

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 14 December 2021.

PRESENT

Mrs D. Taylor CC (in the Chair)

Mr. B. L. Pain CC
Mrs. C. M. Radford CC
Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC
Mr. L. Breckon JP CC

Mrs H. L. Richardson CC
Mrs. P. Posnett MBE CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC
Mr. P. Bedford CC

In attendance

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC, Mr, R. Ashman CC, Mrs B. Seaton CC, Mr. T. Parton CC, Mrs M. Wright CC (via MS Teams)

83. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2021 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

84. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

85. 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.

Mr. L. Breckon CC and Mrs L. Richardson CC both declared a personal interest in item 7 (South Leicestershire Local Plan Making Statement of Common Ground) as members of Blaby District Council.

Mr. O. O'Shea CC declared an interest in item 7 (South Leicestershire Local Plan Making Statement of Common Ground) and Item 9 (National Highways Route Strategy Development) as a member of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

Mr R. J. Shepherd CC, Mrs D. Taylor CC and Mrs C. M. Radford CC all declared a personal interest in item 9 (National Highways Route Strategy Development) as members of Charnwood Borough Council.

86. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26 - Proposals for Consultation.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources setting out the proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23 to 2025/26. A copy of the report,

marked 'Agenda Item 4', and a supplementary report with the detailed proposals, which was circulated separately, are filed with these minutes.

Mr Breckon said that this would be a tough MTFs with over £100m of savings needing to be achieved over the next four years alongside the delivery of a £514m Capital scheme to provide highway, transport and school infrastructure.

He added that rising costs and demand for adult and children's social care and SEND provision was placing substantial pressure on the budget and the proposed 3% increase in Council Tax for 2022/23, which included the 1% adult social care levy, was required to help manage the difficult position. The Authority would continue to campaign for Government funding reform which was required in order to break the cycle of service demand and cost pressures having to be met by Council Tax increases and further savings. He urged Leicestershire residents to respond to the Council's consultation exercise.

Mr Rushton said that the proposed 3% increase in Council Tax was necessary in order to meet the significant financial challenges the Council faced and to honour the Conservative Group's Manifesto pledge to protect the most vulnerable. He welcomed the proposed allocation of £28m to support highway maintenance and additional funding to support the commitment to plant 700,000 trees across the County.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy, including the 2022/23 revenue budget and capital programme, be approved for consultation and referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Scrutiny Commission for consideration;
- b) That the Director of Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources, be authorised to –
 - I. agree a response to the draft Local Government Finance Settlement;
 - II. decide on the appropriate course of action for the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Rates Pool in 2022/23 and subject to agreement by all member authorities to implement this;
- c) That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet on 11 February 2022;
- d) That the allocation of £28m of one-off funding for additional highways maintenance, additional resilience for capital schemes, to reduce capital borrowing requirements and provide an initial investment fund for carbon reduction initiatives be approved;
- e) That authority be granted to the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Lead Member for Resources, to approve the use of any additional funding which may be made available by the NHS locally to ease the burden on the health and care system, noting that this is likely to be non-recurrent funding for use in the current financial year.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To enable the County Council to meet its statutory requirements with respect to setting a budget and Council Tax precept for 2022/23 and to provide a basis for the planning of services over the next four years.

To ensure that the County Council's views on the Local Government Finance Settlement are made known to the Government.

To enable the County Council (alongside the pooling partners) to respond to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in respect of the Business Rates Pool within 28 days from the draft Local Government Finance Settlement.

To enable contingency funding no longer required in 2021/22 to be redirected to County Council priorities.

Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland NHS were expected to have significant non-recurrent funding available in the current financial year. Discussions were taking place between the Authority and the NHS regarding the potential to use the money for the benefit of social care services in Leicestershire. The delegation will allow the County Council to agree the best approach with the NHS.

87. Provision of In-House Community Life Choices Services (Day Services)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities concerning the outcome of the Community Life Choices (CLC) Framework procurement and the consultation exercise on proposed changes to the provision of the in-house CLC services. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 5', is filed with these minutes.

Members noted that a petition with over 800 signatures had been submitted to the County Council titled 'Save Roman Way Community Centre', which was accompanied with a number of comments which had been left by some of those who had signed the petition. A copy of the comments is filed with these minutes.

The Cabinet also noted comments submitted by Mr. B. Champion CC, a copy of which is also filed with these minutes.

The Director said that whilst the Council acknowledged the concerns highlighted in some of the consultation responses and comments submitted as part of the 'Save Roman Way Community Centre' petition, the new Framework of external providers would ensure service users were able to continue to access the appropriate support whilst enabling the Council to focus its own in-house services on short term reablement and crisis support.

He added that the Council would carefully manage the transition of the remaining in-house CLC users to alternative provision and contact would be made with families and users to develop personalised transition plans.

Mrs Radford said that the Council had successfully secured the services of many external providers, all of whom had the capacity, personnel and expertise to manage and deliver high quality day care. She reassured service users and their families that they would be able to continue to access the day service provision they expected and rightly deserved.

Mrs Richardson said that the Council acknowledged that change was difficult, especially for the service users concerned, however it was important that the Council ensured they had access to services which were sustainable in the long term. She welcomed the Council's commitment not to close its in-house CLC services until such time when each service user had access to alternative provision which met their needs.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the services offered under the new Community Life Choices (CLC) Framework be noted;
- b) That the outcome of the consultation on the proposed changes to the Council's in-house CLC services be noted;
- c) That the changes to the Council's in-house CLC services be agreed as follows:
 - I. The in-house short breaks services integrate a CLC offer as part of people's short breaks stay at the existing facilities in Melton Mowbray, Wigston and Hinckley;
 - II. That all in-house services providing long term maintenance CLC packages be closed and future provision of care and support for existing and new service users be provided via the CLC Framework;
- d) That it be noted that the existing users of the Council's in-house CLC services will be fully supported in their transition to alternative services.

KEY DECISION:

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The County Council's provision of CLC services has steadily reduced over several years. The COVID-19 pandemic has further affected the demand for Council run services and the Council's capacity to deliver in-house services has been dramatically reduced over the past 18 months as a result of the need to maintain social distancing and other COVID-19 related restrictions, leading to a requirement to consider how best to use the resources available to the Council to deliver the right outcomes for service users.

The Council will re-focus its in-house services on crisis care, short term reablement and enablement, and support for carers through the delivery of a responsive seven day a week service.

Long-term maintenance CLC support can be delivered effectively by external providers. The new CLC Framework started in late November 2021. There are 27 organisations on the new Framework, eight of whom were not on the previous CLC Framework. There are 13 providers who can deliver services for people with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities.

88. Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2022-2024.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services concerning the Council's draft Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy and the proposed

approach to establishing a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 6', is filed with these minutes.

In response to a question concerning the membership of the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, the Director confirmed that the Board would include a representative on behalf of Health providers, as would the Domestic Abuse Act and Funding Officer Group which would be responsible for progressing the priorities agreed by the Board.

Mrs Taylor said it was important the Council and partners ensured its services were the best they could be in order to support victims of domestic abuse and the development of a Domestic Abuse Strategy and the formation of a dedicated Partnership Board would help make this happen.

Mrs Posnett welcomed that the Strategy had a particular focus on early intervention and prevention and recognised the impact domestic abuse had not only on the victim, but also on their wider family.

Mr Rushton said the Strategy and associated partnership working was crucial and aligned with the Conservative Group's Manifesto to protect the most vulnerable.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the consultation responses to date on the draft Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2022 – 2024, be noted;
- b) That the latest version of the draft Strategy, appended to the report, be approved, noting that further amendments may be necessary in order to address any further comments received before the consultation closes on 21 December 2021;
- c) That the Director of Children and Family Services, following consultation with the Lead Member, be authorised to take the necessary steps to finalise and publish the Strategy ahead of the statutory deadline of the 5 January 2022;
- d) That the proposed approach to establishing a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board as set out in the report be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a number of statutory duties on the County Council including the requirement to publish a Domestic Abuse Strategy by 5 January 2022 and to establish a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board.

89. South Leicestershire Local Plan Making Statement of Common Ground (November 2021)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive which sought approval for the County Council to become a signatory to the South Leicestershire Local Plan Making Statement of Common Ground. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 7', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Cabinet agrees to the County Council becoming a signatory to the South Leicestershire Local Plan Making Statement of Common Ground (November 2021);
- b) That the approach by the district councils concerned in relation to the gathering of evidence and in seeking to align activity in the development of their Local Plans via the Statement of Common Ground be welcomed;
- c) That the Chief Executive be authorised to agree the County Council's response to consultations on Statements of Common Ground and to the County Council becoming a signatory to Statement of Common Ground documents with Leicestershire district councils, Leicester City Council and other neighbouring authorities except where these are considered to be of strategic importance to or have significant policy implications for the Authority, in which case the matter will be referred to the Cabinet.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Statement of Common Ground is focused on the preparation of joint evidence for three pieces of key evidence required for the next round of plan making in three district areas. Undertaking the preparation of evidence in this way should significantly assist in understanding the evidence across a 'larger than single district' geographical area and the resultant mitigation strategies which arise to support the delivery of key infrastructure. It is in the best interests of the County Council as a key infrastructure provider for communities in Leicestershire to support this proposed joint approach to be taken by three district councils in the south of the County (Blaby District Council, Harborough District Council and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council).

The Statement of Common Ground is largely a statement of fact and intent and is likely to evolve in the future as work on the joint evidence is undertaken. It will help to demonstrate Duty to Co-operate on these matters by the County Council and the three district councils.

The 2018 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to produce SoCGs to demonstrate agreement on cross-boundary strategic issues. Not all of these will require consideration by members.

90. Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy - Public Consultation.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport concerning a proposed approach to public consultation on the Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

Mr Pain said that the various authorities which formed the Leicestershire Waste Partnership had working well together to develop a draft Strategy which aligned with Government guidance and took account of the revised Environment Act .

RESOLVED:

- a) That the proposed approach to the consultation on the review of the Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy as set out in the report and the appendix, be approved;

- b) That subject to a) above, the Director of Environment and Transport be authorised to finalise the necessary consultation documents;
- c) That it be noted that a further report will be considered by the Cabinet in the summer of 2022 detailing the outcome of the consultation and seeking approval of a final Strategy.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To support the process of a full review of the LMWMS, a public consultation should be undertaken for a period of 12 weeks.

Each authority within the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP), which comprises the County Council, the seven district councils in Leicestershire, and the City Council (as an associate member), is in the process of seeking approval to the approach for the public consultation which forms part of the process of a formal review of a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy as per Government's guidelines. A 12-week consultation period will commence in January 2022.

The documents outlined in paragraph 28 of the report are currently being finalised and are subject to further review. Due to timings (the next Cabinet meeting is not due to take place until February 2022), delegation is given to enable the Director of Environment and Transport to approve the supporting documentation on behalf of the Authority before the consultation begins.

91. National Highways Route Strategies Development.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport concerning National Highway's proposed Route Strategies development process and presented a proposed response as the views of the County Council. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda item 9', is filed with these minutes.

Members noted comments from Mr. Max Hunt CC, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

The Director said that in light of the comments submitted by Mr Hunt, the County Council's proposed response could be amended to include a request that National Highways improve its air and noise pollution monitoring of new and existing schemes.

Mr Rushton said that it was important the County Council continued to push for Government investment across the County's road network. He added that road pollution and noise were matters of considerable concern for many Leicestershire residents and he therefore supported the Director's proposal to amend the response.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the response set out in the Appendix to the report be forwarded to National Highways as the views of the County Council on the proposed Route Strategies development process concerning the Road Investment Strategy 3 (2025 – 2030), subject to it being amended to include a request that National Highways improve its air and noise pollution monitoring of new and existing schemes;

- b) That It be noted that the County Council will continue to work through Midlands Connect (the region's Sub-National Transport Body) to seek to inform decisions to be made by National Highways and the Department for Transport concerning future investment in the County's Strategic Road Network for the Road Investment Strategy Period 3 (2025 to 2030) and beyond.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

An effectively functioning Strategic Road Network (SRN) is important to support Leicester and Leicestershire's economy, enable the area's future growth and to address environmental and climate change challenges. National Highways is currently undertaking a consultation exercise as part of developing its evidence base for this Route Strategies process, and the County Council's response will be submitted as part of that exercise.

As the region's Sub-National Transport Body, Midlands Connect brings together key transport bodies from across the Midlands. Amongst other things, its role is to establish regional priorities for investment in the region's SRN and to work with the Department for Transport and National Highways to achieve their delivery.

92. Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

There were no items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

2.00 - 2.48 pm
14 December 2021

CHAIRMAN