

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Thursday 31 July 2014 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor AW Johnson (Chairman)

Councillors: JW Millar, GJ Powell, PD Price, P Rone, RI Matthews and H Bramer

In attendance: Councillors

Officers: Richard Ball, Helen Coombes, Jo Davidson, Steve Hodges, Geoff Hughes, Bill Norman and Peter Robinson
Mr David McCallum (Chair Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board)
Mr Phil Kendrick, West Mercia Youth Offending Service

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors: JA Hyde, J Jarvis, PM Morgan, R Phillips.

Alistair Neill

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman, subject to the addition of Cllr R Matthews as being present.

17. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

Cabinet received a report setting out the forecast outturn position based on information as at the end of May 2014, and proposals for a number of budget virements to support centralisation of corporate budgets. It was noted that delivery of a balanced budget was projected.

The Chief Financial Officer, Peter Robinson, drew attention to two significant budget pressures which had arisen since the budget period being reported: £400,000 to support additional in year grass cuttings to be funded from the revenue contingency; and £2m to address the need for temporary accommodation at Colwall Church of England Primary School pending the outcome of works to investigate damp issues at the school to be funded from within existing repair and maintenance and capital and revenue contingencies. Mr Robinson confirmed that he remained confident in the budget forecast for a balanced budget, even should there be winter pressures. All sources of funding were being pursued.

Following issues raised by members in attendance:

- Assurance was sought that other schools premises were not likely to require additional emergency significant expenditure. The Chief Financial Officer acknowledged that the damp issues had been known for some time but had significantly worsened following the exceptional spring rains resulting in the need for some urgent response. The Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing advised that existing conditions surveys for schools were in the process of being updated in line with the activity planned in the Corporate Plan.
- The Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing clarified the mitigations put in place to address adult social care savings risks.
- The Director Economy, Communities and Corporate provided clarification regarding the Yazor Brook flood relief scheme costs and confirmed that some of the additional planning income (a positive indicator of economic improvement) would be reinvested in the service.
- The Leader provided assurance that the Colwall community was, and would continue to be engaged in discussions about the future of the school.
- Assurance was provided that provision had been made for legal costs; the Assistant Director Governance confirmed that any judicial reviews were managed to minimise costs.

RESOLVED THAT:

- (a) Cabinet notes the council is projected to spend within its budget for this financial year;**
- (b) Cabinet notes the capital and treasury projected outturns; and**
- (c) Cabinet agrees the virement of 14/15 budgets, including £7m of budgets from services to centralised area to improve budgetary control and improve value for money**

18. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Cabinet considered performance for the first quarter of 2014/15 following the first quarterly performance review held on 15th July 2014.

The Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing provided an update to the report that 43,000 premises had access to fibre broadband and Vodaphone /O2 had now identified 19 sites across the city identified for 4g masts.

The Director Economy, Communities and Corporate undertook to provide clarification to all members regarding the anticipated timing for neighbourhood planning referenda to access funding.

Following issues raised by members in attendance:

- The Director Economy, Communities & Corporate confirmed that the South Wye transport package would not of itself deliver the additional housing but would be a step towards unlocking that permission given the Highways Agency advice that the A49 was at capacity.
- The Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing confirmed that Ofsted criteria applied equally to academy and maintained schools; however the ability of the council to impact on the response to issues raised differed significantly with councils having little or no duties in relation to taking action within academy status schools. That responsibility lay with the school sponsors or the Government.
- The Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing noted that approaches had been made to both the private owners of the enterprise park in Leominster and to individual businesses offering advice and support in securing broadband at the site.

- The Cabinet Member Infrastructure confirmed that Leominster had not been prioritised for additional roads given higher priorities on the A 49 in Hereford.
- The Director for Children’s Wellbeing advised of action being taken to address the core of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training including those focussing on looked after children.
- The Director of Economy Communities & Corporate confirmed that progress at the Skylon Enterprise Park was good with some 40% of the land taken up.

RESOLVED THAT: the performance report be noted.

19. HEREFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD BUSINESS PLAN

Cabinet received a report outlining progress made against the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) business plan 2013-2014 at year end, and inviting comments on the board’s proposed 2014-2015 business plan.

Mr David McCallum, Chairman of the HSCB, summarised the role of the board and outlined key issues within the report, identifying areas for improvement and proposed action.

RESOLVED THAT:

- (a) the progress achieved in the 2013-2014 Business Plan at Appendix 1 be noted; and
- (b) notes the 2014-2015 Business Plan at Appendix 2

20. WEST MERCIA YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

Mr Phil Kendrick from the West Mercia Youth Offending Service presented the draft Youth Justice Plan, setting out how youth justice services across West Mercia are structured and resourced and identifying key actions to address identified risks to service delivery and improvement. It was noted that two factors likely to be influencing offending rates in Herefordshire were the sustained higher detection rates and lower than average use of community resolution options.

In response to a question from a member in attendance Mr Kendrick advised that the evidence did not suggest that the reduction in universal youth services such as traditional youth clubs was a cause in the numbers of young people offending. It was however important to ensure that young people had access to the services they needed; the difficulties in recruiting and retaining volunteers in this area were noted.

RESOLVED THAT: the Youth Justice Plan (at Appendix A) is recommended to Council for approval

21. MARCHES LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

Cabinet considered a report setting out proposed governance arrangements for the joint exercise of executive functions in relation to the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (the LEP). It was noted that the proposed arrangements were strongly encouraged by government.

In response to questions raised by a member in attendance the Assistant Director Governance advised:

- The governance proposals were entirely in support of democratic accountability and transparency;
- The proposals related to executive functions rather than Council functions
- Access to information requirements would apply in relation to the joint executive committee as with any other body of the local authority
- The LEP board was not itself a decision-making body
- A joint scrutiny committee had been proposed but was not currently supported by the other local authority partners; this did not preclude individual authorities' overview & scrutiny committees from fulfilling their own functions.

RESOLVED THAT:

- (a) the establishment of a joint committee to exercise executive functions in relation to the Marches LEP be approved;**
- (b) The proposed constitution for the joint committee, as outlined at appendix A, be approved; and**
- (c) Herefordshire Council provide governance support for the LEP joint arrangements.**

22. HOOPLE

Cabinet considered a report proposing the future approach to the commissioning of services provided by Hoople. Detailed timescales for developing the business case and implementation plan were being agreed with Hoople.

Cllr C Attwood declared an interest as a board member of Hoople.

In response to issues raised by members in attendance:

- It was noted that savings delivered to date against the original business case had been reported to General Overview & Scrutiny
- Assurance was given that every effort would be made to complete the necessary arrangements in such a way that Hoople's viability was not adversely affected.

RESOLVED THAT:

- (a) In considering the need to put in place arrangements for the period beyond the end of the current contract in 2016, the preferred approach to the commissioning of support services be via a Teckal compliant entity operating under control of the council and other shareholders and it's board, subject to these services offering value for money;**
- (b) A business case and implementation plan be developed, in partnership with Hoople and its board, for the establishment of appropriate legal entities to ensure that the council can continue to procure support services through a company with Teckal status and that a commercial trading company is able to continue to develop wider commercial benefits; and**
- (c) The business case and implementation plan required under recommendation (b) be the subject of a further report for consideration and approval by the Cabinet Member Corporate Services.**

The meeting ended at 4.16pm

CHAIRMAN