agenda Item 2)**

None.

**1979 Confirmation of
the Minutes of
the previous
meeting
(Agenda Item 3)**

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a
correct record.

**1980 Covid-19
Response**

The Leader of the Council opened the meeting by stating
this report captured the actions and decisions taken
during the response phase to the Covid-19 public health
emergency and supported the Council's mission to
preserve life and prevent the spread of the infection while
maintaining critical services.

The report set out how the Council had taken a
succession of urgent actions that had been needed to
respond to the World Health Organisation's assessment
of Covid-19 as a pandemic and to do whatever was
necessary while realising that the financial impact would
need to be dealt afterwards.

The Leader and Cabinet members thanked people of all
levels and parts of the organisation and partners, who
enabled this response to happen in such a positive and
pro-active way to the array of challenges that had to be

faced. The Leader believed it demonstrated that Worcestershire could and did come together when it really mattered; with staff, partners and organisations adapting and innovating to the challenges to keep services going, to minimise the loss of life and to support those most vulnerable people in society.

It was noted that this pandemic was not yet over and all needed to continue to be vigilant. Members extended sincere condolences to all those members of the community who have lost loved ones at this time.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Education and Skills confirmed the wider opening of schools from this week. Of the 94 maintained schools 70 opened on the 1 June, a further 8 by Friday 5 June, 13 opening throughout the week commencing 8 June and a further 2 opening by 15 June, leaving just one further school, which the Council was working with, to determine a wider opening date. He emphasised that schools had remained open for vulnerable children and those whose parents were key workers and thanked teachers in enabling children to be educated both virtually and in schools.

Cabinet Members summarised examples of the successes from the response, including:

- Support for care homes through fee uplifts, Government grants and providing PPE
- Here2Help on-line access centre and phone line set up in partnership with Public Health, Adult Social Care and District partners enabling 2,500 volunteers to come forward offering help to residents across the county and supporting those who were shielded by issuing over 1,500 boxes to the community
- The seamless transition of Babcock being contracted back into the Council
- Of the 1,422 of children in need 1,155 had been visited or contacted in the last 4 weeks.
- 500 personal visits had taken place using PPE where necessary
- Highways reactive and safety critical works undertaken throughout lockdown
- Surface dressing to start in urban areas 22 June
- 100% of Bus contracts supported ensuring social distancing and safe travel in place
- Opening of Parkway Railway Station
- Kidderminster Railway Station re-opened Sunday 7 June 2020, following a refurbishment
- Churchfields/Pinvin/Bromsgrove A38 work continued as normal

- Envirocover, Enviro-sort and landfill sites had remained operational throughout lockdown
- Household recycling centres reopened at Bromsgrove, Redditch, Malvern, Tenbury, Pershore and Worcester with Upton due to re-open in the near future for a 5 day period to relieve the pressure on Malvern. The opening of Kidderminster would take place but the date was to be confirmed
- Procurement and distribution of PPE across Worcestershire.

In response to questions from non-members of the Cabinet, the following details were provided:

- The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills reported that the decision to increase the number of year groups able to return to school would be made by the Department for Education and he could not indicate when this would happen
- the Leader reported that there would be further information in a report to Cabinet on 25 June about support that the Council could provide to business recovery. The Council would work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and other partners on this
- The Cabinet Member for Highways reported that the Council would be submitting a bid for the first phase of Active Travel funds and this would be published and shared with Councillors
- The Cabinet Member for Communities reported that it was National Volunteers Week and referred to a number of organisations in Worcestershire which would build on the volunteering which had taken place during the pandemic.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- (a) Noted and endorsed the action taken by the Council in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to date;**
- (b) Noted the revenue expenditure incurred by the Council to date, receipt of further Government grant and that further updates will be presented to Cabinet in due course;**

(c) Used the information in this report as the background for reporting to Council about the urgent decisions taken at the meeting of Cabinet on 26 March 2020.

The meeting ended at 11.55 am

Chairman