

Minutes of the Cabinet

County Hall

Thursday, 14 December 2023, 10.00 am

Present:

Cllr Simon Geraghty (Chairman), Cllr Marc Bayliss, Cllr Adrian Hardman, Cllr Marcus Hart (Vice Chairman), Cllr Adam Kent, Cllr Steve Mackay, Cllr Karen May, Cllr Richard Morris, Cllr Tracey Onslow and Cllr Mike Rouse

Also attended:

Cllr Tony Miller was also in attendance.

Available papers

The Members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated); and
- B. The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 (previously circulated).

2190 Apologies and Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 1)

None.

2191 Public Participation (Agenda item 2)

None.

2192 Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting (Agenda item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2193 Adults Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy (Agenda item 4)

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care introduced the report and commented that this five-year strategy was underpinned by the Council's vision of 'supporting individuals to live the lives they choose, in a place they call home, connected to people, places and opportunities that are meaningful to them'.

He stated that there were a number of challenges facing Adult Social Care. Demand for Adult Social Care was growing. The number of adults (aged 18-64) requiring care was forecast to increase by 29% by 2038. For people over 65 years predictions were even higher with a forecast 57% increase in people who might require care and support over this period. This was a national trend for more people living longer with long term conditions but the demographic for this county was particularly poor. The cost of delivering care and support were rising. Nationally, there were significant staffing challenges across social care. He was mindful that although the Care Act had placed considerable pressures on the Council, it was right to support people to remain as independent as possible.

He added that there were two key aspirations of the Strategy to effectively deliver the Council's statutory duties: To work proactively to build residents skills and resilience; and make positive and sustainable change in the community.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-being commented that prevention in social care involved encouraging people to be more proactive about their health and well-being. Prevention had a particularly important impact on the quality of life in later years. This Strategy linked in with the aims of the Council's Healthy Worcestershire Strategy. The Strategy was vital to help people to stay socially connected because this had a real impact on their quality of life and health and well-being.

Cabinet:

- a) **Noted and endorsed the new Adults Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy 2023-2028; and**
- b) **Approved commencement of the implementation of the proposed Adults Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy from January 2024.**

2194 Adult Social Care Strategy (Agenda item 5)

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care introduced the report and commented that the Strategy was a five-year plan which set out how the Council would deliver Adult Social Care (ASC) with the right support for residents, at the right place and at the right time, whilst working in partnership with local people and being future focussed to ensure sustainable and high-quality services.

He explained that a key aspect of the Strategy was the desire to work in partnership with local people to discuss with them what they wanted and how a better experience could be delivered for them. The Strategy was future-

focussed to understand how to deal with potential future challenges including demand-led pressures and statutory changes to the ASC sector. If the Council failed to embrace the prevention agenda and did not look at different ways of working then there was a danger that ASC demands would consume the whole of the Council's budget.

He added that the Strategy included a refinement of the safeguarding system in order to have robust practices in place to safeguard people but also with a clear focus on the Council's financial position. He recognised the important work undertaken by officers to understand the local care market and ensure that the market was sustainable and provided value for money.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-being commented that all partner organisations had a role in working together to ensure the best possible outcome for the quality of life of local residents to enable them to live fulfilled independent lives.

Cabinet:

- a) **Noted and endorsed the new Adult Social Care Strategy 2023-2028 (final draft attached to the report as an appendix); and**
- b) **Approved commencement of the implementation of the proposed Adult Social Care Strategy from January 2024.**

2195 Fair Funding for Schools 2024/25 - National and Local Funding Arrangements for Schools (Agenda item 6)

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education introduced the report and commented that the Council had received the Department for Education policy for school and Local Authority funding for 2024-25. It was likely that funding would change when the new census data emerged. The Worcestershire Schools Forum had been consulted and had endorsed the formal recommendation for the Local Schools Funding Formula for 2024-25. The Government had continued its policy of making a significant change to the funding of the Central Services Schools Block (CSSB). Consequently, all local authorities had seen a further reduction of 20% in their allocations for Historic Commitments. The Government's rationale for this funding approach was that there were other funding pots available for councils to use.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were made:

- For some years, this Council had adopted the national funding parameters with a local adjustment. The proposed increase in the high needs funding would not meet the current budgetary pressures or even impact on the Council's High Needs deficit
- The increase in the Government funding rate per pupil in Worcestershire was welcomed albeit was not as high as the Council would wish
- The continuation of the Government's approach to providing schools with a lump sum was welcomed. This lump sum was particularly vital financially for small schools

- Local schools had benefited from the Council's membership of West Mercia Energy which enabled them to purchase energy at below market rates, mitigating inflationary pressures.

Cabinet:

- a) **Noted the Department for Education policy for school and Local Authority funding for 2024-25 detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- b) **Noted the involvement of the Worcestershire Schools Forum members and schools during the engagement process;**
- c) **Noted the views of the Worcestershire Schools Forum on the Local Schools Funding Formula issues for 2024-25 and other matters which are outlined in Appendix 2 to the report;**
- d) **Approved the Local Schools Funding Formula for Worcestershire mainstream schools from April 2024 to apply for 2024-25 and other matters as detailed in paragraphs 33 to 43 of the report, to include the DfE Minimum Funding Levels (MFL's) for Primary £4,665; Key Stage 3 £5,824; Key Stage 4 £6,389; Secondary £6,050 having regard to feedback from schools and the views of the Worcestershire Schools Forum in Appendix 2, to be based as far as is practicable and affordable upon the Department for Education (DfE) National Funding Formula (NFF) parameters; and**
- e) **Authorised the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education to make the required submission to the national executive body, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by 22 January 2024 for the approved Local Schools Funding Formula for 2024-25 taking account of any impact and change on the approved units of resource, Minimum Funding Guarantee and capping arrangements in paragraph 35 of the report as a consequence of the October 2023 census and other 2023 data changes and the final 2024-25 Dedicated School Grant (DSG).**

2196 Visit Worcestershire - Destination Management Plan (Agenda item 7)

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills introduced the report and commented that Visit Worcestershire (VW) was the County's tourism delivery vehicle, coordinating destination marketing, tourism place management, business support and visitor experience. Tourism played an important part in the local economy but there was a belief that more could be done to improve the local offer.

Worcestershire was currently only one of twenty-one destinations who had achieved the Government's Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) accreditation, achieving official status in July 2023. The accreditation required the publication of a new strategic Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the

County. The Plan set out a vision for Worcestershire for the next 5 years to improve and increase the visitor offer and grow the local economy.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were made:

- Local tourism was an area with huge potential to grow the local economy. It was therefore important to promote the Worcestershire brand with ambitious targets as set out in the plan, for example by encouraging visitors to stop overnight in the county and to make it as easy as possible for people to work in the sector
- A member from outside the Cabinet requested that improvements be made to the condition of Hartlebury Railway Station to improve the visitor offer at Hartlebury Castle. The less than perfect conditions of some of the hotels in Worcester was also raised. The Leader undertook to look at what could be done to improve the condition of the railway station at Hartlebury
- A member from outside the Cabinet expressed concern about the discontinuation of the Christmas tree lights event at Avoncroft Museum. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well being explained that Avoncroft Museum had decided to move their event to the summer for economic reasons
- There was potential to maximise visitor income from visits to popular and notable local landmarks/trails or famous residents resting/birth places.

Cabinet approved the Worcestershire Destination Management Plan 2023-2028.

The meeting ended at 10.40am.

Chairman