

CABINET MEMBER (POLICY, LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE)

21st February 2013

Cabinet Member

Present: Councillor Duggins (substitute for Councillor J Mutton)

Shadow Cabinet

Member Present: Councillor Blundell (substitute for Councillor Foster)

Employees Present:

C. Boyce (Chief Executive's Directorate)
F. Collingham (Chief Executive's Directorate)
T. Green (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
- Work Experience Student
L. Knight (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
N. Mills (City Services and Development Directorate)
H. Peacocke (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)

Apologies:

Councillor Foster
Councillor Mutton – Cabinet Member (Policy, Leadership and Governance)

Public Business

28. Declarations of Interest

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests reported.

29. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2013 were deferred for confirmation at the next scheduled meeting.

30. Webcasting Coventry City Council meetings – Evaluation and Consultation

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Chief Executive, which set out the results of an evaluation of the webcasting of Council meetings and sought approval to continue with the webcasting provision.

Whilst Council meetings were open to the public, numbers of people attending was often low and when meetings were held during the day, it could be difficult for the public to attend. In 2010, the Council entered into a contract with Public-i to stream live webcasts of the Council meeting on the Council's website. Webcasting of the meetings increased the accessibility, openness and transparency of local democracy and allowed citizens to see how decisions were made, the importance elected members placed on strong and lively debate and the processes that supported effective decision making.

An online survey was conducted to seek user and non-user opinions of webcasting, over a period of two weeks from 7th January 2013, which included members of the public, elected members and council officers. 195 responses were received and

the report provided details on the percentages of respondents who had viewed the webcast, either live or in archive, and their rating of the quality of broadcast.

The consensus across all groups consulted, was that it was more important to be able to refer back to a webcast than to be able to watch it as a live feed. However, through using the Public-i system, there was no cost difference between broadcasting live and a following archive version, when compared with just an archived version.

As a result, the recommended proposal (detailed as Option 2 in the report) was to continue to webcast future Council meetings at an annual charge of £9,333, which included continuing with the current system of broadcasting a live and archive version of meetings, with up to 30 hours in total per year with an archive of up to 6 months.

RESOLVED that approval be given to continue to webcast live and archived meetings of full Council, as detailed in Option 2 of the report.

31. Department for Transport (DfT) Integrated Transport Block Consultation

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of City Service and Development, which sought approval of a response to a consultation issued by the Department for Transport (DfT) to all local authorities on a revised formula used to calculate levels of Integrated Transport Block (ITB) funding.

The consultation was on a revised funding methodology which changed the way the ITB funding was calculated. This was currently a major source of transport funding for the Council and the ITB funding was currently allocated directly to the Local Transport Authority (Centro) and was then re-distributed out to Centro and the even West Midlands Metropolitan Authorities.

The proposed formula would incorporate new indicators based on a combination of performance, economic and environmental factors. The DfT had confirmed that there was no proposal to simplify the process, for example by distributing funding on a population basis.

Option 1 (Formula based on need and improvement) would involve splitting the formula so that where possible, 75% of funding was allocated according to the current needs-based formula and the remaining 25 % on the basis of continuous improvement using trend data. This option would result in a 1.9% reduction in the funding based on the current 2014/15 budget.

Option 2 (Needs-based only) was based on the current formula with the addition of carbon emissions and economic growth. This option would result in a 8.8% reduction in funding based on the current 2014/15 budget.

Option 3 (Formula based on need and improvement with additional data) was based on an allocation using the formula for Option 1 above with the addition of needs and trend-based carbon emissions and needs-based economic growth. This option would result in a 10.1% reduction in funding based on the current 2014/15 budget.

The report indicated that none of the options outlined were supported by Centro (as the receiver of the ITB funding) due to the proposed reductions in funding. Centro was also proposing to examine the approach being taken by the Passenger Transport Executive Group, who represent all the Metropolitan Passenger Transport Executive's in Great Britain.

It was recommended that the City Council's response should mirror that proposed by Centro and that none of the three options put forward should be supported. It was further recommended that the Council work with Centro to develop an alternative formula which would not result in a reduction to future levels of transport funding.

RESOLVED that all options put forward in the consultation be objected and that the DfT be informed accordingly and that Centro be supported in the development of an alternative formula for consideration by the DfT as their response to the consultation.

(NOTE: This item was considered as urgent business, the reason for urgency being to enable a decision to be taken within the timescales required by the Department for Transport, whilst allowing the normal call-in process to apply.)

32. Any Other Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(NOTE Further to paragraphs 2.7.3 and 4.4.12 of the Council's Constitution, as the Leader and Cabinet Member (Policy, Leadership and Governance) was unable to act due to ill health, the Deputy Leader attended this meeting and acted in the Leaders' place in order that the functions of the portfolio could be undertaken.)

Meeting closed: 1.08 pm