

CABINET - 11 March 2021

MINUTES

Present: Councillors: I Courts, K Grinsell, K Hawkins, A Mackiewicz, K Meeson, T Richards OBE, A Rolf, R Sleigh OBE, J Tildesley, A Adeyemo, S Caudwell and F Nash

Officers: Nick Page, Paul Johnson, Deborah Merry, Andrew Kinsey, Mary Morrissey, Louise Rees, Lizzie Edwards, Perry Wardle, Alison McGrory, Peter Carrol, Anthony Jones, Martin Clayton and Jane Game

1. APOLOGIES

None received.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cllr Sleigh reminded Members that in relation to item 8 and 12 he was a Director of the UGC.

3. QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None received.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2021 were presented for information only.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2021 be received for information.

5. SOLIHULL HOLIDAY ACTIVITY & FOOD PROGRAMME

The Cabinet was:

- updated on the help and support provided to families and vulnerable households during the winter period, particularly on how grants received from the government had been used to provide that help and support;
- informed of the government's Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAFP), including the funding provided to the Council and requirements concerning its use;
- advised of the food offer available to families with children in receipt of free school meals during the upcoming Easter holiday period; and

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- advised of the options and recommended approach for developing a Solihull HAFP for summer 2021.

Members were briefed on the support received from the government for vulnerable households and families during the winter period and further into 2021. Support was provided via the COVID Winter Grant Scheme and Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies, of which the Council received a total of £775,531.15.

The report also detailed the support provided through another government scheme - Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAFP). This funding to Local Authorities provided six weeks of activities and food during the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays of 2021, which were free to access for children and young people in receipt of benefits related to free school meals. The Council had been allocated £991,970 to deliver a holiday offer for 2021. This offer could be delivered during any six weeks of the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays with the option for Local Authorities to consider delivering it in its entirety during the six-week summer holiday period.

The report set out the differences between the HAFP scheme and Winter Grant scheme and the change of approach that would be required to help support families and vulnerable households. Two key differences were the need for parents to opt-in to the offer available and the emphasis on providing healthy meals rather than food or the means of purchasing food, as well as the face to face delivery of activities.

Members were advised that local authorities could determine how the scheme was delivered and some delivery options were detailed in the report. The report also set out the rationale for not delivering the HAFP during the Easter holidays but delivering it during the summer and Christmas holidays.

Officers informed Members that since the report had been published discussions with the DfE had continued regarding the Easter holiday plan, and Officers were now considering an amendment to include an activity offer as well.

In considering the report Members very much welcomed the proposal and commended Officers on the work that had been done to date. Members also recognised the efforts of Voluntary Organisations and community partners in supporting this work. There was some concern over the opt-in element of the programme and Members sought assurance that vulnerable families would not miss out. Officers confirmed that a communication strategy was being worked up and all the information available to Officers would be utilised to identify vulnerable families.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the positive progress and impact, as well as learning, from the delivery of help and support to families and vulnerable households during the winter period be noted;
- (ii) That the decision made by the Cabinet Member for Stronger and Safer Communities for the food offer for families this Easter be noted; and
- (iii) That approval be given to the Council to develop and deliver a HAFP for eligible families in the Borough, based on the following:

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- The delivery of the HAFP during the summer and Christmas holidays for 2021;
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council as the lead and accountable body;
- A Cross-Directorate and multi-agency programme and delivery structure to make the best use of the Council's and the borough's assets and expertise;
- The Cabinet Members for Stronger and Safer Communities and Children, Education and Skills as the joint portfolio holders for the Solihull HAFP;
- The Assistant Director Inclusion and Additional Needs and Assistant Director Communities and Partnerships as Programme Sponsors; and
- The Head of Stronger Communities as the Programme Lead.

6. SOLIHULL CYCLING & WALKING STRATEGY AND LOCAL CYCLING & WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Cabinet was provided with an overview of how comments gathered through public consultation on the Cycling and Walking Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan had been incorporated into both documents. Cabinet approval was sought to adopt the final versions of Solihull's Cycling and Walking Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

The report before Members detailed the extensive work that had been undertaken regarding a consultation exercise on Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy and associated Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), the key issues highlighted from the consultation and the further work undertaken with specific user groups, all of which had helped to inform the Strategy and Plan.

In welcoming and supporting the report Members made a number of comments/observations which Officers responded to and in summary included:

- Assurance was sought that the Plan was linked in to the Solihull on the Move Initiative. Officers confirmed that this was the case;
- With regard to bike sharing Officers confirmed the West Midlands Bike Share Scheme was still being rolled out, and Solihull was in line to receive both pedal and E bikes in July;
- Members recognised that there was a need to balance the needs of all road users and encourage people to shift from car use to active travel. To this end it was important that the infrastructure was in place to support this, such as well-planned shared space, cycle routes were fully connected inside and outside the Borough and end point storage was available; and
- Officers confirmed that the Plan had been designed to meet the principles set out in LTN 1/20 cycle infrastructure design. On the question of the use of canal towpaths for cycling, Officers confirmed this was still under consideration when funding allowed.

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RESOLVED:

- (i) That the comments received through public consultation on the draft Cycling and Walking Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (as set out in Appendix A) be noted;
- (ii) That the Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (Appendices B and C respectively) be approved and delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director - Growth and Development to make any minor amendments necessary to improve clarity or accuracy, in consultation with the portfolio holder; and
- (iii) That it be agreed to publish the Cycling and Walking summary document (Appendix D).

7. PLACEMAKING FUND – PROPOSED ALLOCATIONS

The Cabinet was invited to approve the proposed allocation of the Council's Placemaking Fund.

Members were reminded of how the Placemaking fund was established and of the approved allocations made to date regarding Town and local centres and Climate Change/Economic Growth resources.

The report before Cabinet detailed a number of other proposed allocations which covered:

- Planting our Future
- Healing Woodland
- Enhanced Cleaning
- Electric Vehicle Charging and strategy rollout
- Culture and Community events
- CCTV-enhancing fly tipping enforcement
- Towns and Local Centres round 2
- Borough promotion and tourism

Members welcomed the proposals set out above and fully supported them. With regard to graffiti on privately owned property, Members asked what could be done to aid its removal. Officers advised this was not covered in the scope of this proposal, but the issue would be investigated. With regard to the placement of CCTV cameras in support of flytipping enforcement, Officers advised that the "hot spots" were known, but this would be kept under review.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the allocation of the Placemaking Fund, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved; and
- (ii) That the establishment of new reserves in the relevant portfolios to hold funds for the allocations set out in Appendix 1 be approved.

8. URBAN GROWTH COMPANY BUSINESS PLAN 2021-22

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The Cabinet was invited to approve the UK Central Urban Growth Company (UGC) Business Plan for the period 2021-22.

Members were reminded that the UGC was required to present an annual business plan to the Council. Section 2 of the Business Plan highlighted some of the achievements of the UGC and section 4 set out the priorities for the coming year. Members were advised that the UGC Board had approved the Business Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the Urban Growth Company Business Plan 2021-22 be approved.

9. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business to be transacted, on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information in terms of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

10. MINUTES

11. ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY WITHIN THE BOROUGH

12. COLLABORATION AND VALUE CAPTURE AGREEMENTS RELATING TO THE ARDEN CROSS INTERCHANGE TRIANGLE SITE

7.55 pm