

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Glenfield and via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 23 June 2020.

PRESENT

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. Blunt CC	Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC
Mr. L. Breckon JP CC	Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC
Mr. I. D. Ould OBE CC	Mrs H. L. Richardson CC
Mr. B. L. Pain CC	Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

In attendance

Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC, Mrs. C. M. Radford CC, Mrs D. Taylor CC, Mr. P. Bedford CC, Mrs R. Page CC, Dr. Terri Eynon CC

415. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2020 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

416. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

417. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting. He and Mr. Breckon CC, Mr. Blunt CC, Mrs. Richardson CC, and Mr. Shepherd CC each declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 (Coronavirus (Covid-19) Impact and Response of the County Council - Recovery and Financial Impact) as members of district councils. Mr. Rushton and Mr. Blunt also declared a personal interest in agenda item 11 (Coalville Transport Strategy) as members of North West Leicestershire District Council.

418. Coronavirus (Covid-19) Impact and Response of the County Council - Recovery and Financial Impact.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources regarding work being undertaken within the County Council and with partners to address the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic and plan for the recovery and reinstatement of services. The report also outlined the financial impact of the pandemic on the Council's finances and the latest statistics on the economic effects. A copy of the report and a supplementary report, marked 'Agenda item 4', are filed with these minutes.

Members noted the comments of the Scrutiny Commission, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

The Director said that the funding gap for the Council had now increased to an estimated £36m but added that there was huge uncertainty on a number of issues.

Mr. Rhodes thanked Council staff for responding so well to the very difficult situation, enabling many services to continue. The Council now had to address the immediate problem of the shortfall in the current financial year and greatly reduced income in the next.

The Leader said that he had contacted all Leicestershire MPs regarding the Council's financial predicament. He had received a positive response from all and hoped that the Government would increase its support.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the comments of the Scrutiny Commission be noted;
- (b) That the actions taken to date in response to the pandemic be noted;
- (c) That the work that has commenced on recovery including the outcomes from the initial meeting of the cross-party Member Working Group be noted;
- (d) That the financial implications for the County Council and the actions proposed to begin to address the impact on the Council's finances be noted.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To note the current position on the response to the coronavirus pandemic, the County Council's Recovery Plans, and the financial implications for the current and future years' budgets.

419. Commissioning and Procurement of Home Care Service Post- November 2020 - Proposed Deferral Arising from Covid-19.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities concerning a review of the proposals for the new Home Care service (previously agreed by the Cabinet in February) arising from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and proposing a delay to the procurement and implementation of the new Home Care for Leicestershire (HC4L). A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda item 5', is filed with these minutes.

Members noted that no comments had been received from members of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

That procurement of the new Home Care service for Leicestershire previously agreed by the Cabinet on 7 February 2020 be deferred for 12 months, subject to agreement by the East Leicestershire and Rutland and West Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups' Governing Bodies.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Due to the current pressures arising from the coronavirus pandemic, it is deemed unlikely that an Invitation to Tender for a new Home Care service would elicit a positive or significant response from the care market at the present time.

There is a significant risk that the current Covid-19 crisis would either not be over or reduced sufficiently in this period to enable either the procurement to start or to ensure a safe roll-out of the new service.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

The options considered were delays of 6, 9, 12 months, or longer. The key factors were to avoid procurement or implementation of the new service during peak service pressure periods and for the postponement period to be realistic, so that a sustainable market response would be secured and a further deferment could be avoided.

As explained in the report, delays of 6 or 9 months risked moving procurement or implementation into the busy winter period or into the summer, when workforce availability can be an issue. Also, officers involved would be likely to still be occupied in managing the coronavirus response.

Delays over 12 months but under 24 months would pose the same difficulties indicated above. Whilst this ultimately may have to happen to avoid an even longer deferment, it was not recommended at the present time.

420. Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2023.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Public Health seeking support for the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Prevention Strategy 2020-2023 and associated Action Plan, developed by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Audit and Prevention Group (LLR SAPG). A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda item 6', is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Breckon was pleased to note that the feedback from members and partner organisations had been constructive and supportive of the Strategy.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the comments of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the members of the Health and Wellbeing Board on the draft Strategy and Action Plan and changes made as a result be noted;
- (b) That the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Prevention Strategy 2020-2023 and associated Action Plan be supported.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Strategy builds on recent actions bringing together co-ordinated suicide prevention work across the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland area. The LLR SAPG seeks to reduce death by suicide and to support the bereaved. The Strategy will assist multi-agency work in raising awareness of risks and influencing policy and seeks to promote open discussion and support services for vulnerable people.

421. Leicestershire Sexual Health Strategy 2020-2023.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Public Health regarding the outcome of consultation on the Leicestershire Sexual Health Strategy and seeking approval of the final Strategy. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda item 7', is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Breckon said that notwithstanding the restrictions imposed by the pandemic there had been a full and thorough consultation process. He commended the Strategy, which aligned with other public health policies and strategies and would support work with the voluntary and community sector.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the responses to the consultation including the comments of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and changes made to the draft Strategy as a result be noted;
- (b) That the Leicestershire Sexual Health Strategy 2020-23 (appended to the report) be approved for implementation.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The 2020-23 Strategy recognises the changing commissioning landscape, development of the integrated care system and its impact on partners. It builds on the work of the previous Sexual Health Strategy, which made significant progress in combining a fragmented system into a single service. The 2020-23 Strategy focuses on sexual health improvement, leadership and policy in Leicestershire.

422. 2019/20 Provisional Revenue and Capital Outturn.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which set out the provisional revenue and capital outturn for 2019/20. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda item 8', is filed with these minutes.

Members noted the comments of the Scrutiny Commission, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Rhodes commented on the ongoing financial pressures, particularly with regard to High Needs (Children and Family Services) spend which was expected to result in an accumulated deficit of £20m by the end of 2020/21. This was a national problem and needed to be addressed by the Government. Mr. Rhodes added that the Council's capital programme needed to be reviewed as a result of the pandemic, with a view to reducing spend and/or postponing projects so that it could continue to fund mainstream services.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the comments of the Scrutiny Commission be noted;
- (b) That the 2019/20 provisional revenue and capital outturn be noted;
- (c) That the prudential indicators for 2019/20 as shown in Appendix E to the report be noted.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To note the provisional revenue and capital outturn for 2019/20.

423. Annual Treasury Management Report 2019/20.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources regarding action taken and the performance achieved in respect of the Council's treasury management activities in 2019/20. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda item 9', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Authority's full adoption of the CIPFA Code of Practice for treasury management requires an annual report on Treasury Management activity and performance to be considered by both the Cabinet and the Corporate Governance Committee before the end of September each year.

424. Melton Mowbray Distributor Road.

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance regarding the decision by Melton Borough Council to approve a masterplan for its South Sustainable Neighbourhood seemingly without having taken into account the County Council's concerns about its financial viability, and the implications of that decision for construction of the southern section of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road (MMDR). A copy of the report and a supplementary report, marked 'Agenda item 10', are filed with these minutes.

The Chairman said that it was not reasonable for the County Council to be expected to take on a financial risk measured in tens of millions.

Mr. Rhodes said that he had been supportive of the MMDR project for a long time. He considered that the masterplan for the South Sustainable Neighbourhood was good in so far as it went but as it did not address financing of infrastructure it was incomplete. Mr. Rhodes hoped it might be possible to progress the road scheme at a later date once the viability of the Neighbourhood had been addressed.

Other members expressed regret but agreed that the project could not be pursued at the present.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the position of the County Council in respect of the masterplan for the South Sustainable Neighbourhood and the financial viability of the Neighbourhood as approved under delegated powers by the Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader and the Deputy Leader, and communicated to Melton Borough Council prior to its Cabinet meeting, be noted;
- (b) That the decision of the Cabinet of Melton Borough Council at its meeting on 17 June 2020, inter alia, to approve the masterplan, be noted;

- (c) That the views of the Director of Law and Governance (set out in paragraphs 17 to 23 of the report) on the decision of Melton Borough Council's Cabinet of 17 June be noted;
- (d) That the County Council's position as set out in (a) above, viz:
- "To date no evidence has been provided by Melton Borough Council in the masterplan or elsewhere to demonstrate the financial viability of the South Sustainable Neighbourhood in its proposed form and for which no timescales are given for the different phases of development. Consequently, the County Council is still not in a position to accept the Housing Infrastructure Fund grant-aid offer towards the cost of the southern leg of the MMDR."
- be reaffirmed and that Melton Borough Council be also advised (i) of the views of the Director of Law and Governance and (ii) that the County Council notes that it has had no answer from Melton Borough Council as to exactly on what basis it believes the South Sustainable Neighbourhood development to be viable;
- (e) That Homes England be advised of the County Council's position accordingly.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Officers believe that the increasing financial risk to the County Council is not acceptable without the assurances and information sought from Melton Borough Council.

425. Coalville Transport Strategy.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport concerning the outcomes of recent refreshed transport study work on the ongoing development and delivery of a Coalville Transport Strategy (CTS) and North West Leicestershire District Council's 'Section 106 policy for the delivery of infrastructure in Coalville', which provided a basis for securing developer contributions towards projects covered by the CTS. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda item 11', is filed with these minutes.

Members noted comments from Dr. Terri Eynon CC, and responses from the Director of Environment and Transport, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

On behalf of the Cabinet, the Chairman thanked North West Leicestershire District Council for its work with the County Council on the CTS.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the ongoing work to support North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) to deliver the successful growth and evolution of Coalville and of Ashby-de-la-Zouch (Ashby) be noted;
- (b) That it be noted the outcomes of the recent transport study work:
- (i) further evidences the importance of achieving the delivery of the A511 Growth Corridor Major Road Network scheme, without which growth in the area is forecast to have severe residual cumulative highway impacts;
 - (ii) evidences that transport projects in addition to the Major Road Network scheme are still required in and around Coalville and Ashby in order to mitigate forecast severe residual cumulative highway impacts;

- (c) That the revised list of projects covered by the CTS as set out in paragraph 51 and in Appendix A to the report be approved;
- (d) That no changes be sought to the general level of developer contributions requested towards delivery of the CTS through NWLDC's 'Section 106 policy for the delivery of infrastructure in Coalville';
- (e) That the County Council as the Local Highway Authority uses the outcome of the recent study work to inform its advice to NWLDC on development proposals and developer contributions in and around Coalville and Ashby;
- (f) That it be noted that there may be circumstances where the County Council as Local Highway Authority will advise NWLDC to refuse development proposals on highways grounds regardless of a suggested developer contribution towards delivery of the CTS; and
- (g) That the County Council works with NWLDC to produce a formal CTS document.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To ensure that the County Council as the Local Highway Authority (LHA) is using the most up-to-date evidence in seeking developer contributions from proposals in and around Coalville and Ashby and in providing highways advice to NWLDC, and to ensure that it continues to be in a strong position in circumstances where planning appeals are lodged by applicants in the light of the LHA's advice to NWLDC.

The total cost of the A511 Major Road Network project and additional junction mitigation measures now identified exceed that on which the level of developer contributions was originally based but in light of the many uncertainties arising from the Covid-19 pandemic it is considered that it would be unwise to seek to increase the level of contributions requested.

The preparation of a formal CTS document will ensure that this information is available in the public domain in a clear and non-technical format.

426. Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

There were no items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

427. Mr. Ivan Ould OBE CC

The Chairman noted that Mr. Ould was attending his last Cabinet meeting as the Lead Member for Children and Family Services, a position he had held since 1999, and thanked him for his work.

Mr. Ould thanked the Leader and his colleagues for their support over the years in which he had been privileged to serve as Cabinet Lead Member, and expressed his appreciation to officers, particularly those in Children and Family Services and the Chief Executive, for their work and assistance to him in his role.