

Contact Officer: Andrea Woodside

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CABINET

Tuesday 15th December 2020

Present: Councillor Shabir Pandor (Chair)
Councillor Viv Kendrick
Councillor Musarrat Khan
Councillor Naheed Mather
Councillor Carole Pattison
Councillor Cathy Scott
Councillor Graham Turner
Councillor Paul Davies

Observers: Councillor Martyn Bolt
Councillor David Hall
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Alison Munro
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje

Apologies: Councillor Peter McBride

318 Membership of Cabinet

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor McBride.

319 Interests

No interests were declared.

320 Admission of the Public

It was noted that all agenda items would be considered in public session.

321 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

322 Public Question Time

Cabinet received the following question;

Question from Andy Leader

“There is a longstanding and ongoing problem on a number of Holmfirth public rights of way caused by intensive and inappropriate use by 4x4 vehicles and motorbikes.

This vehicle use is severely damaging both the unsurfaced rights of way and adjacent private land, causing a nuisance to non-motorised users and degrading the environment. The routes worst affected are Ramsden Road, Kiln Bent Road, Rake Head Lane and Old Gate.

Can the Council protect these vulnerable rights of way by closing these routes to vehicles with Traffic Regulation Orders?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Mather).

323 Questions by Elected Members (Oral Questions)

Cabinet received the following questions from members of the Council;

Question from Councillor Bolt

"At an earlier Cabinet meeting today, Councillor McBride agreed with me that enforcement action should be taken against developers who do not conform to the terms of the planning permission and deliver everything agreed. Could I ask that Cabinet will also agree with me and take action against the applicant of planning application 2003/95052, the applicant being Kirklees Metropolitan Council, and the application being the construction of a shared use footpath, walking and cycle route from Dewsbury through to Huddersfield. The area in particular is in the Dalton ward between Helme Lane and Bog Green Lane where what is delivered on the ground does not reflect what is in the plans. They have failed to deliver in accordance with plans, and also a planning condition on this stipulates that there should be an annual usage survey and an annual highways survey. We haven't had any highway safety surveys done at each of the road crossings and the route has not been delivered in conformity with the planning application approved, so it would seem hypocritical for Kirklees to be taking action against private developers whilst blatantly ignoring the planning conditions itself. So, will you ensure that your staff deliver the scheme as originally approved?"

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council.

Question from Councillor D Hall

"Leeds Council are to empty all their household bins between Christmas and New Year, as are Calderdale and Bradford, and Wakefield is prioritising grey bin collections. In Kirklees there are to be no household bin collections between Christmas and New Year. Do you think this is an acceptable service to people who pay their Council tax?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Mather) and the Cabinet Member for Culture and Greener Kirklees (Councillor Davies).

Question from Councillor Bolt

"In line with all the other West Yorkshire authorities, Kirklees has signed up to the West Yorkshire Carbon Emission Reduction Pathway. Some of the key targets of this are to reduce private car travel by at least 21%, increase travel by walking by 78%, increase travel by bicycle by approx. 2000%, as well as bus and rail targets. Where are the targets that Kirklees have adopted, how much of these West

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Yorkshire targets will Kirklees absorb and what is being done to increase cycling in Kirklees by 2000%?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Culture and Environment (Councillor Davies).

Question from Councillor Munro

“Advertising plays a key role in the climate crisis by fuelling demand for high carbon products such as diesel and petrol vehicles, SUVs, airline flights, as well as promoting fossil fuel companies like Shell and BP. We have declared a climate emergency and we must therefore make sure that we don’t allow advertisements promoting these kind of things to appear on our advertising billboards and screens that are located on council owned land across Kirklees. Additionally passenger transport executors often control advertising policies regarding buses, bus stops and rail so it’s vital that we put an end to any advertising that doesn’t accord with the Council’s climate change policy. I’m therefore asking today, will you adopt a low carbon advertising policy across Kirklees?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Culture and Environment (Councillor Davies).

Question from Councillor D Hall

“With regards the perennial recurrence of the poor bins service, can I ask the Leader, if you are re-elected as an administration in May, can we expect a similar service next Christmas?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council.

Question from Councillor Bolt

“With regards to Christmas and bank holiday working hours and the IT service desk, this is obviously a section of the Council that has been put under extreme pressure since February this year, with more staff than ever home working and the excellent support that we as Members get from them when we have problems. I notice that the IT staff will be finishing work at lunchtime on Christmas Eve, returning on Tuesday 29th, so can I ask that the Cabinet join me in thanking our IT service for their dedication and hard work during this period, for the support that they give not only to elected members but to everyone in the Council in enabling them to work from home and to continue to run the Council. Will you join me in thanking them and wishing them all the best for the forthcoming season?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council.

324

Half Yearly Monitoring on Treasury Management Activities 2020-2021

Cabinet received a report which set out an update on the Council’s treasury management function and half yearly monitoring on treasury management activities for 2020/2021. The report advised that external investments averaged £53.4m during the period at an average rate of 0.41% and that investments had ranged from

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a peak of £144.1m in April and a low of £15.0m in June, whereby the high investment balance in April was due to receiving a Covid 19 support grant of £12.2m and business grant relief grant of £11.7m on 27 March 2020, and business rates of £113.7m on 1 April 2020.

Cabinet noted that balances had been invested in line with the approved treasury management strategy, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, in instant access accounts or short term deposits. The report advised that in-year treasury management performance had been in line with treasury management prudential indicators, as set out at Appendix 4.

The report provided a breakdown of detail in regards to (i) economic context (ii) investment performance (iii) borrowing performance (iv) revenue budget monitoring (v) prudential indicators and (vi) future treasury management strategy.

Cabinet noted that the treasury management strategy would continue to maintain a relatively low risk strategy giving priority to security and liquidity, and as such, invest an average of around £20m externally in relatively short term liquid investments. The report advised that any remaining balances, net of the investment in the Local Authorities Pooled Investment Fund, would be used internally, offsetting borrowing requirements.

RESOLVED - That the Half Yearly Monitoring on Treasury Management Activities 2020/21 be noted and that the report be submitted to the meeting on Council on 13 January 2021.

325 Colne Valley Place Partnership - Proposal to provide responsive mental health and wellbeing interventions for young people and families

(Under the provision of Council Procedure Rule 36(1) Cabinet received a representation from Councillor Marchington).

Cabinet received a report which sought approval of £101,000 from the Place Partnership mental health themed budget to provide a responsive counselling support mental health intervention for young people and families in the areas of Golcar, Lindley and Colne Valley, and also the delivery of a Therapeutic Forest School Pilot for primary school children. The report advised that a pilot project of counselling support had been undertaken during the summer to provide a service for young people aged 11-18, and that feedback had been positive.

The report set out details of the proposal to fund a locally delivered intervention which would replicate the benefits of the pilot scheme and provide young people with the support that they require at an early stage to attempt issues from escalating and requiring more specialist intervention. Cabinet noted that aims of the proposal included a reduction in referrals to CAMHS, supporting young people with emotional resilience, and improving overall mental and physical wellbeing. The report advised that the allocation of £98,000 was being sought for the provision of this counselling support provision and that, additionally, the allocation of a further £3,000 was sought for the provision of an outdoor play based project (Therapeutic Forest School) for primary school aged children who may be experiencing anxiety, stress, loneliness or isolation. Cabinet noted that the allocation of £3,000 would fund 6 sessions at £410

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per session, plus £540 to cover any potential transport costs incurred to enable families to have access to the sessions.

The report advised that, subject to approval, a procurement exercise would take place in respect of the counselling support service to commission a host organisation to be able to commence service delivery as early as February 2021, and that, in regards to the forest school project, liaison would take place with local schools to identify ten young people who would benefit from the pilot and that the sessions would commence in January 2021.

RESOLVED - That approval be given to £101,000 from the Place Partnership Mental Health Theme Budget to provide a responsive mental health intervention and a therapeutic forest school pilot in the Golcar, Lindley and Colne Valley wards.

326 **Final Report of Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel on Elective Home Education**

(Under the provision of Council Procedure Rule 36(1) Cabinet received a representation from Councillor Marchington).

Cabinet received the final report of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel on Elective Home Education, which had been formed in November 2017 following an increased number of home educated children in Kirklees, which reflected a trend a local and national trend, and therefore identified a need to review relevant protocols and support provided to parents with the aim of developing the offer available to ensure that families are supported to achieve the best possible outcomes for home educated children. The report advised that, between December 2017 and December 2019, the Panel had gathered evidence from relevant stakeholders and considered non statutory government guidance, prior to completing the final report which set out its findings and seven recommendations, including the possibility of providing a centre to sit exams and establishing a dedicated elective home education team.

Cabinet welcomed the content of the Scrutiny Panel's final report, along with the recommendations and appended action plan, and it was noted that updates on progress would be submitted to the Children's Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED - That the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel, and the responses as set out in the Action Plan, be noted.

327 **Amendments to Civil Penalty Policy for Housing related offences**

Cabinet received a report which set out proposed amendments to the civil penalty policy for housing related offences. The report advised that Cabinet had approved a policy to be used in determining appropriate levels of civil penalties on 2 October 2018 but that further housing legislation had since been introduced and that the revisions to the policy would consolidate all existing housing offences where civil penalties could be considered, and take account of legislation, guidance and case law.

The updated policy, which was appended to the considered report, was intended to deter and prevent the renting out of unsafe and substandard accommodation and providing clear and transparent guidance to promote high quality standards and practices within the private sector. Cabinet noted that, for offences committed under

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the Housing and Planning Act 2016, raising the level of civil penalty to £30,000 was considered important in achieving this.

The report advised that a communications and publicity campaign would take place to outline the legislative changes and potential consequences of non-compliance.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That amendments to the Civil Penalty Policy for Housing Related Offences, as attached at Appendix A of the considered report, be approved.
- 2) That future minor amendments to the Policy be delegated to the Service Director (Growth and Housing) in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder.

328 Local authority COVID Winter Grant scheme

(Under the provision of Council Procedure Rule 36(1) Cabinet received a representation from Councillor D Hall).

Cabinet gave consideration to a report which set out details of the local authority covid winter grant scheme, and proposals to provide assistance with food utilities and other essential supplies, in accordance with guidance issues by Government. The report advised that the scheme aimed to provide support to families with children and other vulnerable households and individuals from December 2020, and cover the period until the end of March 2021.

Cabinet noted that work would be undertaken with services and partners to identify recipients through the local welfare provision scheme and that the approach would take advantage of existing administration and delivery mechanisms, ensuring the most appropriate and timely interventions. The report advised that services would include the provision of food parcels, essential supplies and food vouchers, and the provision of winter clothing.

The report advised that the funding was a one off contribution for the 2020-2021 financial year, made under Section 31 of Local Government Act 2003.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That a sum equivalent to £30 per child eligible for free school meals be provided to schools and colleges in order that they can provide a voucher for the Christmas period.
- 2) That a sum equivalent to £15 per child eligible for free school meals be provided to schools and colleges in order that they can provide a voucher for the February half term period.
- 3) That the balance of funding available, estimated to be £697,500, be allocated to the Local Welfare Provision budget to support additional food, fuel and other essentials, in accordance with the grant determination and guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 4) That a further report be submitted to Cabinet in early 2021 to consider proposals for a Holiday Activities and Food Programme for 2021, following

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confirmation of Government funding support through the Spending Review 2020 announcement on 25 November 2020.

329 **Proposal for the Early Help offer for Children Young People and Families**

Cabinet received a report which set out the progress made pursuant to a report to Cabinet in 2017 which had set out proposals for the redesign of early support service delivery. The report also provided information on the 'Early Years and Beyond' Summit that had been held in January 2020 in order to engage with partners to shape the development of an integrated early support offer for children and families.

The report explained that the proposed family hub model, which was illustrated within the report, aimed to build upon existing relationships, and place and community assets, while focusing upon local residents and the needs of the area, and would be based around the geography of (i) Dewsbury and Mirfield (ii) Batley and Spen (iii) Huddersfield and (iv) Kirklees Rural, with each having a designated children's centre building.

Cabinet noted that the proposed model offered the opportunity for children and young people to be involved with their communities and to develop parent participation in local areas. The report advised that a series of engagement activities were taking place and that a subsequent report setting out the findings would be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet, prior to an anticipated implementation of the model from April 2021.

RESOLVED - That the proposal for the Early Help Offer for Children, Young People and Families be noted and endorsed, and that a further report be submitted to a future Cabinet meeting setting out the findings of the engagement exercise and the finalised proposals for the Family Hubs model.

330 **COVID 19 Community Champions Grant Scheme**

Cabinet gave consideration to a report which sought approval to establish a Community Champions grant scheme to support the Community Champions Fund, which would provide a range of funding options in order to enable communities to provide additional capacity, and support the existing integrated Covid 19 response. The report advised that, subsequent to the Government announcement in October 2020, that up to £25m funding would be available for communities that had suffered disproportionately during Covid 19, via a new scheme called 'Community Champions', Kirklees had been identified as one of the areas to apply for this funding due to its diversity of communities and range of complex and individual needs. The report advised that, in order to deliver the outcomes of the scheme within Kirklees, a Community Champions grant scheme would be established in order to ensure that funding could be provided to support those areas and communities facing the greatest challenges.

Cabinet were asked to approve the establishment of the grant scheme, the eligibility criteria for applicants, and the indicative grant amounts to be awarded. It was noted that, subject to approval, the Council launch the scheme as soon as practicable and would promote detailed scheme guidance and application forms whilst keeping the operation of the scheme under review.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That approval be given to the establishment of the Community Champions Grant, including the proposed eligibility criteria for applicants and the grant amounts to be awarded, as detailed at para. 3 of the considered report, and that the short timescales for the establishment and operation of the scheme be noted.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Children's Services) to implement and monitor the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund Scheme, in consultation with the Service Director (Finance) and relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders, and that authority also be delegated to make further changes to the scheme to ensure equity and achievement of the objectives.
- 3) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Children's Services), in consultation with the Service Director (Finance) and relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders, to vary the eligibility criteria for the Community Champions Grant Scheme.

331 VCS Support Funding over the Christmas Period (Late/Urgent item)

(The Leader of the Council advised that he had given authority for this item to be considered as a late and urgent item due to the timescales for implementation).

(Under the provision of Council Procedure Rule 36(1) Cabinet received a representation from Councillor Bolt).

Cabinet gave consideration to a proposal to provide Ward Members with additional resources to support voluntary and community groups who would be impacted by a loss of funding over the Christmas period. The report explained the proposal to allocate a budget of £50,000 to assist groups who have found increasing difficulty in relying upon consequential opportunities to generate income due to the challenges of Covid-19, impacting upon financial security. It was noted that, subject to approval, work would take place with local groups and organisations in order to facilitate timely access to the funding and that the criteria and process would be finalised and communicated.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That, in order to support local community groups and organisations impacted over the Christmas period with regards to a loss of funding, approval be given to a budget of £50,000.
- 2) That responsibility for the design of the criteria and supporting process be delegated to the Head of Democracy and Place Based Working.