

PUBLIC

**MINUTES** of a meeting of the **CABINET MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC POLICY AND BUDGET** held on 28 May 2014 at County Hall, Matlock

**PRESENT**

Cabinet Member – Councillor Ms A Western

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor A I Lewer

**9/14** **MINUTES RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Cabinet Member.

**10/14** **DERBYSHIRE CHALLENGE FUND – BIDDING AND MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS** The Derbyshire Challenge Fund was established by Cabinet on 22 October 2013 to act as a resource to help develop transformational change initiatives that would contribute to the Council's budget reduction requirement of £157m.

To ensure transparency and contribute to the effective governance of the scheme, it was proposed that for each bid into the fund, the Derbyshire Challenge Fund Bid Proposal Form (attached as Appendix A to the report) was completed. To access funding it was proposed that the following process was followed:

- (i) completion of a Challenge Fund Bid Proposal Form would be required to access funding support, detailing the amount of funding required, how the proposal would benefit Derbyshire's communities etc.;
- (ii) Challenge Fund bid proposals would be considered, in the first instance, by the relevant professional heads of service, to assess its operational validity, prior to consideration of its strategic merit by the Corporate Management Team (CMT); and
- (iii) proposals which received endorsement from CMT would be submitted to the Leader of the Council (as Cabinet Member for Strategic Policy and Budget) for approval at a Cabco or Cabinet meeting depending on the size of the investment and/or the operational and political risks associated with the proposal. In circumstances when the Leader is not available, approval be given by the Deputy Leader.

The allocation of resources from the Challenge Fund would be monitored by the Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Finance, with

regular financial and operational updates being provided to the Leader, Cabinet and CMT following existing protocols.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Derbyshire Challenge Fund bidding and monitoring process.

**11/14      REVIEW OF COUNTY COUNCIL PASSENGER TRANSPORT PROVISION** The County Council provided a number of different passenger transport services across the departments for Economy, Transport and Environment, Children and Younger Adults and Adult Care. In 2013-14, the cost of these services amounted to around £33.9 million.

There had already been many initiatives to improve efficiency and reduce spending on the Authority's passenger transport operations. As an example, in previous years, cuts of some £3.12 million were made by reductions in local bus services, savings on concessionary fares and withdrawing financial support for 'non-entitled' home to school transport routes.

The County Council had, for a number of years, operated an integrated transport unit which managed all of its passenger transport provision within one section in the Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) Department. Advantages with such an approach included the inter-weaving of appropriate home to school services into the local bus network, which had already realised significant savings to both ETE and CAYA budgets. Improvements in procurement processes should also help to manage costs better and help to drive up quality standards. However, it was considered that there were further savings to be found by considering further efficiencies across service areas.

It was therefore proposed to conduct a review of the delivery of all passenger transport services across the County Council. In order to reflect the cross-departmental nature of the review, a working party with representatives from all relevant areas would be established to identify and action the agreed efficiency initiatives. The working group would be led by the Strategic Director – ETE, who would report to Councillor Andy Botham, Deputy Cabinet Member – Jobs, Economy and Transport and Councillor Jim Coyle, Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

It was intended to carry out the review to a timetable that would allow any changes to be ready for implementation in the 2015/16 financial year. To meet this timetable, it was proposed to appoint specialist consultants with appropriate experience or technical skills to assist with aspects of the review, and to support County Council staff with progressing the review.

The detailed scope of any consultancy support would be determined by the officer working group and the Strategic Director ETE. At this stage, it was

envisaged that external support would assist in areas such as reviewing good practice so that the County Council could benefit from the experience of other local authorities and in providing technical support, for example to assist with the analysis of any mapping of passenger transport services. The review would ensure good value for money by making the best possible use of existing skills and capacity within the County Council. External support would only be used where needs could not be met from existing resources. Any consultants would be appointed in accordance with the County Council's financial regulations and, if appropriate, further reports would be submitted for Member's approval.

Relevant staff and the consultants would report to the cross-departmental working group under the Strategic Director – ETE. It was expected that the total cost could be up to £50,000 to meet the costs of technical support, consultancy and temporary staff resources where appropriate. As this was an invest-to-save proposal, it was recommended that the funds were sourced from the County Council's Challenge Fund.

**RESOLVED** to (1) approve the cross-departmental review of passenger transport services under the leadership of the Strategic Director Economy, Transport and Environment with support, as necessary, from specialist consultants;

(2) approve up to £50,000 from the Challenge Fund to support the delivery of the project; and

(3) authorise the Strategic Director Economy, Transport and Environment to appoint specialist consultants to provide technical support and temporary staff up to a maximum cost of £50,000 as outlined in the report.