

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Glenfield and via Microsoft Teams on Friday, 18 September 2020.

PRESENT

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

Mr. R. Blunt CC  
Mr. L. Breckon JP CC  
Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC  
Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC

Mrs H. L. Richardson CC  
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC  
Mrs D. Taylor CC

Apologies

Mr. B. L. Pain CC

In attendance

Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC, Mrs. C. M. Radford CC, Mrs B. Seaton CC, Dr. Terri Eynon CC

428. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2020 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

429. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

430. 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. Blunt CC, Mr. Breckon CC, Mrs. Richardson CC, Mrs. Taylor CC and Mr. Shepherd CC each declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 (White Paper on Devolution and Local Recovery) as members of district councils, and Mr. Blunt CC undertook to leave the meeting during consideration of this item as Leader of North West Leicestershire District Council.

431. Medium Term Financial Strategy Latest Position.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the 2020/21 revenue budget and capital programme monitoring position as at the end of July 2020. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 4', is filed with these minutes.

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

Mr. Rhodes emphasised the considerable pressures faced by the Council as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although measures had been put in place to secure the

Council's financial position through to the end of the year, he expected 2020/21 to be more challenging due to the predicted loss of income from Council Tax and Business Rates. Although the financial situation was challenging, he reassured members that the Council was in a better position than many other authorities.

The Leader commended Mr. Rhodes and the Director of Corporate Resources for managing the challenging financial situation and asked that details be sent to Leicestershire MPs of how the future savings would be made so that there was a full understanding of the Council's financial situation.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Scrutiny Commission be noted;
- b) That the latest position of the 2020/21 revenue budget and capital programme as at the end of July 2020 and the effect of Covid-19 be noted;
- c) That the changes to the 2020-24 capital programme as set out in the report be approved;
- d) That the approach outlined in the report to updating the Medium-Term Financial Strategy be approved.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To note the intended approach to the development of plans to address the latest financial position.

To agree the revised capital programme for 2020-24 which required amendment as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

*(Mr. Blunt then left the meeting during consideration of the following agenda item – White Paper on Devolution and Local Recovery).*

432. White Paper on Devolution and Local Recovery.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the forthcoming White Paper on Devolution and Local Recovery and the Council's proposal to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting an invitation for councils in Leicestershire to come forward with proposals for a unitary authority as a prerequisite to a devolution settlement for the East Midlands. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 5', is filed with these minutes.

Members noted comments from Mr. M. Mullaney CC and Dr. T. Eynon CC on behalf of the Labour Group, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that the Government was seeking greater devolution linked to improved local and regional accountability and preferred to have elected mayors in place. Ministers had suggested that reorganisation to unitary authorities would be a condition of a regional devolution deal. The recommendations in the report would align the Council

with both Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire County Councils and would present the opportunity for further financial savings to be made.

Mr. Rushton said that, following the passing of a similar motion in the same week, both Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire County Councils had written to the Secretary of State.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Leader write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting an invitation for councils in the administrative boundaries of Leicestershire County Council to come forward with their proposals for the establishment of unitary local government as a prerequisite to a devolution settlement for the East Midlands;
- b) That officers be requested to
  - (i) Develop and update the draft strategic business case for a unitary structure for local government in Leicestershire having regard to the criteria and requirements of the White Paper;
  - (ii) Take steps to engage an independent social research company to undertake a stakeholder engagement on the revised business case;
  - (iii) Following publication of the White Paper submit a further report to the Scrutiny Commission and Cabinet before the matter be debated by the full Council with a view to an ambitious proposal being put to Government which recognises a once in a generation opportunity to improve local government in Leicestershire in the context of a strong economy and powerful voice for the East Midlands.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To enable work to commence immediately to update the draft business case in order that Leicestershire, together with Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, which are also approaching the Secretary of State, can be in a position to be in the early tranche for local government reform.

*(Mr. Blunt re-joined the meeting).*

433. Adults and Communities Department Strategy 2020-24 - Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities concerning the outcome of the consultation on the new Adults and Communities Strategy. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 6', is filed with these minutes.

Members noted the comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

The Director said that the Strategy had been revised in light of the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that services continued to support people in the most effective way whilst keeping residents and staff safe.

Mr. Blunt said that the Strategy continued to promote independence for users and aimed to improve user satisfaction levels and continue efficient delivery of services in a cost-effective way.

Mrs. Richardson was pleased to see continuing support for community libraries which became community hubs and were vital for supporting people's mental health.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) That the outcome of the consultation on "Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire: Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020-2024" be noted;
- c) That the "Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire: Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020–2024" be approved.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The consultation and engagement exercise undertaken overwhelmingly support the key themes of the Strategy, which will underpin the work of the Department over the next four years.

434. Status on Support for Community Managed Libraries.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities regarding the provision of extra support for community managed libraries in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 7', is filed with these minutes.

Members noted the comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

The Director informed members that Community Managed Libraries (CMLs) were an established and successful part of the library service. The Covid-19 lockdown had impacted on the ability of CMLs to raise additional funds to support their work and it was proposed to enhance the Council's support to them during this challenging time.

Mr. Blunt thanked the Trustees of Community Managed Libraries for their support in steering the libraries through the Covid-19 pandemic and commended officers for the support given to CMLs, a model which other Councils had followed.

Mr. Rhodes supported the increased investment, from existing budgets, to help ensure the continuing operation of CMLs.

## RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) That the baseline support offer to Community Managed Libraries be enhanced to:
  - (i) increase the lease extension period from five to 10 years;
  - (ii) offer more officer visits to provide support and training and, via Voluntary Action Leicestershire, support for volunteer recruitment and retention, business planning, and income generation;
- c) That it be noted that the position of Community Managed Libraries will be kept under review during the recovery from Covid-19 and further reports will be made to members as necessary.

## REASONS FOR DECISION:

The original funding support package for Community Managed Libraries was set up in 2014. This tapered funded support reduced by 20% each year from 100% running costs and will reach nil by 2021 for those CMLs that transferred early in the process.

The pandemic has resulted in all libraries being closed and consequently their ability to generate income has halted.

Lessons learned from the CML project have indicated that in order to indicate viability for external funds, a 10-year lease is preferable to the current arrangement which requires library groups to request a rollover five-year extension. Ten-year leases would also reduce CMLs trustees' legal costs and would be more efficient from the Council's perspective.

CMLs have identified the importance of regular visits from Council support officers, especially in supporting volunteers and trustees at points of crisis, and this is imperative following Covid-19. It is therefore important that the frequency of these visits be increased during this period of known vulnerability.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

Option 2 - Upscaled baseline plus offer for all libraries with internal repairing-only leases.

Option 3 - Upscaled baseline offer relating to County Council and VAL officer support plus the Council takes back control of all running costs of CML building.

435. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2020 to 2023.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which presented the outcome of engagement on the Special Educational Needs and Disability and Inclusion Strategy for 2020-2023. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

Mrs. Taylor explained that the Strategy would be monitored through the SEND and Inclusion Board with strong governance in place to oversee delivery of the action plan to

ensure the best outcomes for children with SEND. She thanked local area partners, the Parent and Carer Forum, parents, carers and children for their support in developing the Strategy.

Mr. Rhodes said that he was pleased that the Strategy had been developed to improve standards and reduce dependence on the independent sector.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the responses to the consultation including the comments of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) That the Leicestershire local area Special Educational Needs and Disability and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2023 be approved.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To provide the basis for planning, commissioning and delivering SEND Services and support by the Council and its partners for children and young people living in Leicestershire over the next three years.

436. Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board Partnership Annual Report 2019/20 and Business Plan for 2020/21.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services concerning the Annual Report 2019-20 for the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Business Plan 2020-21 from that Partnership and the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

Mrs. Taylor said that the new arrangements were now bedded in and a new Independent Adviser was working with the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. She welcomed more aligned working across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to address children's safeguarding.

Members asked that their thanks be conveyed to Mr. Simon Westwood for his work as Independent Chair and Adviser since 2017.

RESOLVED:

That the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LRSCP) Annual Report for 2019/20 and the joint Business Plan of the LRSCP and the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board for 2020/21 be noted and welcomed.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Leicestershire County Council is one of the Statutory Partners who have a shared and equal statutory duty with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups and Chief of Leicestershire Police to agree and make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Leicestershire.

The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements locally are managed through a new partnership – the LRSCP – that covers Leicestershire and Rutland. The arrangements commenced on 29 September 2019, replacing the former Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The Business Plan for 2020/21 has been jointly developed by the LRSCP and Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board in order to support greater alignment in safeguarding development work across the two areas.

In Leicestershire the Annual Report has traditionally been presented to the Cabinet and the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Presenting the Annual Report and Business Plan enables the Cabinet to comment on the content of both documents and consider whether these identify matters that it wishes to address in relation to the effectiveness of safeguarding within the work of the Authority.

437. Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2019/20, Strategic Plan 2020 to 2025, and Business Plan 2020/21.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board which presented the Board's draft Annual Report 2019-20, Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and Business Plan for 2020-21. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

Members noted the comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) That the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report for 2019/20, Strategic Plan for 2020-2025, and Business Plan for 2020/21, be noted and welcomed.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (LRSAB) is a statutory body and local authorities have a duty to ensure that the Board is enabled to operate effectively.

It is a requirement of the Care Act 2014 that the LRSAB Annual Report be reported to the Leader of the Council together with the Chief Executive of the local authority, the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Police and Crime Commissioner, and local Healthwatch.

In Leicestershire, the Annual Report and Business Plans have traditionally also been presented to the Cabinet and the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Presenting the Annual Report enables the Cabinet to comment on the content of the Annual Report and consider whether the report identifies matters that it wishes to address in relation to the effectiveness of safeguarding within the work of the Authority.

Presenting the Strategic Plan and Business Plan enables the Cabinet to have oversight of the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board and the requirement on the Local Authority for contribution to these partnership plans.

438. Corporate Asset Investment Fund Annual Performance Report 2019-2020.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning performance of the Corporate Asset Investment Fund for the 2019-20 financial year. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Rhodes informed members that investments would be closely monitored and were expected to make a significant contribution to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy each year.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Scrutiny Commission as set out in the report be noted;
- b) That the performance of the Corporate Asset Investment Fund for the period April 2019 to March 2020 be welcomed.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

In accordance with the Cabinet's decision in September 2017, this report fulfils the requirement to report annually on the performance of the CAIF to both the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Commission, to demonstrate that the Fund is being managed professionally and prudently.

439. Planning for the Future White Paper (August 2020).

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive which proposed the Council's response to the Government's White Paper "Planning for the Future". A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 12', is filed with these minutes.

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

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Scrutiny Commission be noted;
- b) That the proposals set out in the Planning for the Future White Paper (August 2020), be noted;
- c) That the County Council's response to the consultation on the proposals set out in the White Paper as appended to the report, be approved, subject to (d) below;



- d) That the Chief Executive be authorised, following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Lead Member, to agree a final response to the consultation having regard to the comments made by the Scrutiny Commission.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The White Paper proposes substantial reform to the English town and country planning system. In order to protect the County Council's services and its strategic objectives, it is essential that the White Paper is thoroughly reviewed and a response to government is provided.

The draft response sets out how the proposed revisions to the planning system will impact upon County Council services. It explains where the changes appear acceptable and where amendments are required.

The views of the Cabinet are sought to confirm the County Council's response and inform a discussion by a working group comprising representatives from local planning authorities (city, county, district) plus the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership later in the month.

440. Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

There were no items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

11.00 am - 12.12 pm  
18 September 2020

CHAIRMAN