

The Cabinet

Wednesday 6 May 2020 at 15:30 at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

- Present:** Councillor Y Davies (Chair);
Councillors Ali, Crompton, Hadley, Millard, Shaeen,
Taylor and Underhill.
- In attendance:** Councillors Allcock, E M Giles, L Giles, Padda, Rollins
and Singh.
- Officers:** David Stevens (Chief Executive), Alan Caddick (Housing
and Communities), Alison Knight (Executive Director –
Neighbourhoods), Rebecca Maher (Head of Finance),
Lisa McNally (Director – Public Health),
Elaine Newsome (Service Manager – Democracy),
Sue Stanhope (Interim Director – Human Resources),
Suky Suthi-Nagra (Democratic Services Manager),
Surjit Tour (Director of Law and Governance and
Monitoring Officer) and Chris Ward (Director – Education,
Skills and Employment).

21/20 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair reported that in accordance with the 2020 Coronavirus Regulations, the meeting was being held virtually to facilitate attendance and enable the consideration of important matters during the current COVID-19 situation, i.e. all members of the Committee joining in remotely were now able to contribute and vote on any matter.

Due to technical issues, the meeting was not being broadcast live but would be made available for members of the public to access after the meeting.

22/20 **Apology for absence**

Members noted the apology of Councillor Moore, Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board.

23/20 **Minutes of Meetings**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.



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24/20 **Additional Business**

There were no additional items of business to consider.

25/20 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared at the meeting.

26/20 **Consultation Feedback and Future Development of Moor Lane**

Approval was sought to close Manifoldia Grange and Holly Grange extra care facilities and to the transfer of tenants to the new Moor Lane Extra Care development, or alternate extra care services by February 2021 or a later date if the Moor Lane build was delayed due to the developing Covid-19 situation.

It was anticipated that Council employed staff teams currently working at Manifoldia Grange and Holly Grange would be relocated to the new Moor Lane development by February 2021 and approval was sought to the proposed staffing structure.

A further report would be submitted detailing the proposed future for the sites at Manifoldia Grange and Holly Grange, as the future of these sites would need to be considered within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan.

Agreed:-

- (1) that the closure of Manifoldia and Holly Grange and the transfer of tenants to Moor Lane, or alternative extra care accommodation within the Borough, by February 2021 (or a later date if the Moor Lane build is delayed due to the developing Covid-19 situation) be approved;
- (2) that the transfer of affected Council staff members at Manifoldia and Holly Grange to Moor Lane by February 2021 (or a later date if the Moor Lane build is delayed due to the developing Covid-19 situation) be approved;
- (3) that the revised staffing structure for extra care staff, as set out in the Appendix now submitted, be approved as the basis for further consultation with employees and trade unions.

27/20

Schools Capital Programme 2020/21 – 2022/23

Consideration was given to proposals to undertake interim works to prepare sites at three schools for respective major construction works as follows:-

- a new stand-alone classroom block at Bristnall Hall Academy; Phase 3 Q3 Academy Langley, which will see completion of the 1,500 place secondary school;
- Phase 2 West Bromwich Collegiate Academy, completion of the new 750 place secondary school.

The preparatory works would support the statutory provision of 990 new secondary school places by September 2021.

The Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board welcomed the proposals and in response to questions raised in relation to consultation with local businesses and alternative arrangements in the event of Wilmott Dixon going into administration, the Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life confirmed that:-

- a local consultation strategy was being discussed with Wilmott Dixon who would co-ordinate activities of all its sub-contractors. The Authority had previously delivered a number of school projects with the company and advance notice through the resident newsletters had worked well, however the Project Team would ensure concerns were noted to ensure no issues arose;
- the Construction West Midlands framework had offered the opportunity to engage with contractors much more quickly than previous projects. During the current situation they had continued to work, adopting new safety measures, and their financial viability was regularly monitored through the framework that would alert the Authority to any early signs of failure. The Council had a degree of protection through the framework to re-engage an alternative contractor. In the worst case scenario of going into administration, the Council would have to consider temporary accommodation arrangements whilst a new contractor was appointed.

Agreed:-

- (1) that the funding of Enabling Works at Bristnall Hall Academy, Bristnall Hall Lane, Oldbury B68 9PA; Q3 Academy Langley, Moat Road, Oldbury B68 8EA and West Bromwich Collegiate Academy, Kelvin Way, West Bromwich B70 7JW be approved, as part of the Schools Capital Programme 2020/21 - 2022/23, funded from the Council's balance of Basic Need resources;

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- (2) that in connection with Resolution (1) above, the remaining £533,376 Basic Need funding be retained to support the completion of construction works at all three schools once a government announcement on Basic Need funding has been made for 2021/22 and 2022/23, and a further report has been submitted to Cabinet to approve additional expenditure;
- (3) that in connection with Resolution (1) and (2) above, the Director – Education, Skills and Employment award a contract to Willmott Dixon Construction Limited to deliver the Enabling Works packages, in conjunction with the Executive Director - Resources, and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life, subject to meeting the criteria;
- (4) that the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer enter into any legal agreements on terms agreed by the Director – Education, Skills and Employment, as required, to allow building works to be completed at each proposed site.

28/20

Local Transport Settlement 2020/21 – Sandwell Allocation

Cabinet received details of the local transport resources allocated to Sandwell for 2020/21. The funds allocated from the local transport settlement comprised the majority of the Council's capital programme of minor works, highway and bridge maintenance.

Approval was now sought to the allocation of funds to specific categories of projects.

In view of the decrease in the provision of transport funding, the Leader was of the view that post covid-19, all authorities in the West Midlands should be requesting increased transport funding to enable transport to be fit for the 21st century.

Agreed:-

- (1) that details of the allocation of resources, as confirmed by the West Midlands Combined Authority in January 2020 for Integrated Transport and Local Highway Maintenance Block funding, be noted;

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- (2) that the following programme of minor works, highways, bridges and street lighting maintenance works for 2020/21 be approved;

Minor Works Programme	Funds 2020/21 £
Major Schemes Development (Ring Fenced)	220,000
Local Area Safety Schemes	115,000
Local Safety Schemes	150,000
Safer Routes to School	125,000
Vulnerable Users	250,000
Demand Management	100,000
Traffic Calming	100,000
Major Route Signing	60,000
Named Schemes Over £250k.	356,000
Total	1,476,000

Maintenance Programme	Funds 2020/21 £
Carriageway Maintenance – Needs Formula	1,936,000
Carriageway Maintenance – Incentive Fund	538,000
Carriageway Maintenance – Pothole Action Fund	159,000
Bridges – Needs Formula	516,000
Street Lighting – Needs Formula	130,000
Total	3,285,000

- (3) that the funding pressures relating to highway maintenance resulting from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on supporting income sources, and the potential implications of any long-term economic pressures on Central Government funding in future years be noted.

29/20

Bleakhouse Junior School and Warley Infant School – Proposed Closure and Expansion

Following consideration of the outcome of Stage 1 statutory consultation undertaken on a proposal to close Warley Infant School and expand Bleakhouse Junior School, both located in Bleakhouse Road, Oldbury, approval was sought to the publication of a Statutory Proposal to close Warley Infant School on 31 August 2020, and expand the age range of Bleakhouse Junior School from 8-11 years to 3-11 years with effect from 1 September 2020. This would enable the amalgamation of two twinned schools in Oldbury to form a 420 statutory place primary school, with a 26 full time equivalent place Nursery.

Whilst the proposal was welcomed by the Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board, regular consultation and engagement should be undertaken on the status of the project.

Agreed that having taken the results of consultation into account, approval is given to:-

- (1) the publication of a Statutory Proposal to:-
 - i) formally close Warley Infant School, Bleakhouse Road, Oldbury B68 9DS; and
 - ii) increase the age range of Bleakhouse Junior School, Bleakhouse Road, Oldbury B68 9DS from the ages of 8-11 years old to 3-11 years old to accommodate the displaced pupils from Warley Infant School;
- (2) subject to no objections being raised during the statutory representation period for the Statutory Proposal as referred to in 1 above, authorise the Director – Education, Skills and Employment to make a final decision on proposal for the prescribed alterations at Warley Infant School and Bleakhouse Junior School, Bleakhouse Road, Oldbury B68 9DS, in conjunction with Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life; and
- (3) in the event that any objections are raised during the statutory representation period for the Statutory Proposal, a report is submitted to the Cabinet with full details of representations received to inform a final decision on the proposal.

30/20

Care Home Fees – Older People 2020/21

Approval was sought to the care homes fees for older people for 2020/21.

Agreed that the following care home fees for older people for 2020/21, calculated in accordance with the agreed model, to be effective from 1 April 2020 be approved and that the Director of Adult Social Care communicate this to the relevant providers and implement the fee increase.

	Residential	Dementia Residential	Nursing	Dementia Nursing
	£ /week	£ /week	£ /week	£ /week
2019/20 Fees	436.28	491.04	599.06	606.74
Increase in SMBC Fees	19.62	22.06	16.48	16.75
Change in 2020/21 NHS RNC	N/A	N/A	Not announced based on 2019/20 rates*	
Notional 2020/21 fee including RNC contribution*	455.90	513.10	615.54	623.52
Movement in SMBC Element of the Fee	4.50%	4.49%	3.80%	3.80%

* The NHS Registered Nursing Care (RNC) contribution towards the costs of a place in a care home are set nationally by NHS England, this figure is included in the stated fee level at the 2019 -20 rate, any changes will be passported to NH providers once known.

31/20

Sandwell Green Space Strategy 2020-2030

Approval was sought to the Green Space Strategy 2020-2030 which set out the strategic directions for the management and maintenance of green spaces in Sandwell to help deliver positive and sustainable outcomes for green spaces, parks and associated facilities and resources in Sandwell.

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The Chair of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board welcomed the proposals and sought clarity on whether the work of the Scrutiny Board enquiry day in relation to rewilding not only in designated green spaces but also verges, etc. could be fed into the strategy and action plans as the benefits of improved air quality, biodiversity and improved environments for people to live in. The Cabinet Member for Safer Communities confirmed that the findings of the enquiry day into rewilding would be fed into the strategy and action plans.

Agreed:-

- (1) that the Green Space Strategy 2020-2030 be approved;
- (2) that a further report be submitted setting out action plans for specific recommendations and a Parks and Green Space Investment strategy, outlining external and internal funding opportunities and requirements;
- (3) that the findings of the Economy, Skills and Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board's enquiry day into rewilding be incorporated into the Green Space Strategy 2020-2030 and action plans.

Meeting ended at 16:06

This meeting is available to view on the Council's website

<https://cmis.sandwell.gov.uk/cmis5/Meetings.aspx>