

Cabinet

Excerpt of the Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20 September 2023 in the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillors Davison (Leader), Billiald, Chilvers, J Harrison, King, Kennedy, Sinnott and Wightman.

Also Present: Councillors: Milton (Liberal Democrat Group Observer & Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee), Day (Conservative Group Observer), and Falp (Whitnash Residents Association Group Observer).

29. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

Part 1

(Items upon which a decision by the Council was required)

31. **Policy & Budgetary Framework Procedure Rules**

The Cabinet considered a report from Governance Services which brought forward a proposal to amend the Budget & Policy Framework Procedure Rules to enable changes to these to be made in a timely fashion.

In reviewing the Constitution for the delivery of the new Corporate Strategy, it was identified that significant time was provided from initial proposals to the final document being adopted by Council.

This was not in-line with the desire of the Council to deliver a new Corporate Strategy for the Council to enable the Council to identify and start delivering on its corporate priorities as soon as possible after the election.

Officers were asked to look at the CIPFA nearest neighbours Policy & Budgetary Frameworks for comparison to Warwick District Council. The CIPFA nearest neighbours to Warwick District Council were Rugby, Cheltenham (no less than four weeks), North Hertfordshire District Council, Mid Sussex District Council (six weeks), Test Valley, Maidstone, Charnwood, Chelmsford, Winchester, Huntingdonshire, East Hertfordshire, Tunbridge Wells, Basingstoke and Dene and the former authority of Harrogate. In addition, officers also looked at Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Constitution.

It became clear from this review that most Councils had a time frame defined by the Cabinet (along with draft principles of any Policy with the Policy Framework to be adopted) at the relevant time. The remaining few had a time scale no greater than two months.

With this in mind, and the desire from Council to bring forward a new Corporate Strategy at the earliest opportunity, it was considered reasonable to seek an exemption to the adopted procedure rules, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, with a wider review of these rules being

undertaken as part of the review of the Constitution.

The finalised 2023 to 2030 Corporate Strategy would set out the Council's corporate aims and ambitions for the next seven years, in the same way the current business strategy did. It would underpin every project and initiative developed and implemented by the Council's Service Areas that set out how to deliver services over the next seven years.

The draft strategic goals were currently subject to consultation with, the consultees listed at Appendix 2 to the report. The timetable for the delivery of the new Corporate Strategy was proposed in the table at 1.8 in the report.

The intention was for the final version of the new Strategy to be considered by Cabinet on 2 November for them to make a recommendation to Council on 15 November.

In terms of alternative options, the Cabinet could consider not applying for the exemption to the Policy & Budgetary Framework Procedure Rules but this would have delayed the delivery of the new Corporate strategy. This though, could have allowed for further and wider community engagement in the proposed strategy. That said, the Corporate Strategy was an expression of the priorities of a new administration which had only recently been elected via significant amount of community participation.

The Cabinet could seek to amend the Policy & Budgetary Framework Procedure Rules at this time, however as reported to Cabinet in July 2023 there would be a review of the Constitution being undertaken and it was advised the Procedure Rules were reviewed as part of this.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee held a good discussion on a draft Corporate Strategy for this Council.

The Committee considered that the Corporate Strategy report (in its draft stage) was difficult to scrutinise as a "Strategy" document because the document did not have either the structure or framework to understand the direction the Council wished to take, and whether the areas of focus listed in the report would help to achieve that. It made the following points that it wished Cabinet to bring more detail to in the Corporate Strategy:

1. The Committee encouraged Cabinet to "be brave" in setting out what it wished to achieve, particularly around climate ambitions.
2. There was a need for "smart objectives" showing what the Council intended to do, building on what it had already achieved in respect to its aims and there should be an indication of a timeframe.
3. The strategy should focus more on people and the different segments of people living or coming into the District such as new communities, visitors to the District, people who work here. It should seek to be "People first".
4. A more holistic view on finances should be taken, not just the profit and loss but also the balance sheet.

The Committee suggested that how the Council intended to support new communities, local enterprise and town centre regeneration should be added to the Strategy.

Parish Councils should be added to the list of consultees.

In response to the comments from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding the strategy focusing more on people, Councillor Davison stated that this was a point well made; if the vision was to stay the same as it currently was, that Warwick District be a great place to live – ie residents, work – including people who might commute, and visit, these were distinct groups of people which perhaps had not been considered enough. It was important that when the strategy was next looked at this would need to be thought about.

Councillor Davison also clarified that the Head of Governance & Monitoring Officer would email Parish/Town Councils directly as opposed to via the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC), and that Warwickshire Wildlife Trust would also be included as part of the Consultees. He then proposed the report as laid out.

Recommended to Council that decisions outside of the Policy & Budgetary Framework Procedure Rules can be taken: to not provide 5 months notification of the initial proposals and timeline for adoption of the new Corporate Strategy; and the timeline as set out at Paragraph 1.8 of the report, be approved.

Resolved that

- (1) the Consultation work underway on the draft strategic goals as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, with the partners listed at Appendix 3 to the report, be noted; and
- (2) officers' work in comparing the Warwick District Council Policy & Budgetary Framework with its CIPFA nearest neighbours and asks officers to be mindful of this when reviewing the Constitution, be noted.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Davison)

38. **Public and Press**

Resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Minutes Numbers	Paragraph Numbers	Reason
39,40	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

39. **Associated Costs for the Purchase of Fifty One s106 Dwellings at The Asps, Banbury Road, Warwick**

The recommendations in the report were approved.

40. **Associated Costs for the Purchase of Twenty s106 Dwellings at Thickthorn, Kenilworth**

The recommendations in the report were approved.

(The meeting ended at 7.00pm)