

Time began	9.00am
Time ended	9.15am

Urgent Leader of the Council Cabinet Member Meeting

5 February 2015

Present: Councillor Rawson

In Attendance: Councillor Care

17/14 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Banwait.

It was stated in the Council Constitution within Part B of the Scheme of Delegations that “any member identified by the Executive Leader as the Deputy Leader will deputise for the Executive Leader in his/her absence in respect of any matters reserved to the Executive Leader”.

It was further stated in Part B of the Scheme of Delegations that among matters reserved to the Executive Leader was “taking decisions in cases of urgency in respect of any executive matter, including key decisions”.

It was recorded in minute 11/14 of the meeting of Council held on 11 June 2014 that Councillor Banwait, having been elected as Leader of the Council, had identified Councillor Rawson as Deputy Leader. Councillor Rawson was thus able to consider and determine the executive matter presented to the meeting in the absence of Councillor Banwait.

18/14 Late Items

There were no late items.

19/14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

20/14 Application to the Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund

The Deputy Leader considered a report of the Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods on Application to the Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund. The report was presented by the Head of Highways and Engineering.

It was reported that the Government had consistently asserted a strong commitment to ensure that the Council had a well maintained local highway network, which was fit for the demands of the 21st century. It was further reported that this had included

additional highways maintenance funding in 2013/14 (£339k) and 2014/15 (£174k) and £221k additional severe weather funding, as well as last year's Pothole Fund from which, following a successful bid the Council was awarded £281k. The Deputy Leader noted that, to that end, during the recent local highways maintenance funding consultation, views were sought about the creation and duration (3 or 6 year period) of a Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund.

It was reported that the proposal was to allocate a proportion of the national highways maintenance budget to create a separate fund, which local highway authorities in England could submit bids for major maintenance projects that would ordinarily be difficult to resource through their usual funding allocations.

It was further reported that the Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund was subsequently announced in the 2014 Autumn Statement and would run for the next six financial years starting in 2015/16 and concluding in 2020/21. The Deputy Leader noted that it was envisaged that the funding would be split into two tranches.

It was reported that local authorities in England had been invited to submit bids for small (£5m - £20m) and large (£20m+) schemes. It was further reported that the Council's proposed project was focussed on the A52 from Pentagon Island to the Raynesway flyover (the point at which the Highways Agency assumed responsibility for the A52)

The Deputy Leader noted that individual elements of the proposed project were likely to include:

- Resurfacing of the A52 carriageway (east and west bound)
- Upgrading of street lighting with innovative LED lighting
- Resurfacing of Pentagon Island carriageway
- Safety improvements to Pentagon Island structures
- Improved vehicular, pedestrian and cycling signing

It was reported that the Department for Transport's (DfT) guidance advised a strong local contribution of at least 10% of the total scheme costs and that this would be achieved through the Asset Management section of the annual H&T capital work programme. The Deputy Leader noted that the DfT contribution would need to be fully spent by the end of March 2018.

The Deputy Leader asked about the possibility of problems occurring on the A52, such as to the road surface, before the scheme got underway. It was reported that increased inspections were taking place, any cracks would be filled and resurfacing would take place early in the scheme.

Councillor Care asked about the possibility of creating a bus lane. It was reported that it had been initially proposed to create extra carriageway space, for this purpose, by utilising the gap between the two vehicle restraint barriers in the middle of the A52. It was further reported that unfortunately this would not be possible due to the existence of a Severn Trent Water sewer in the middle of the road that would prevent the building of a concrete barrier.

Councillor Care asked if widening of the A52 cycleway was included in the bid. It was reported that it was not and there was not time to include it. Councillor Care asked that widening of the cycleway be included in the scheme if future flexibility allowed for it.

Resolved to:

- 1. to consider this report and approve the submission of an application to the Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund; and**
- 2. to delegate approval to accept any funding awarded as a result of this bid to Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Procurement.**

MINUTES END