

**Cabinet****Thursday, 3 February 2022, County Hall,  
10.00 am****Present:****Minutes**

Cllr Simon Geraghty (Chairman), Cllr Alan Amos, Cllr Matt Dormer, Cllr Adrian Hardman (Vice Chairman), Cllr Marcus Hart, Cllr Adam Kent, Cllr Karen May, Cllr Tony Miller and Cllr Andy Roberts

**Also attended:****2071 Apologies and  
Declarations of  
Interest**

Apologies were received from Cllr Marc Bayliss.

**2072 Public  
Participation**

None

**2073 Confirmation of  
the Minutes of  
the previous  
meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be an accurate summary of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

**2074 2022/2023  
Budget and  
Council Tax**

The Chairman, also the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Finance introduced the report. The draft budget had been considered at the last meeting and had been updated and revised following consultation and to address issues which were important to the public. Due to the Council's income increasing faster than forecast, due to rents and increased income from Government, a three year plan for the capital programme was possible rather than the expected two year plan.

Council tax had been increased but was below inflation and Worcestershire would have the second lowest council tax rate in the Country. The Scrutiny Panels were thanked for their work on the budget scrutiny and Cabinet wished to reassure Councillors, as well as staff, that the County Council had good financial stewardship which allowed it to have resilience and cope with the unexpected. Staff were thanked for their hard work during the difficult time of the previous couple of years.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care was impressed that the updated budget had changed very

little from the version which first came to Cabinet. Finances were in a strong position to move forward. There was a fundamental change in the budget with more going to support older people, an increase of £13.7 million, due to demographic change in the County; but this was likely to still leave a gap of £3.4 million. The gap would have been larger if Councillors and MPs had not lobbied for more money which had led to £6.1 million grant from the social care fund. Tribute was paid to the Integrated Care System Chief Executive was supporting Social Care as it was recognised that it was important for health and social care to work together.

Cabinet Members supported the budget and were pleased with the amount of money being spent on highways, LED lighting, improvements to stations, the new Worcester Secondary School and helping families stay together.

Some questions were asked by Members outside the Cabinet:

- In response to whether some capital money could be diverted to the SEND improvement budget, it was explained that capital money could not be used. Revenue spending could be increased, in theory, but there had already been investment in SEND staff and a recruitment process was currently underway, the inspection in December 2021 reported progress had been made in 8 out of 12 areas of concern, and £6.5 million had been allocated to SEND and vulnerable learners. It was also pointed out that if the capital programme was cut, improvements on bridges, highways and pavements would be affected.
- It was stated that staff had concerns about pay, with some being paid less than the minimum wage, and there was a general fall in morale. It was queried whether an improvement plan was intended? The Chairman stated that such claims were untrue and cited the positivity he experienced at the Staff Briefing. Cabinet believed that Worcestershire County Council was an employer of choice with good terms and conditions. It was recognised that staff had had a busy two years, but employees felt valued and a new well-being policy had been introduced.
- It was felt that the budget did not do enough to address the climate emergency. In response it was stated that there was an ambitious agenda for improving buses and to integrate them with other forms of transport.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet to recommend to Council that:**

- (a) the budget requirement for 2022/23 be approved at £373.199 million as set out at Appendix 1B, having regard to the proposed Transformation and Reforms programme set out in section 9 of the report;**
- (b) the Council Tax Band D equivalent for 2022/23 be set at £1,396.78 which includes £169.47 relating to the ring-fenced Adult Social Care precept, and the Council Tax Requirement be set at £301.346 million, which will increase the Council Tax Precept by 3.94% in relation to two parts:**
  - 0.94% to provide financial support for the delivery of outcomes in line with the Corporate Plan 'Shaping Worcestershire's Future' and the priorities identified by the public and business community;**
  - 3.00% Adult Social Care Precept ring-fenced for Adult Social Care services of which 2% was carried forward from 2021/22, in order to contribute to existing cost pressures due to Worcestershire's ageing population;**
- (c) the Capital Strategy 2022-25 and Capital Programme of £146.064 million be approved as set out at Appendix 1C and 1D and section 8 of the report;**
- (d) the earmarked reserves schedule as set out at Appendix 2 to the report be approved;**
- (e) the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators set out at Appendix 4 to the report be approved; and**
- (f) the Council's Pay Policy Statement set out at Appendix 5 to the report be approved.**

**2075 Mental Health  
Aftercare  
Arrangements  
S117**

**The Cabinet agreed to:**

- (a) give delegated authority to the Leader of the Council to recommend to Full Council, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, any further adjustments to the revenue cash limits as a result of Central Government confirming the final Local Government Finance Settlement, Council Tax and Business Rates Income, and associated Specific Grants and income for 2022/23; and**
- (b) authorise the Strategic Director for People and the Director of Children's Services in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members with Responsibilities, to approve the agreement for the use of resources between the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Groups under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 (the Section 75 Agreement) for 2022/23.**

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care, introduced the report by explaining that section 117 was a complicated field. It had been necessary to sort out issues such as whether the Local Authority, Health or an individual self funder should pay for mental health aftercare. The Director of People was thanked for clarifying the issues so that the various organisations understood their duties and responsibilities. The new policy was fit for the future, fit in with the new Integrated Care System and was fair to all parties.

It was clarified that the individual would be at the centre of decision making so would get the support they required and although a review process for the new arrangements had not been set out it was expected that the Health and Well-being Board would look at the arrangements in future, at a joint board with Herefordshire.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- a) Approved the joint policy for section 117 mental health aftercare: and;**
- b) Authorised the Strategic Director of People, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for**

**2076 Development of All Age Disability Service and the Transition of that Service into WCF**

**Health and Wellbeing and the Director of Children's Services, to make all operational decisions to ensure implementation of the policy and operating procedure, agreeing any operational changes to the documents, including those arising from case law, as required for their implementation.**

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families introduced the report and explained that various services which supported children, young people and young adults were spread across four service areas and it was proposed that the services be moved together to enable a strengthened, integrated service. The staff in the Young Adults Team would be transferring from Adult Social Care to Worcestershire Children First under TUPE.

There was a need for change to improve the experience for young people and minimise disruption for them; the development was not a cost saving exercise. It was acknowledged that there had been some concerns at the Scrutiny session that the Young Adult Team would be diluted but efforts would be made to ensure that did not happen and that disruption was minimised. The change was not part of the SEND improvement journey, but rather was due to the responsibility the County Council had to integrate and improve services generally.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care explained that the changes were being made in order to smooth the transition for individuals from Children's services to adults and that they did not intend to lose the good work done by the Young Adult Team. There would be more focus on management within the single integrated system and benefits had been seen in many other authorities who had already carried out a similar change. The public participation at Scrutiny had been welcomed and the Children and Families Scrutiny panel had agreed to the proposals.

Various questions were asked by Members outside the Cabinet;

- It was queried whether this decision could be paused until the next Cabinet. Stakeholders had a number of concerns and it was felt that the documents did not show how the actions would improve services,
- It was pointed out that the SEND Ofsted inspection had said there had been a lack of engagement with the SEND service and it was felt

that there had been a lack of engagement with stakeholders over the proposed plan.

- One questioner felt that Cabinet did not have the full story that Scrutiny had had and was concerned at the amount of opposition to the plans.
- It was queried whether a new Director was the best use of resources; and it was pointed out that the Equality Impact Assessment was not as good as it should be; and that co-production should have been the aim

The Chairman responded that Worcestershire was 'behind the curve' in this area and that the quality of SEND services should not be conflated with improving integration of services for young people. There was no logic in having a fragmented service, but assurance was given that the Legal duties in this area would remain with the County Council as Worcestershire Children First was a wholly owned Council Company.

It was pointed out that this was the first stage of integration and co-production would take place but needed time to be developed. Concerns had been raised at Scrutiny but it was not right to delay improvements. With regard to the additional spend, assurance was given that most of the money had gone on front line staff and one additional manager to ensure adults were represented in Worcestershire Children First.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

**(a) Approved the development of an All Age Disability Service (0-25);**

**(b) Approved the transfer of staff resource in the Young Adult's team (TUPE) to be hosted by WCF as part of an All Age Disability Service (0-25) - Integrating SEND Team, Children with a Disability Team and Young Adults Team, to improve the customer experience and drive better short and long term outcomes;**

**(c) Noted that the budget for provision and care packages remains in People Services but will be operationally managed by the new All Age Disability (0-25) service;**

**(d) Delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Commercial and Change and AD for Legal and Governance in consultation with the Strategic**

		<p><b>Director for People, Director of Children's Services and Chief Finance Officer to amend the contract with WCF and performance reporting as needed to deliver the above;</b></p> <p><b>(e) Delegated authority to Worcestershire Children First to exercise, on the Council's behalf, the functions of Part 1 of the Care Act 2014 in respect of children and young people up to age 25 years with the exceptions set out in paragraph 26 of the report pursuant to s79 of the Care Act.</b></p>
<b>2077</b>	<b>Review of Adult Social Care Transport Policy</b>	<p>The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care introduced the report. It was explained that around 220 adults, mainly with learning disabilities, received transport support. As there had not previously been a formal policy for Adult Social Care Transport, it made sense that one should be developed and there had been extensive consultations. In future web-based resources would be made available to give support and advice. The County Council wished to do as much as possible to promote independence.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED that Cabinet:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a) Noted the current work programme related to the provision of transport for adults with assessed eligible needs under the Care Act 2014, including feedback from stakeholder engagement;</b></li> <li><b>b) Noted and approved the new Transport Policy for Adult Social Care and authorises the Strategic Director for People to implement the policy.</b></li> </ul>
<b>2078</b>	<b>National Bus Strategy</b>	<p>The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways explained that work was ongoing on the Bus Service Improvement Plan and that an Enhanced Partnership Plan had been prepared. The Improvement Plan covered all aspects of buses such as improving reliability, punctuality and frequency; improving inter operator and intermodal integration, as well as real time information in bus shelters. It was explained that a pilot scheme had been introduced in Bromsgrove for demand responsive travel, whereby residents could call a bus via an app. The on-demand bus was proving popular and would be beneficial to a range of people, for example to help older people who may not be able to get to regular bus stops or young people who could not afford expensive car</p>

insurance.

Comments from members outside the Cabinet included that:

- It was understood that changes to bus timetables were difficult to implement and technology was needed to support such change
- All improvements to buses were welcomed as they would be good for the climate and social inclusion
- In response to a question about how much money would be received from the Department of Transport it was replied that the Council was unsure of when they would hear.

The Improvement Plan was ambitious and the County Council thought bus services were important, especially rural services, but services would need to be used by Worcestershire residents.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- (a) Acknowledged the work to date on the Worcestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and how this influences Worcestershire's Enhanced Partnership and Schemes;**
- (b) Approved in principle the draft Enhanced Partnership Plan and Schemes, which has been prepared in accordance with guidance from Central Government;**
- (c) Authorised the Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, to implement the Plan noting that the Enhanced Partnership Schemes are contingent on Department for Transport funding (to be announced) and results of the 28-day legal requirement consultation, and formulate operational schemes and policies with an appropriate implementation schedule having regard to the Plan;**
- (d) Authorised the commencement of a full review by the Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure of the Council's Passenger Transport network, which will incorporate all**



**aspects of the public Transport network; and**

- (e) Noted that the Council has made a submission to the Department for Transport relating to the implementation of a Zero Emissions Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA).**

The meeting ended at 12.15pm

Chairman .....