

COUNCIL
12 NOVEMBER 2020**REPORT OF CABINET - SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN**

Use of Children's Centre Buildings – Transfer of the Centre at Bewdley Primary School

1. In June 2016 WCC Cabinet agreed a range of recommendations relating to the provision of effective prevention services for children and young people including optimising the use of children's centre buildings for delivery in localities.
2. This included the proposal that the Children's Centre building known as Riverside Children's Centre located at Bewdley Primary School be leased to the Governing Body of Bewdley Primary School for the delivery of Early Year's Education for 2-year-olds and other local support services.
3. Following consultation, the school has proposed that they would continue to operate 2-year old provision from this building, with no alteration to staff, children, or number of places offered, but that the nursery, and the site, be absorbed into the maintained estate. The integration of this facility into the maintained age range of the school would enable a consistent education programme from 2-11 and improve communication and administration across the school community, along with securing ongoing availability of early education and care provision for 2-year-olds in this area.
4. In agreeing this change the school have confirmed that they will continue to use the building to provide early years provision, as well as allowing the use of the building for existing community services to continue as this is in the interests of the development and welfare of young children and families in the community. Therefore, this proposal continues to meet the statutory definition of a Sure Start Children's Centre, meeting the requirements of the Sure Start, Early Years, and Childcare Grant (SSEYCG) which was invested in the site.
5. Cabinet agreed the proposals for the future use of the Children's Centre building at Bewdley Primary School, authorised the Directors of Children's Services and of Commercial and Change to take all necessary steps to effect the change and has authorised the Directors of Children's Services and Public Health, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members to take all decisions in relation to change of use of Children's Centre buildings so long as they continue to provide services under the definition of a Sure Start Children's Centre.

A New Approach to Delivering Integrated Services for Adult Mental Health

6. Cabinet has considered a report about the termination of the Agreement for Section 75 Integrated Provider Adult Mental Health, Older Adult Mental Health and Learning Disabilities which was entered into with Worcestershire Health and Care

NHS Trust on 1 April 2016. The Overarching Framework Agreement and the all other s75 Provider Agreements made under it are not affected by the proposed termination.

7. The purpose of the adult mental health agreement is to ensure the efficiency and effective delivery of integrated mental health services, by delegating the duties and powers of the Council to the Trust. At the time, this approach was the preferred strategic direction of national policy to deliver integration and placed the Council and local NHS at the forefront of developments in mental health.

8. The Community Mental Health Framework for Adults and Older Adults (NHS, September 2019) envisages holistic mental health care that is place-based, personalised and community-focused and with social care playing a central role. The Framework underpins the Transforming Community Mental Health Services agenda. The Trust has been appointed as a pilot on behalf of Herefordshire and Worcestershire STP to trial the adoption of the Community Mental Health Framework.

9. In light of the national agenda, the Council's Strategy for People and Communities and following discussions with Worcestershire Health and Care Trust, it is clear that the original intention of the s75 adult mental health agreement is no longer fit for purpose. The legal purpose of s75 arrangements are to allow the creation of a pooled budget. Without a pooled budget in place, there are better ways of working in partnership without the need for a s75. There is a need for continued social work specialist development and professional leadership, a role which sits best with the County Council as the responsible lead.

10. Cabinet has therefore agreed to terminate the Agreement for Section 75 Integrated Provider Adult Mental Health, Older Adult Mental Health and Learning Disabilities with Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust with effect from 31 March 2021 and noted that the Council will resume direct management of all adult social care mental health functions and services with effect from 1 April 2021. The Strategic Director of People, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, is authorised, to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Trust by 1 April 2021 to ensure the delivery of personalised, place-based and integrated services to people with mental health difficulties, and to ensure the transfer of relevant staff to the Council, arrangements for co-location of staff as appropriate and the establishment of an operational mental health social care function within the People Directorate within the existing budget

Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme

11. Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, sets out the requirement for Local Planning Authorities to prepare and maintain a scheme and schedule of planning policy documents that it intends to produce, known as a Local Development Scheme. The Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme (LDS) has two main purposes, to inform the public about the preparation and adoption of planning documents and to establish and reflect Council priorities and enable work programmes to be set for the preparation of the documents.

12. The LDS should be reviewed regularly and in order to balance the use of Cabinet time and maintaining appropriate political oversight and awareness of mineral and waste policy development, Cabinet agreed that more frequent updates are delegated

to the Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member. The updated LDS will be brought to Cabinet for approval in 2023.

13. Restrictions on meetings during the Covid outbreak meant that the public hearing sessions scheduled for May and June 2020 in the 2018 LDS had to be postponed and are likely to be held virtually in November. This will delay the adoption of the Plan by Council until Q4 2022 or Q1 2023.

14. Cabinet approved the Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme September 2020 – December 2023 and delegated authority to the Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure to make minor amendments to it prior to publication.

Resources Report – Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring – Month 4 (31 July) 2020/21

15. Cabinet has considered details of the 2020/21 outturn forecast for the Council's £345 million net revenue budget as at Month 4 (31 July 2020), the estimated financial impact of COVID-19 and progress to date on the savings and reforms programme.

16. The Council is forecasting a £1.6 million cost pressure after management actions to reduce expenditure in year. Around £20 additional expenditure was being incurred on Adult Services, with a further £27m on whole Council/countywide services such as hubs, PPE and allowing for lower income collection levels.

17. In addition to this, at the time the Council was managing around £52 million of additional one-off funding to support its response to COVID-19 working alongside partners and suppliers to ensure vital support services are enabled across the County area. At this stage for 2020/21, no second wave had been assumed and costs were broadly in line with the additional funding allocated by Central Government. Looking forward, there are risks to council tax and business rates income as well as the uncertainty around the impact of changes in the economy and spending priorities.

18. This report also updated Cabinet on the latest position with regard to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block.

19. The current DSG position is a forecast overspend of £0.6 million against a total budget of £220 million. The overspend is exclusively within the High Needs block of the DSG and this will increase the overall DSG deficit brought forward from 2019/20 of £6.2 million to £6.8 million at the end of the year.

20. High Needs funding was increased by £8.7 million in 2020/21, bringing budget broadly in line with expenditure, although future allocations and spend management measures will need to make good the deficit balance.

21. The Council is working with Schools to optimise pressures within funding, whilst taking every opportunity to lobby Central Government about overall funding allocations. Worcestershire is not alone with regard to these pressures.

22. Cabinet endorsed the conclusions about revenue and capital budget monitoring up to 31 July 2020, noted the financial impact and forecast for COVID-19 expenditure; noted current progress regarding savings plans approved by Council in February 2020 and noted borrowing and lending transactions during 2019/20.

A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme

23. The County Council has been working with partners including Highways England (HE), Bromsgrove District Council (BDC), Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) to relieve congestion on the A38 through a programme of improvement works.

24. The programme was identified in Local Transport Plan 4 to support the sustainable growth of Bromsgrove, relieve existing traffic congestion and to support the growth identified in the adopted Bromsgrove District Plan. The programme is also critical to assist to support the objectives of the Redditch Local Plan, and both the Worcestershire and Greater Birmingham and Solihull Strategic Economic Plans.

25. Proposals for the A38 in Bromsgrove were considered by Cabinet in July and November 2018. The full proposal has been divided into an early works package known as Package 1, with the remainder of the proposed works being packaged together as the A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme (BREP). BREP consists of seven Highways Schemes (A-G) and six Active Travel Schemes (1-6).

26. Package 1 consisted of enhancements and improvements to three junctions:

- Works Complete: A38 / Barley Mow Lane
- A38 / M42 Junction 1 and A38 / M5 Junction 4: both currently in delivery'
- This phase is being funded by a combination of monies from Highways England, WLEP, GBSLEP and section 106 developer contributions.

27. A38 BREP is a part of the Major Road Network (MRN). The BREP proposal is currently being developed and promoted through the Department of Transport (DfT) Major Road Network fund for major schemes up to a maximum of £50 million plus a 15% local contribution. WLEP and Midlands Connect (MC) have identified BREP as one of West Midlands Regional 10 MRN priority schemes securing important regional support for the scheme

28. On this basis the Council developed and submitted a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to the DfT in summer 2019. The SOBC highlighted that the scheme provides very high value for money with a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of 4.5. As the SOBC was well received by the DfT work is now underway on the more detailed Outline Business Case (OBC) as the next step to securing funding from the scheme. This is due to be submitted to the DfT in 2021.

29. The programme contains a mixture of highway capacity and safety enhancements aimed at providing additional capacity within the area and improving overall journey time reliability. In addition, it includes a series of Active Travel enhancements providing opportunities for walking and cycling, alternatives to car use for short journeys and link to the Active Travel schemes provided though the Bromsgrove National Productivity Investment Fund.

30. As part of the development of the OBC a public engagement exercise was carried out in early 2020. This highlighted matters which the Council has since sought to address and has led to several changes to the programme from the SOBC submission. These are:

- greater provision for Active Travel with additional cycle schemes and pedestrian crossing points within the corridor to reduce severance and promote cycling and walking as a realistic alternative mode for short journeys within Bromsgrove.
- further local widening of the highway to optimise capacity and enhance safety
- to review scheme F (M42 J1 and Birmingham Road) and undertake further public engagement.

31. The walking and cycling provision brings the scheme in line with current government proposals and guidance for Active Travel which were revised in July 2020.

32. WLEP allocated £7.5 million to support both the delivery of Package 1 improvements and development of the A38 BREP proposals through the Local Growth Fund. Government is now seeking to ensure that all this money is spent within the current financial year (2020/21). This money has been allocated to complete the following activities:

- Delivery of Package 1 which is in progress
- Development of the A38 BREP proposals and submission of the SOBC which is complete;
- The current further development of the A38 BREP proposals up to and including submission of the OBC; and
- Detailed design of selected A38 BREP schemes to provide a series of schemes ready for delivery.

33. Cabinet has noted the progress made to date on the BREP and supported the its continued development and approved the further development and submission of an Outline Business Case to the Department of Transport during 2021. Cabinet also delegated authority to the Strategic Directors for Economy and Infrastructure and for Commercial and Change, as appropriate, to undertake public engagement regarding Scheme F if required, and in consultation with the CMR, to finalise and award contracts to deliver the A38 BREP proposals and acquire land. The forward funding of the development of the Full Business Case was also supported.

Reducing Congestion Update

34. A total of £22.9m has been made available for the overall Reducing Congestion Programme and Cabinet has considered a summary of the schemes and progress to date.

35. The congestion programme is in accordance with the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP 4) which was consulted on extensively and the schemes have been developed in consultation with appropriate Divisional Councillors, statutory and other stakeholders.

36. The schemes are the Upton Roundabout Scheme; Hoobrook Roundabout scheme at Kidderminster; Parkside Junctions scheme in Bromsgrove and Evesham junctions scheme.

37. Cabinet has noted progress with the schemes and approved the continuation of activities to progress their implementation; authorised the purchase of land necessary to complete the A38 Upton Roundabout scheme, including by compulsory purchase if necessary, and delegated the award of contracts and agreements required for the

schemes to the Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure. Expenditure in line with funds allocated to the Reducing Congestion programme in the capital programme has also been approved.

Council provided Day Services for Adults with a Learning Disability

38. As part of its duties under the Care Act 2014, the Council must meet the care and support needs of adults and the support needs of carers who are assessed as eligible under the Act's eligibility criteria. Eligible needs may be met by the provision of day opportunities to meet the adult's outcomes as identified in their needs assessment and will be recorded in their care and support plan.

39. There is a mixed market of day opportunities for people with learning disabilities within Worcestershire. Currently 207 people attend internally provided day opportunities while around 300 people attend services provided by the external market.

40. The Council has directly provided internal day opportunity provision for over 25 years through Resource Centres and Connect Services. Resource Centres operate Monday to Friday and provide a variety of activities for people with complex learning disabilities. Many of these activities are building based with some community-based activities planned according to individual needs and preferences. Support for individuals includes personal care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language support, behaviour support, psychology support and support to access the community.

41. Connect Centre Services operate Monday to Friday and they provide mainly community-based day opportunities to adults with less complex learning disabilities. This service provides support such as: access to employment/work experience, education and volunteering, personal care, meeting friends, computer/IT literacy support.

42. Following a decision in November 2018 to close and relocate some Connect Services, internal day opportunities have continued to operate with requests for support being made by the learning disability social work teams. The services have been well utilised, with only a small amount of capacity remaining in services. However, all practice changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and there is now a need to look at things afresh.

43. Council-provided Day Opportunities had to temporarily close in March 2020 due to the reduction in demand and the updated government guidance relating to Covid-19. This was in line with external providers who took the same approach. Despite having to close centres, staff continued to provide welfare checks, stayed in touch with families, provided support by collecting shopping and supported people out in the community. Day Centres, both internal and external have slowly begun to reopen, albeit with limited capacity due to the Covid-19 protective measures requirements and social distancing restrictions.

44. It was decided to commence engagement, in early July, with a small cohort of individuals who use Council run day opportunities to learn from the experiences throughout lockdown and consider more fully formed options for the future delivery of Day Opportunities. The engagement was individual based, to understand how changes as a result of Covid-19 have impacted on service users personally, and how to best

help them to adapt and access relevant support as well as how day opportunities need to adapt in order to support them effectively.

45. As a result of this engagement with service users, a decision was made to re-open Resources Centres to prioritise supporting adults (and their carers) who have higher or more complex needs. Covid-19 restrictions have meant that the service hasn't been able to offer as many places as they could prior to the pandemic and it has worked closely with individuals, their families/carers to confirm arrangements.

46. For those people who receive support through the Connect Services, these buildings have not reopened. This is because there are limitations on the number of spaces due to Covid-19 restrictions and there is more potential to meet individuals' needs with external providers including through direct payments. In the meantime, the Council continues to work closely with service users and their carers to find solutions to best support their eligible needs.

47. Following the changes to the Council's Day Opportunities provision, as a result of Covid-19, there is need to review the Council's long-term position in providing access to day service support both internally and externally in order to continue to meet assessed need. This will help meet the ambition of the Council's People Directorate to ensure Worcestershire residents are healthier, live longer, have a better quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible

48. The purpose of the Day Opportunities Review is to consider how the Council may continue to meet assessed eligible need in the most efficient and cost-effective way that promotes independence, social inclusion and positive outcomes for individuals and carers. The Council's preferred approach is to move to the position where internal day opportunities will only be provided where there isn't the capacity or capability within the external market to meet eligible need. The proposed review will explore and test this approach. Any proposals affecting the long-term future of internal day opportunities will be consulted upon with all stakeholders before Cabinet is invited to make the final decision. There will be several stages to the review all underpinned by engagement with service users and their families/carers. The review will also take into account financial and value for money implications

County Council Net Zero Carbon Plan

52. The Net Zero Carbon plan has been produced in direct response to the notice of motion agreed at the 16 May 2019 Council meeting. At that meeting Worcestershire County Council reaffirmed its commitment to tackle climate change.

49. The proposed Net Zero Carbon Plan outlines how the Council could reduce the above emissions to Net Zero and achieve its pledge of carbon neutrality within its own estate and operations by 2050.

50. The plan also recognises the wider role of the Council in influencing emissions reduction across the county, as well as responding to the impact of climate change.

51. The proposed plan sets out progress to date, provides a baseline carbon emissions assessment and outlines the strategy the Council could take to deliver on its commitments.

52. The Council's proposed approach to achieving net zero emissions includes:
- The reduction of carbon emissions associated with the Council's estate and activities as far and as fast as possible and practical. (The plan sets short and longer-term reduction targets)
 - The requirement for carbon reduction measures to be cost effective, (e.g. maximum payback times will be set)
 - The prioritisation of local carbon offsetting projects with environmental and/or social benefit, where offsetting is necessary
 - Continuation of the requirement to assess the environmental impact of all proposed Council projects, including carbon emissions and the impact of severe weather and climatic change, (through the Joint Impact Assessment process)
 - The continuation of the Council's role in cutting carbon emissions and promoting environmental improvement across the county, working together with partners to achieve this aim,
 - The communication of Climate Change, raising the awareness of staff and of residents of the need to cut carbon emissions, the Council's role in this and how everyone can play their part.

53. Measures to achieve net zero emissions from the Council's estate and operations include:

- Ongoing investment in energy efficiency measures in WCC properties to achieve annual reduction in energy consumption and to ready them for zero carbon emission heating systems
- Further investment in generation of renewable energy at WCC properties
- Moving to 100% LED street lighting
- Moving to 100% Ultra Low Emission fleet vehicles (ULEVs)
- Procurement of 100% renewable electricity for property and street lighting
- Inclusion of carbon reduction requirements in new contracts
- Provision of carbon reduction advice sessions with service providers, (in particular SMEs)

54. Offsetting will be required to balance remaining WCC emissions. More detail on this will emerge. As an initial example, the Council has already committed to the planting of 150,000 trees, which will offset annually an average 350 tonnes CO₂.

55. Cabinet has approved the Net Zero Carbon Plan and agreed that an annual progress report and updated plan be brought to Cabinet for approval in 2021.

Update on COVID-19 Response and Recovery Including Economic Development

56. Cabinet has considered a broad overview of the activities being led or supported by the Council in respect of COVID Response and Recovery. The report covered three distinct areas:

- Specific project, forum and support updates covering LRF, Economic Recovery, Business Support, Here2Help, and Local Outbreak Response Plan (LORP)
- Services and Directorate Status Updates
- Capital Programme – Proposals on Revisions (referred to separately on the Council agenda).

57. Cabinet has noted the current situation in all three areas and acknowledged that circumstances are changing regularly. Members thanked the Council's officers for their continued hard work in addressing the impact of the pandemic and recovery in Worcestershire.

Mr S E Geraghty
Chairman

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and background papers for the meetings of the Cabinet held on 24 September and 22 October 2020.

<https://worcestershire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=131&Year=0>