

Cabinet

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 May 2022 in the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

Present: Councillors Bartlett, Cooke, Falp, Grainger, Hales, Matecki, and Tracey.

Also Present: Councillors: Boad (Liberal Democrat Group Observer), Davison (Green Group Observer), Mangat (Labour Group Observer), and Milton (Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee).

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Day and Rhead.

In the Leader's absence, Deputy Leader Councillor Hales chaired the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 20 April and 11 May 2022 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Part 2

(Items upon which a decision by the Council was not required)

4. **Programme Team (Green Spaces) – Resourcing Delivery of Live Projects**

The Cabinet considered a report from the Programme Team which set out the anticipated resources required to complete delivery of projects already commenced by the Programme Team. The report focused on bringing three key Council projects within the programme to a point where previous investment in their development could be realised and further planned delivery could be reassessed.

The recommendation to agree the funding to extend existing posts allowed for business continuity to finish delivering live projects to a key milestone point. This would enable project delivery without interruption to current programmes or incurring additional costs due to a break in programme.

The recommendation to support the Newbold Comyn establishment related to learning gained during its early implementation and would support the "bedding in" of the facilities and assessment for their ongoing maintenance for future operation.

In terms of alternative options, in order to complete already committed work based on the elements of Table 1 in the report, the following options were considered:

- Cease project activity in line with staff resource availability. This option would be available at break points in project activity but were it to be used for the Table 1 in the report, items of work at the point staff resource would be lost, and the cost and reputational damage to the Council would be key factors for not pursuing this.
- Extend the current time periods for staff provision to match the project completion needs over the next three years i.e. until the end of 25/26 financial year. This option was the one proposed, as it met the current project needs. It would enable the completion of committed key Council projects to the completion of key milestones, maximising the benefit of spend already accrued to commence them but allowing for a break point to review the continuation of any further works.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

The Group Observers supported the report but noted that construction and material costs were increasing and as such the Council should “keep an eye” on the viability of projects.

Councillor Grainger then proposed the report as laid out.

Resolved that

- (1) the release £350,000 from the General Fund Balance to provide funding to resource the projects identified, be agreed;
- (2) the release £119,000 from the General Fund Balance, be agreed so that there is a co-ordinated and adequately resourced launch to, and operation of, the cycle trail facilities at Newbold Comyn;
- (3) a review be undertaken of the commitment of the Programme Team including pipeline workloads in April 2025 to establish what future resources will be required in the medium and longer term, at that time; and
- (4) ongoing assessment be undertaken of the operational needs of the cycling facility to establish the future resources required in its first 18 months of operation.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Grainger)
Forward Plan Reference 1,286

5. **Levelling Up Fund Round 2 – Decision to Submit**

The Cabinet considered a report from the Chief Executive which sought approval to agree to delegate authority for the Decision to Submit the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 when it was complete.

The Levelling Up Fund was another important potential source of funding that could be deployed to support the overall Transformation Framework for Leamington's town centre.

The Governments Levelling Up agenda was focused on reducing regional and local inequalities that unfairly held back communities across the UK. The Levelling Up White Paper was published on the 2 February 2022 and set out the simplified approaches to funding across the Towns Fund, Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Warwick District Council had already successfully secured funding via the Towns Fund in the form of the Future High Streets Fund to a total of £10M for improvements across Royal Leamington Spa's town centre. The decision was taken not to submit to the Round 1 applications for the Levelling Up Fund in 2021 given that the fund was competitive and Leamington was a Tier 3 area (lowest priority) and so any projects submitted needed to be very robust to counter this.

The Leamington Transformation Board was established in January 2022 and was now overseeing the production of a Transformation Framework for the town centre with the intention of co-ordinating projects to be ready to submit them for these Government funding opportunities. A review of current projects identified two projects that were progressed enough and had enough supporting evidence to put forward for the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 application due in July 2022. The Leamington Transformation Board had recently been reviewing projects underway across the town centre in order to establish which projects were progressed far enough to be able to meet the criteria for consideration in a Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bid.

Two projects were sufficiently progressed, and they were the Bath Street Area Improvements currently being progressed by Warwickshire County Council's (WCC) highways department using WDC Community Infrastructure Levy funds, and the Grand Union Canal Towpath Improvements being progressed by the Canal and River Trust (CRT). Both these projects sat well under the Levelling Up Funds Transport theme and would deliver both connectivity improvements and air quality/environmental improvements in one of the more deprived areas of the town.

The timescale to prepare the bid was incredibly tight. WDC commissioned the same support consultancy that assisted with the successful Future High Street Fund bid and work was underway at a pace, working closely with WCC colleagues and CRT to gather together all the required supporting information.

The team believed they could complete the submission in time and a

delegation of the Decision to Submit would assist in approving the submission in time for the 6 July 2022 deadline.

Given the tight timescales, this delegation was the best way to ensure the Decision to Submit could be taken quickly and efficiently to support the imminent submission.

An addendum circulated prior to the meeting advised of additional recommendation:

"That Cabinet delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader, to submit the UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan to The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and agrees that the Head of Finance is authorised to make the necessary financial arrangements to ensure that the plan is submitted on time."

The reason for this additional recommendation was that the Government had published the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) prospectus and provisional allocations. The conditional allocation for Warwick District Council was just below £3.5million over the period 2022 – 2025. Lead authorities (of which Warwick District Council was one) would access their allocation by submitting a local investment plan by 1 August 2022. Each investment plan needed to contain the local outputs and outcomes that were set out for the fund as part of the prospectus.

The timescale for submission was very tight, with details of the Fund only recently released, and did not allow for a report to be submitted to the 6 July Cabinet meeting as the investment plan would still be evolving. A delegation was therefore sought; however, full consultation would take place with the Leader, and it was anticipated that the Leader would in turn consult with the other Group Leaders.

At Appendix A to the report was further details of the UKSPF and comprehensive information could be found at the DLUHC website.

The Group Observers supported the report. The Labour Group Observer suggested that air quality reports should be undertaken at the canal side.

Councillor Cooke agreed with the Labour Group Observer and suggested that it be mentioned to the Chief Executive. He then proposed the report as laid out, including the additional recommendation provided in the addendum.

Resolved that

- (1) authority be delegated to the Head of Development and the Portfolio Holders for Planning and Place, and Economy and Culture, to make the Decision to Submit the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 submission by the deadline of Wednesday 6th July 2022 as set out in paragraphs 1.2.1 to 1.2.7 in the report; and

- (2) authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader, to submit the UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan to The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the Head of Finance is authorised to make the necessary financial arrangements to ensure that the plan is submitted on time, be agreed.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Cooke)

6. 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
7, 8	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Part 1

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

7. Milverton Homes Ltd Business Plan

The Cabinet considered a confidential report from Housing Services.

The recommendations in the report were approved.

8. Associated Costs for the Purchase of 60, Section 106 Dwellings at Birmingham Road, Hatton, Warwickshire

The Cabinet considered a confidential report from Housing Services. The recommendations in the report were approved.

(The meeting ended at 6.30pm)

CHAIRMAN
6 July 2022