

**MINUTES of the meeting of COUNCIL held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford. on Friday, 3rd November, 2006 at 10.30 a.m.**

**Present:** Councillor J.W. Edwards (Chairman)  
Councillor J. Stone (Vice Chairman)

**Councillors:** Mrs. P.A. Andrews, B.F. Ashton, Mrs. W.U. Attfield, Mrs. L.O. Barnett, W.L.S. Bowen, R.B.A. Burke, A.C.R. Chappell, Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels, P.J. Dauncey, Mrs. C.J. Davis, G.W. Davis, P.J. Edwards, D.J. Fleet, Mrs. J.P. French, J.H.R. Goodwin, Mrs. A.E. Gray, K.G. Grumbley, P.E. Harling, J.W. Hope MBE, B. Hunt, T.W. Hunt, Mrs. J.A. Hyde, T.M. James, J.G. Jarvis, Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes, G. Lucas, R.M. Manning, R.I. Matthews, J.C. Mayson, R. Mills, J.W. Newman, Mrs. J.E. Pemberton, R.J. Phillips, Ms. G.A. Powell, Mrs. S.J. Robertson, D.W. Rule MBE, Miss F. Short, R.V. Stockton, Mrs E.A. Taylor, J.P. Thomas, W.J.S. Thomas, Ms. A.M. Toon, W.J. Walling, D.B. Wilcox, A.L. Williams, J.B. Williams and R.M. Wilson

**40. PRAYERS**

In the absence of the Dean of Hereford, the Very Reverend Peter Haynes led the Council in prayer.

**41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs. E.M. Bew, H. Bramer, M.R. Cunningham, N.J.J. Davies, J.G.S. Guthrie, Brig. P. Jones, CBE, R Preece, D.C. Taylor and P. Turpin.

**42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor W.L.S. Bowen declared a personal interest in the report on the Public Service Trust at Agenda Item 9(b), paragraph 1.1(iii) as a non-executive member of the National Health Service.

**43. MINUTES**

Before signing the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July, 2006, the Chairman proposed that Minute 28, Page 8, final paragraph be amended to read: "...Councillor Mrs. French expressed sadness at Councillor Hunt's response and again encouraged Members to use the service and report any failings to her."

**RESOLVED:** That, subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July, 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**44. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that the Council had received an ISO 14001 certificate in recognition of its environmental performance. He presented the certificate to Councillor P.J. Edwards, Cabinet Member (Environment) who praised the Council, its employees and the officers in the sustainability team who had all played their part in gaining the certificate.

The Chairman asked Council to note that the next Civic Service was to be held on 11th March, 2007. He said that the arrangements were being finalised and further details and invitations would be sent out well in advance of the date.

He drew Council's attention to the new leaflet "Thinking of becoming a Herefordshire Councillor?" aimed at prospective candidates in the May 2007 elections and advised that further copies were available from the Members Support Office.

The Council joined the Chairman in congratulating Councillor Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes on being granted the Freedom of the City of London.

#### 45. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Under the Constitution a member of the public can ask a Cabinet Member or Chairman of a Committee any question relevant to a matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties, or which affects the County, as long as a copy of the question is deposited with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services more than six clear working days before the meeting. One question had been received and included in the agenda. The question and response is set out below:

Question from Mr. C.J. Grover, Bromyard

##### **BROMYARD HOUSEHOLD WASTE SITE**

*As the members of the Council are aware several million pounds of the long term Waste Disposal Contract were spent between, I believe, 1999 and 2002 upgrading sites throughout the county. The Bromyard one in particular provides an excellent service to the local community. It has however one major drawback which is the deteriorating condition of the approach road which is in an extremely bad state of repair and a disgrace for any self respecting organisation. Nobody has made any attempt to carry out maintenance in the last six years although one or two potholes on probably the best part were filled in with concrete a couple of weeks ago.*

*The official response from the Chairman of Planning and local Ward Councillor is that the road is owned by different people and it is therefore too difficult to do anything until the UDP is finally approved and the site will be improved. I would say from the date of this question it would be very optimistic to quote two years for this improvement even to start. This site road is pounded at least three times a week by the heavy skip trucks and will continue to deteriorate. It is amazing that none of the three owners of the road have ever been approached by the Council concerning maintenance since the site was built.*

*Clearly there is a difficulty over ownership and the degree of responsibility the Waste Disposal firm has but the question is how much longer are the Council prepared to ignore the situation since they chose the site and are, as we ratepayers see it, ultimately responsible."*

Councillor P.J. Edwards, Cabinet Member (Environment) accepted that the site access road was not ideal. He explained that the access to the site did not belong to the Council. He advised that the Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards and the Head of Property Services in conjunction with the Council's Waste Management Contractors would be approaching the owners of the road to discuss the best way to secure improvements both in the short-term and in the longer-term.

**46. QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN UNDER STANDING ORDERS**

Councillors may ask questions of Cabinet Members and Chairmen of Committees so long as a copy of the question is deposited with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. A list of questions, set out in the order in which they had been received, was circulated at the beginning of the meeting. Councillors may also, at the discretion of the Chairman, ask one additional question on the same topic.

**Question asked by Councillor D.C. Taylor - for the Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation)**

*"I understand that the Madley Parish Council have been consulted about the removal of two 100 metre lengths of hedge and provision of post and rail fencing. Also two 30 metre lengths of tarmac on the Madley to Bridge Sollars Road. Could he advise me when this work is to start as traffic when two large vehicles meet is horrendous?"*

**Councillor D.B. Wilcox, Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation)**

confirmed that discussions had taken place with Madley Parish Council regarding the need to improve the C1098 Madley to Bridge Sollars road by the introduction of two additional passing places. The proposed scheme would provide two passing places, one each side of the carriageway, at different locations in the vicinity of Bage Farm. He advised that, in order to facilitate this work and improve visibility, it would be necessary to remove a total of approximately 200 metres of hedgerow (100 metres on either side of the road) and either, erect post and rail fencing or re-plant the hedge, set back from the road.

Subject to all the necessary permissions being granted and agreement being reached with the landowner, it was hoped to be able to commence the works during the current financial year with a start date anticipated in March 2007.

**Question asked by Councillor Mrs. E.A. Taylor**

*"When checking on-line it's clear from the May agenda, that the November meeting takes place on the 10th November and there is nothing on the Agenda of 28th July to indicate a change of date. As there is so much criticism of the council of late, it is even more important to engage with the public and not exclude them. I note from the Agenda there is only one question from members of the public and that is from an ex-cabinet member.*

*My question to council is, "How have the Council informed the 170,000 people who live in Herefordshire of the change of date of the next Council meeting?"*

Councillor R.J. Phillips, the Leader of the Council said that the change of date had been approved by Council at its meeting on 28th July and the date had been changed on the Council's website within a week of the decision. He advised that the normal method of giving members of the public advance notice of meetings of the council is through a notice of public meetings which is issued fortnightly. The revised date had been included in these notices (which are issued to all Info Shops, Area Offices, Libraries and media) since the beginning of September, this being the first notice to cover November meetings. He also advised that Council was required by statute to give at least five clear working days' notice of any meetings open to the public.

**Question asked by Councillor Mrs. S. Robertson**

*"I note that the Grafton Works and the Burcott Depot have been vacant for a considerable time with a loss of income to the Council as these sites could have been let.*

*(a) Why has this occurred and*

*(b) What is being done to rectify the position."*

Councillor M. Wilson, Cabinet Member (Resources) replied that neither depot was actually vacant.

The **Grafton Depot** was being used by FOCSA, the Council's waste collection contractor who has offices at the rear of the garage and mess facilities in the original Depot as well as using the depot for overnight parking of its fleet. He advised that negotiations have been underway for some time about proposals to relocate FOCSA to Rotherwas in the New Year and dispose of the Grafton Depot site.

The **Burcott Depot** is at present being used by Wrekin Construction, as their equipment and bulk material storage site, whilst they carry out the works in High Town. The site is being disposed of and Solicitors are nearing completion of the conveyance. In addition the prospective purchaser has submitted a planning application for a new office block. Exchange of contracts should take place early in December with completion by the end of the year.

He advised that the sale of both sites would produce capital income for the Council and end ongoing liabilities.

**Questions asked by Councillor Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes**

*"What consultation was carried out with the public prior to the decision being made on the Rotherwas Relief Road?"*

Councillor D.B. Wilcox, Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation) replied that the public, including employees and businesses on the Rotherwas Industrial Estate, had been consulted on the proposed Rotherwas Access Road at several stages during the development of the scheme prior to the recent decision to proceed with implementation. This had included consultation carried out during the preparation of the Council's first Local Transport Plan 2001/2 to 2005/6 (published in July 2000) and the second Local Transport Plan 2006/7 to 2010/11 (published in March 2006), both of which had identified the scheme as the Council's top priority major highway scheme.

He said that a variety of methods had been used to provide opportunities for as many people as possible to respond. During the development of both Local Transport Plans, all households had received an informative leaflet explaining the process, key aspects and including a questionnaire allowing residents to make comments on their priorities. Presentations had also been given to all Local Area Forums (known now as Community Forums) and feedback had also been encouraged through the Council's website. Consultation and involvement had also been carried out with stakeholders through the Herefordshire Partnership and other stakeholder groups. Direct consultation had been carried out with employers and employees on the Rotherwas Industrial Estate, through questionnaire surveys and meetings on the estate, which had consistently shown support for the provision of an access road.

Formal consultation, by means of public notices, had been undertaken as part of the planning process, prior to Planning Permission being granted in February 2003 and also in relation to the Side Roads Order and Compulsory Purchase Orders for the scheme that had been published in March 2005 and the subject of a public inquiry in January 2006.

In response to a further question about consultation with the residents in the area, Councillor Wilcox said that leaflets had been sent to all households, with visits to over 4,000 homes. Petitions had been raised in High Town and other areas of the city. Consultation had taken place over a period of six years with very little response from the residents. There had been a full Public Inquiry and consultation through Herefordshire Matters. He failed to see how the Council had fallen short in terms of consultation.

### **Question from Councillor Mrs. Lloyd-Hayes**

*"How does the Council intend to improve its engagement with the public?"*

Councillor Mrs. J.P. French Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) said that the Council had done much to improve the way it engaged with residents, to understand their views and needs, so that they may influence policy and services. The Council's community involvement strategy sets out, for now and the future, stringent quality standards for engaging a range of groups. She cited the Disability Equality Forum and the Youth Council as examples.

She advised that regular customer satisfaction surveys informed changes to service delivery in areas such as waste management, local bus provision and libraries and Info Shops.

There was also extensive consultation on the Local Transport Plan and the views of those working in communities are gathered through the Voluntary Sector Assembly. Consultation on the new Herefordshire Community Strategy included talking to people face to face. The Herefordshire Conversation involved several group sessions, and the Council has a citizens' panel of 1,254 residents, which it intend to consult more often face to face. Planning applications are consulted upon using statutory processes and the recently published Statement of Community Involvement includes an increasing emphasis on face-to-face consultations. New Community Forums, together with West Mercia Police, will engage people on issues of local concern.

She advised that the Council is working across statutory and voluntary sector partners, to share information, to jointly consult and share best practice in consultation and there is full co-operation between social care and the Primary Care Trust to improve our consultations and the use of information about vulnerable residents.

She said that there is a vast range of information on how the council engages and consults the public on the council's website and stated that staff have recently received training on the use of plain English; summary leaflets such as the latest one on Council finances have been appreciated; and the Council is currently working on improving information for Members to help them brief residents in their Wards.

She also said that e-mail was an important tool in the age of 24/7 media.

Councillor Mrs. Lloyd-Hayes said she was pleased that young people were part of the consultation process and asked if the money raised through the closure of youth

centres in the north of the city could be used to fund a skatepark.

Councillor French said she noted the points made but it was not for her to comment on matters outside her area of responsibility.

**Question asked by Councillor W.L.S. Bowen**

*"Is the Cabinet Member for Housing aware of South Shropshire District Council's affordable Housing Policies?"*

*"Is it possible that some of these policies can be used to advantage in Herefordshire? If so, how soon could these policies for the improvement and greater provision of affordable housing in Herefordshire be instituted?"*

Councillor Mrs. L.O. Barnett, Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults and Housing) said that she was aware of the provisions of the interim planning guidance on affordable housing for South Shropshire. She said that the guidance was non-statutory at this stage and did not form part of adopted statutory planning policy.

She also said that the Council would continue to closely monitor new approaches by other local authorities to affordable housing, and when these new approaches demonstrated their worth and were aligned with national and regional policy, their suitability for this County would be assessed and policies brought forward as part of the Council's Local Development Framework.

**47. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS**

There were no Notices of Motion.

**48. CABINET**

The Chairman indicated that he intended to take any discussion on the Rotherwas Relief Road and Rotherwas Futures at Item 9.1 on page 31 of the agenda. This included any questions on the call-in of the decision as set out in the report of the Strategic Monitoring Committee on page 39 of the agenda.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor R.J. Phillips, presented the report of the meetings of Cabinet held on 7th and 28th September and 12th October, 2006.

**In relation to Item 5.1 Building Schools for the Future** - A local Member expressed his pleasure about the grant to the Minster College, Leominster and urged the Council to take note of the public consultation exercise particularly people's views on Westfield School.

**In relation to Item 7.1(i) Integrated Performance Report** - In response to a comment on partner organisations' performance, Councillor Mrs. J.P. French, Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) replied that performance management and interrogation of reports was very important. The Council and partners were jointly responsible for delivering on certain targets and both needed to be held to account. She said she would be happy to assist any Councillors to understand the figures.

The Cabinet Member (Social Care Adult and Housing) agreed to speak to a Member after the meeting about a particular instance in which it was alleged that homeless people were being actively discouraged from registering as homeless. She agreed that homelessness was a very serious issue. The Leader stated the Council could not abdicate its responsibility for homelessness but the issue was a national problem

that required primary legislation from central government.

**In relation to Item 9.1 Rotherwas Futures and Rotherwas Access Road** - In response to a query about alternative funding options for the Rotherwas Access Road (other than housing developments) the Leader said that the development of the Rotherwas Industrial Estate and the building of the access road was vital to the future economic viability of the County. Various other options for funding the projects had been considered. These included:

- **Selling the Industrial Estate or other assets of the Council.** This had been rejected because of the implications of the loss of revenue. The sale of the Industrial Estate alone would mean a loss of £1 million a year. The only way to recoup this would be by raising Council Tax, something the Council was keen to avoid as it would put an unacceptable financial strain on the people of Herefordshire.
- **Increasing the Council Tax** - the Council is aware that it needs to limit the amount of Council Tax increases in order to reduce the tax burden on the people of Herefordshire.

The only viable option was to negotiate with the housing developers on their contribution towards the development of much needed infrastructure.

Councillor T.M. James, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, said that this matter had been fully debated at the previous meeting of Council on 28th July, 2006. He did not think there were any alternatives. The majority of the Council had been in favour of the principle of the scheme. He said that none of the alternative options: raising Council Tax, cutting services or selling revenue producing assets was viable.

The Local Ward Member, Councillor W.J.S. Thomas said he had contested two elections and on both occasions there had been major discussions about the building of an access road at Rotherwas. He said businesses in the area deserved a vote of thanks for their patience and that the economic viability of the county depended on the road and the Rotherwas Futures scheme. He spoke in favour of housing development as a means of funding the access road.

Councillor D.W. Rule, the Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) said that young people in Herefordshire were doing well educationally and in vocational training and needed good jobs to encourage them to remain in the County.

The Leader concluded the discussion by saying that the County needed to take advantage of the funding provided by Advantage West Midlands and that those who frustrated the project would be held to account.

**In relation to Item 11 - Rural Regeneration and Strategy** - in response to a query the Cabinet Member assured Council that he was continuing to press Government very hard on the issue of rural post offices.

The Leader then presented the Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 26th October, 2006.

**It relation to item 1.1(iii) - Public Service Trust, Herefordshire** - Councillor James, the Leader of the Liberal Democrats, supported the proposals in the report. Councillor A.C.R. Chappell, Leader of the Labour Group - also lent his support to the proposals saying it would be an opportunity for more democracy in health and social care. He said that the Council would face many criticisms from the public and it would be necessary to persuade them that this was the best thing for them and for

the County, but that it would take time to get it right. He regretted that Mental Health was not included in the plans.

Councillor Mrs. Barnet, Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults and Health) endorsed Councillor Chappell's views.

Councillor Mrs. French, Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) advised that it would be necessary to consult with staff in the Council and the PCT and keep them fully informed of progress. She warned that although there was a tight timeframe, any slippage should be avoided. She said that the formation of a Public Service Trust would mean a better service for residents.

Councillor W.J.S. Thomas, Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee also lent his support to the proposals and encouraged Members to attend any seminars on the subject. He said this would be the most important decision to be taken by the Council over the next 12 months and said it was a great opportunity for the Council and the PCT to work together for the good of all the residents in Herefordshire.

Councillor J.G. Jarvis sounded a note of caution as he had been involved in a similar proposal in another Council and that scheme had been sabotaged and had eventually collapsed.

The Leader stated that the proposals would lead to genuine savings and improved services. He warned that if the scheme did not go ahead that the Government, in the light of proposals in the new Local Government White Paper, might look again at the viability of Herefordshire continuing as a unitary authority. He also spoke of the need to integrate the Council's Herefordshire Connects programme into the proposals for the Public Service Trust.

**RESOLVED: That the reports from the meetings of Cabinet held on 7th and 28th September and 12th and 26th October, 2006 be received.**

#### **49. REGULATORY COMMITTEE**

Councillor R.I. Mathews presented the report of the meetings of the Regulatory Committee held on 9th August and 26th September, 2006.

He drew the Council's attention to the progress made in relation to Public Path Diversion Orders.

In response to a query about taxis registered in neighbouring counties operating in Herefordshire, he confirmed that these taxis were not allowed to tout for business or use taxi ranks, but acknowledged that it was difficult to monitor and enforce. He urged any Members who knew of such activity to report it to him for further investigation.

**RESOLVED: That the report of the meetings of the Regulatory Committee held on 9th August and 26th September, 2006 be received.**

#### **50. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Councillor T.W. Hunt presented the report of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 25th August and 29th September, 2006.

Councillor Hunt reminded Council of a seminar on Planning Obligations to be held on Monday, 13th November at 2.00 p.m.

He responded to a number of comments and queries as follows:

Retrospective applications - He confirmed that officers were involved in discussions and working towards solutions, particularly in relation to large developers.

Estech - He confirmed that he felt the Estech application should have been dealt with by the main Planning Committee because it involved a strategic element which involved the whole county.

When a question was posed about the future of Area Planning Sub-Committees, the Chief Executive intervened and advised that any discussion which involved an amendment to the Constitution would have to follow the proper procedure and could not be debated at Council without proper notice.

**RESOLVED: That the report of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 25th August and 29th September, 2006 be received.**

#### **51. STRATEGIC MONITORING COMMITTEE**

Councillor T.M. James presented the report of the meetings of the Strategic Monitoring Committee held on 15th September and 16th October, 2006.

**RESOLVED: That the report of the meetings of the Strategic Monitoring Committee held on 15th September and 16th October, 2006 be received.**

#### **52. AUDIT AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Councillor A.C.R. Chappell presented the report of the meeting of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee held on 22nd September, 2006.

**RESOLVED: That the report of the meeting of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee held on 22nd September, 2006 be received.**

#### **53. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

The Chief Executive presented the report of the Panel which had met to review the current Members' Allowance Scheme and to make recommendations which would take effect from the elections in May 2007. He explained that the report was being presented at this time, rather than after the Elections, as it would be clear that those voting would not automatically benefit from the decision. He explained that the Panel did not revisit the basic principles of the scheme but confined their discussion to the suitability of the allowances compared to other authorities of a similar nature and with neighbouring authorities and to those Committees where the workload has increased, or was expected to increase, significantly.

In response to a request that Vice-Chairmen be given an allowance, he explained that government guidance placed a restriction of the number of Special Responsibility Allowances that could be granted and if Vice-Chairmen were to be included this number would be exceeded. He said the Panel had considered this point and was of the view that if the Vice-Chairman was undertaking a substantial workload there should be an informal arrangement between Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen to recompense this. One Committee Chairman said he would be prepared to do this.

One Councillor suggested that Cabinet Members should be paid a higher allowance with adjustments made elsewhere to stay within the proposed budget. The Leader advised that the allowance paid to Cabinet Members and the Leader had been voluntarily frozen over the last three years.

One Councillor felt that the basic allowance was still too low to attract younger people and that the workload was such that it was difficult for anyone who was employed to take on the role.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Panel had discussed many of these issues, but that government guidelines did not allow them to make recommendations on higher figures. He confirmed that the Council could approve allowances below the level of the recommendations of the Panel but it would be unwise to go much above the recommendations because of public perception if the Council was to ignore the advice of an Independent Panel.

**RESOLVED: That the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel held on 19th October, 2006 be received and**

**THAT (a) the Basic Allowance be amended to £7,000 (current £6,165);**

**(b) Special Responsibility Allowances be amended as follows:**

<b>Band 1</b>	<b>£27,000 (current £26,586)</b>
<b>Band 2</b>	<b>£11,000 (current £10,635)</b>
<b>Band 3</b>	<b>£8,500 (current £8,212)</b>
<b>Band 4</b>	<b>£1,500 (current £1,368)</b>

**(c) Special Responsibility Allowances be attached to the following at the Band Indicated:**

- (i) Chairman of Audit and Corporate Governance Committee – Band 3 (pro rata 50 %);**
- (ii) Chairman of Regulatory Committee – Band 3;**
- (iii) Chairman of Standards Committee – Band 3 (pro rata 50%);**

**(d) the Childcare and Dependent Carers' Allowance be set at the current market hourly rates;**

**(e) no change be made to the Members' Travel and Subsistence allowances which is currently set within the scale of rates used by the Inland Revenue;**

**(f) Members' Allowances should not be subject to performance related measurement;**

**(g) new and existing Members be given every encouragement to adopt the use of ICT in their work as Councillors.**

The revised scheme of allowances which will take effect after the May 2007 elections is attached at Appendix 1 for ease of reference.

#### **54. STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Robert Rogers, the Vice-Chairman, Mr. David Stevens presented the report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 20th October, 2006.

**RESOLVED: That the report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 20th October, 2006 be received.**

**55. WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY**

Councillor B. Hunt presented the report of the West Mercia Police Authority held on 26th September, 2006.

Councillor Hunt responded to a number of queries and comments as follows:

Stop Search - He reported that, generally, West Mercia Police Officers conducting stop searches were polite and helpful but often stop searches were carried out in contentious circumstances and whereas some of those being stopped and searched co-operated with the police officers, others did not. Police officers had discretion to respond to these situations accordingly.

Neighbourhood Watch Officers - He said the response was often down to who was contacted. There did not appear to be an agreed standard of response. He would take this up.

Removal of speed camera on Aylestone Hill, Hereford - He said that he understood the location of speed cameras was being investigated but could not comment on individual cameras. He said that, in future, it may fall to local authorities to decide on locations for speed cameras.

Community Support Officers - He confirmed that these posts were part funded by the Home Office and would only attract continued funding if they demonstrated value for money.

Leominster and Hereford Police Stations - He advised that the new police station on the Industrial Estate, Leominster was due to open during 2007 and that the refurbishment of Hereford Police Station was being undertaken in stages and was due for completion in 2008.

**RESOLVED: That the report of the meeting of the West Mercia Police Authority held on 26th September, 2006 be received.**

**56. HEREFORD & WORCESTER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

Councillor G.W. Davies presented the report of the meeting of the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority which was held on 28th September, 2006.

In response to a concern that the Regional Fire Control Room In Wolverhampton would be too remote from Herefordshire, Councillor Davies said that he had been assured that distance was immaterial as all operations would be computerised. He also advised that the Fire Control Room was expected to be operational by 2010.

**RESOLVED: That the report of the meeting of the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority which were held on 28th September, 2006 be received.**



## COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME - DRAFT

The Councillor's Allowances Scheme has been agreed following consideration of the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel.

**Note:** The Independent Remuneration Panel was established in November 2001. It consists of six members who collectively have a wide range of experience, comprising two members from local businesses (Sun Valley Foods Ltd and Special Metals Wiggin Ltd); the Editors of the Hereford Times and the Hereford Journal and representatives from Herefordshire Unison and Herefordshire Voluntary Action. The Council has agreed that the membership of the Panel be continued until November 2008 and the relevant individuals or their nominees or successors be invited to serve at the appropriate time to ensure continuity and to reflect statutory requirements.

The main features of the Scheme are:

- A Basic Allowance for all 58 members of £7,000.
- A scheme of Special Responsibility Allowances with four bands with the post of Leader of the Council in Band 1 with a Special Responsibility Allowance of £27,000 per annum, and other offices assigned to Bands and remunerated at set proportions of the Leader's rate, as shown below:

Band 2	Cabinet Members Chairman of Strategic Monitoring Committee	£11,000
Band 3	Chairman of Council, Deputy Leader ( <i>if not a Member of the Cabinet</i> ) Chairmen of: Planning Committee, Regulatory Committee and Scrutiny Committees Independent Chairman of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee (pro rata 50%) Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee (pro rata 50%)	£8,500
Band 4	Vice-Chairman of Council Chairmen of Planning Sub-Committees Group Leaders	£1,500

- In addition to the flat rate Group Leaders' Allowance of £1,500, a payment of £124.00 per member of the Group to reflect the different level of responsibility dependent on the size of the Group.
- Special Responsibility Allowance to be in addition to Basic Allowance. Excluding Group Leaders' Allowance, only one Special Responsibility Allowance is payable per **Elected** Member.
- A Childcare and Dependant Carers' Scheme: allowances payable for eligible duties where costs are incurred in the care of children aged 16 or under, and in respect of other dependants where there is medical or social work evidence that care is required, and where the work claimed for has been undertaken by persons other than family members resident in the household; all claims must be evidenced by receipts and will be paid at the current market hourly rates.
- All allowances to be updated annually in line with the N.J.C. for Local Government Services pay award.

In addition attendance whether as an appointed member or at the invitation of a Director, Cabinet Member or Chairman of the relevant body at any of the following will entitle a Councillor to claim for travel and subsistence:

- Council meeting
- Council committee and sub-committee meeting
- Any of the other bodies described in these Standing Orders including Cabinet and Community Forums;
- A Working Group established by any one of the above bodies (including attendance as a member of a Best Value Review team at a team meeting or related activity);
- Official briefing session called by the Chairman of Council, Leader, Cabinet Member, Chairman of a Committee, Sub-Committee or Panel, Community Forum or Working Group, or by a Group Leader or his/her substitute - such attendance being limited to one Councillor from each group per session;
- Meeting of any other approved body.

The undertaking by any of those listed below of any duty associated with the Council or its committees and other bodies approved for such purposes by the Chief Executive or Head of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Leader:

- The Chairman/Vice-Chairman of Council
- A Cabinet Member
- The Chairman/Vice-Chairman of any Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Group, or Chairman of a Community Forum.
- The leaders of the political groups

Attendance on site visits approved by the relevant Committee or body.

Attendance at Cabinet by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Strategic Monitoring Committee;

Attendance at a meeting of any Scrutiny Committee by the Chairman of the Strategic Monitoring Committee or in the absence of the Chairman and with his/her permission the Vice-Chairman.

Attendance at Cabinet by the Chairman or in the absence of the Chairman and with his/her permission the Vice-Chairman of a Scrutiny Committee where Cabinet is addressing matters within that Committee's terms of reference.

Attendance at any conference by any Councillor authorised by the relevant Director.

Any other attendance for which prior approval has been given by the Chief Executive or Head of Legal and Democratic Services after consultation with the Leader.

In general allowances will not be payable for meetings of outside bodies. A list of appointments to outside bodies, which shall be approved by the Chief Executive or Head of Legal and Democratic Services following consultation with Group Leaders, will be maintained by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. This list will also identify those appointments to outside bodies where allowances are payable.

**Note:** The single rate at which travel may be claimed shall be within the scale determined by the Council within the scale of rates used by the Inland Revenue

A subsistence allowance for Councillors is paid on the basis of actual reasonable expenditure and where overnight accommodation is necessary, this will be for three star accommodation or equivalent, evidenced by receipts.

Co-opted and other non-elected Members are entitled to claim Travel, Subsistence and Dependant Carer's Allowances on the same basis as Members of the Council.