

# DRAFT

The Cabinet met at Shire Hall,  
Warwick on the 16th September,  
2004

Present

**Cabinet Members:**

Councillors Ian Bottrill (Chair (Policy and Governance)  
Martin Brassington (Supporting  
Communities),  
Ken Browne (Transport, Environment  
and Rural Affairs),  
Richard Grant (Schools)  
John Haynes (Public Information and  
Safety),  
Mick Jones (Young People, Lifelong  
Learning and Families)  
Tim Naylor (Resources Management)  
Raj Randev (Adult Services).  
June Tandy (Regeneration and  
Planning)  
Bransby Thomas (Performance and  
Best Value)

**Non-Voting Invitees:**

Councillors Alan Farnell (Leader  
of the Conservative Group)  
Jerry  
Roodhouse  
(Leader of the  
Liberal  
Democrat  
Group)

**Other Members:**

Councillors: David Booth, Ron  
Cockings,  
Jose Compton, Peter Fowler,  
Marion Haywood, Martin  
Heatley,  
Richard Hobbs, Chris Holman,  
Susan Juned, Helen McCarthy,  
Chris Saint, Izzi Seccombe,  
Bob Stevens,

### **(1) Apologies**

None.

### **(2) Minutes of the Meeting held on the 26th August, 2004 and Matters Arising.**

Resolved:-

That the non-exempt minutes of the Cabinet's 26th August, 2004 meeting, be approved.

There were no matters arising

### **(3) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

Councillor Ian Bottrill declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 24 relating to the Integrated Community Equipment Services.

Councillor Susan Juned declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6 - Climate Change and an Energy Strategy for Warwickshire

Councillor Richard Hobbs declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 3 – Extending the River Avon Navigation.

Councillor Jose Compton declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 2 Improving Access to Council Services as a member of the Warwick District Council.

David Carter, County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive, declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 23 because his son attends North Leamington School.

### **(4) Requests for Discussion of En Bloc Items**

It was agreed that items 7 and 11 would be discussed before decisions were taken .

## **2. Improving Access to Council Services - Towards an Integrated One Stop Shop in Warwick District**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Libraries, Heritage and Trading Standards .

The report built on the Strategic Plan for Warwickshire and proposed a partnership with Warwick District Council to develop One-Stop-Shops to improve public access.

Councillor Ken Browne indicated that he believed many of the Council's services were already accessible through existing facilities. He expressed concern about the resource implications of the overall proposal for One-Stop-Shops and suggested that alternatives should be examined such as the provision of free phones in libraries.

Members agreed that there would be improvements to the Council's services to the community as a result of giving access to services in a variety of ways.

During further discussion various points were raised, including:-

- (a) The principles had been considered at a previous members seminar
  - (b) There would be a higher profile in the town centres
  - (c) Similar facilities were also needed in more socially deprived areas
  - (d) It was intended that 80% of the processes made publicly accessible through the shops would be total processes.
  - (e) The current proposal was for a pilot project working with the Warwick District Council who had already agreed to part fund the project and provide staffing.
  - (f) Partnership arrangements were important
  - (g) Warwick District Council was currently the only District/Borough Council which had agreed to participate in the project but it was likely that all other District/Borough Councils would evolve towards One-Stop-Shops.
  - (h) The proposed site at Lillington would be particularly beneficial.
  - (i) In view of the officer view mentioned on the Agenda Management Sheet to the report it was suggested that the recommended management arrangements should be revisited, in particular having regard to the possible utilisation of the Warwickshire-On-Line Partnership Board.
  - (j) There would be benefits in making provision for an exit [strategy](#)
- It was then Resolved:-

(1) That the overall structure and principles of the pilot project are agreed, subject to one of the One-Stop-Shop Sites being located at Lillington

(2) That Programme and Project Boards are established as set out in Section 11 of the report, subject to (6) below.

(3) That each Council and the Warwickshire-On-Line Partnership Board receive regular progress reports.

(4) That Cabinet nominate four Members to the Programme Board (2 Labour, 1 Conservative, 1 Liberal Democrat), subject to (6) below.

(5) That a capital allocation of £215K be made for the pilot stage of the project commencing in this financial year.

(6) That the [Chief Executive](#) gives further consideration to the management structure and in particular the possible utilisation of the existing

### **3. Extending the River Avon Navigation**

The report of the Chair of the Environmental and Rural Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Chief Executive and Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy was considered.

The Environment and Rural Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 19th July 2004, considered a report by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy, following extensive consultation on the proposal by others to open up the River Avon between Stratford on Avon and the Grand Union Canal at Warwick or Leamington Spa to navigation. The Committee recommended Cabinet, unanimously, that the County Council does not support the principle of opening up the River Avon between Stratford-upon-Avon and the Grand Union Canal at Warwick or Leamington Spa to navigation.

During the discussion it was suggested that arrangements should be made to promote the success of this scrutiny exercise.

The Cabinet was advised of the views of the Inland Waterways Association, which had not been received by all members. In particular the Association was of the opinion that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations had been based on perceived detail whereas no quantitative detail had been submitted by the Association. The Association suggested that the Cabinet should not object to any future details which would be subjected to professional scrutiny.

Councillor Marion Haywood, a local member, urged the Cabinet not to support the principle of extending the River Avon navigation. The Cabinet felt that the weight of opposition to the proposal had been considerable and supported the conclusions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved:-

That the County Council does not support the principle of opening up the River Avon between Stratford upon Avon and the Grand Union Canal at Warwick or Leamington Spa to navigation.

### **4. Adult and Community Learning Post Inspection Action Plan**

The Cabinet considered the report of the County Education Officer.

The LEA's Adult and Community Learning provision had been inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate in April 2004. The Inspectorate (ALI)

required that the Post Inspection Action Plan addressed all judgements made in the inspection report including both strengths and weaknesses to ensure continuous improvement and the raising of the quality of provision. The report briefly summarised the main outcomes of the Inspection and appended the Post Inspection Action Plan for endorsement by the Cabinet.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet notes the main outcomes of the recent ALI Inspection of Adult and Community Learning and formally endorse the Post Inspection Action Plan subject to such amendments as it thinks fit.

## **5. Summary and Implications of the Audit Commission Report "Education Funding"**

The Cabinet considered the report of the County Education Officer

The report summarised the findings of the Audit Commission document "Education Funding", compared its findings with current practice in Warwickshire, and suggested a response to the Commission and DfES.

During the discussion Eric Wood, the County Education Officer expressed concern at the likely future spending of schools the amount of schools budgets not being used within expected time scales and the lack of control that could be exercised by the Council. He stressed that the County Council had good information about schools budgets.

It was then Resolved:-

That Cabinet note the findings of the Audit Commission's report on education funding and approve the request for clarification from the Commission and the Department for Education (DfES) on the tension between more challenging monitoring and a "light touch" approach with schools.

## **6. Climate Change and an Energy Strategy for Warwickshire**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy.

Concerns about the impacts of climate change, and how we generate energy, had led to the preparation of a national Energy Policy and a Regional Energy Strategy. The report proposed the development of an Energy Strategy for Warwickshire in association with others including members of the Local Strategic Partnership and the adoption by the County Council of the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change to make a clear public statement of the Council's intent on these issues.

Councillor Ken Brown suggested that, as the Council had debated climate change about two years ago, it would not be necessary at this time for the Council to revisit the issues.

In response to comments from Councillor Alan Farnell, it was agreed that the Warwickshire District and Borough Councils should be referred to specifically in the resolution.

Following comments from Councillor Bransby Thomas on the regional aspects of the proposed strategy it was Resolved:-

(1) That the County Council leads on the development of an Energy Strategy for Warwickshire working together with the Warwickshire Sustainability Commission, the District and Borough Councils and others within and beyond the County Strategic Partnership.

(2) That the County Council signs up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change.

## **7. Independent Review of the Community Legal Service -Consultation**

The Cabinet considered the report of the County Solicitor & Assistant Chief Executive which related to the response of the County Council to the consultation by the Department of Constitutional Affairs.

During the debate, members felt that the recommended response should be strengthened in particular in relation to:-

- The development of CLS policies with little consultation/engagement of partners.
- The difficulties experienced with the provision of a service caused by the rules and regulations surrounding the LSC budget and changes in support arrangements for the partnership.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet agrees the recommended response to the Department of Constitutional Affairs subject to amendments being made by the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive having regard to the comments made during the meeting.

## **8. Social Services Annual Performance Review**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Social Care and Health which outlined the findings from the Social Services Department Annual Review Meeting (ARM) with the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

Resolved:-

(1) That Cabinet notes the report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection regarding

the Performance Review of Warwickshire Social Services 2004.

(2) That Cabinet agrees the publication of the report and that it be copied to the Council's appointed auditor and to NHS and Education partners.

## **9. Forecast of Available Capital Resources 2005/2006 to 2007/008**

The report of the County Treasurer was considered.

The report provided members with a forecast of the likely level of capital resources available for 2005/2006 to 2007/2008 that can be used as a basis for developing the capital programme.

Resolved:-

(1) To note the likely level of capital resources available for 2005/2006 to 2007/2008,

(2) To recommend the report to the political groups for consideration when preparing their budget resolutions for 2005/2006,

(3) To support the issuing of guideline limits for bids for new capital schemes in addition to the government guidelines of £10 million a year, and

(4) To support, in principle, the earmarking of capital receipts for reducing debt unless Cabinet/Council have reserved receipts for other purposes/capital projects.

## **10. Broadband Network Design & Edge Site Funding Issues**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of CAMS which related to a proposal to change the technology used by some edge sites for connection to the corporate broadband network and to meet the cost from the e.Government budget.

Resolved:-

(1) That Cabinet notes the need to replace the corporate broadband network EPS9 edge site circuits with LAN Extension Services where possible, and Learning Stream circuits where not possible

(2) That Cabinet approves the proposal to meet the additional cost involved from the e.Government budget

## **11. Inspection Report: Coventry & Warwickshire 14-19 Area Inspection**

Report of the County Education Officer was considered.

The paper reported the very positive outcome of the inspection of 14-19 education and training in Coventry and Warwickshire carried out by Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate.

Members expressed appreciation to the Council's officers for the work being undertaken.

It was then Resolved:-

(1) That the Cabinet welcomes the report of the area-wide Inspection of 14-19 education and training in Coventry & Warwickshire.

(2) That a further report on the Action Plan following the Inspection be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet and the Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

## **12. Public Library Position Statements**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) required the submission of Public Library Position Statements. The elected member with the main responsibility for the library service was required to sign the statement to indicate that it has political backing within the authority.

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet approve the Public Library Position Statements for onward submission to DCMS.

## **13. Smallholdings Rent Moratorium Relaxation**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Vice Chair of the Environment and Rural Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Chief Executive and the Director of Property Services.

The Environment and Rural Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 27th July 2004 considered a report that proposed a relaxation of the present smallholdings rent moratorium, depending upon the economic circumstances of each farm. The report was referred from Cabinet, on the 24th June 2004, for further consideration by this Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Committee's recommendation was set out below..

Resolved:-

That the Cabinet authorises the Director of Property Services to serve rent-increase notices to increase the rent of existing tenants on a selective basis with effect from Michaelmas (29th September) 2005, dependent on the prevailing economic circumstances of each farm.

#### **14. Irrecoverable Debts**

The report of the Director of Social Care and Health was considered.

Authority was requested to write off 13 irrecoverable debts, which the County Solicitor had advised he was unable to pursue any further.

Resolved:-

That the 13 debts amounting to £32,000.76 be written off as irrecoverable.

#### **15. Highway Maintenance Plan 2004/2005 and Five Year List of Structural Maintenance Schemes**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy.

The report provided information about the highway maintenance work proposed in 2004/05, and other sites where structural maintenance work will be required in the future. The views of Area Committees were also given.

Resolved:-

That Cabinet approves the Highway Maintenance Plan 2004/05.

#### **16. Any Other Items**

There were no urgent items to consider.

#### **17. Reports Containing Exempt Information**

Resolved:-

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of confidential and exempt information as defined in paragraphs 7, 8, 9 and 12 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **18. Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on the 26th August, 2004 and Matters**

## **Arising.**

Resolved:-

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 26th August, 2004 be approved as a correct record and the minutes be signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising

### **19. Proposed Acquisition of an interest relating to Phase 2 Centenary Business Centre**

The joint report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy and the Director of Property Services was considered

The Cabinet had previously approved the development of Phase 3 of Centenary Business Centre.

The Cabinet considered the proposed acquisition of land.

### **20. Land at Paynes Lane, Rugby**

The Joint Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy and the Director of Property Services was considered.

The Cabinet considered the future of a parcel of land at Paynes Lane, Rugby, which was surplus to requirements.

### **21. Coventry Law Centre**

The Cabinet considered the report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive relating to a proposal by Coventry Law Centre to establish law centre services in Warwickshire

### **22. Wolston: South Lodge Farm**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Property Services about the tenancy.

### **23. Report of the Chair of the Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

David Carter, County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive, left the room for this item.

The report of the Chair of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee was considered.

The Cabinet considered several recommendations relating to the following matters:

- o a protocol for the disposal of property at less than best value in certain circumstances.

- a proposal for quarterly reviews of Departments' accommodation requirements.
- the existing occupancy of the Montague Road Complex and Wedgnoek House, Warwick.
- and certain other property matters

#### **24. Integrated Community Equipment Services (ICES) – Letting of Contract**

Councillor Ian Bottrill left the room for this item. The Chair was taken by Councillor June Tandy.

The Cabinet considered the letting of a contract for provision of an integrated community equipment service.

#### **25. Avon Valley School**

The Cabinet considered the Joint report of the County Education Officer, County Treasurer and County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive which related to insurance and building issues following the fire at Avon Valley School.

The Cabinet rose at 3.50 p.m.