

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Friday 11 September 2015 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor AW Johnson (Chairman)
Councillor PM Morgan (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: H Bramer, JG Lester, GJ Powell, PD Price and P Rone

In attendance: Councillors JM Bartlett, WLS Bowen, JA Hyde, RI Matthews, AJW Powers, Mr A Neill, Mrs J Davidson, G Hughes, Robinson, Samuels, EPJ Harvey, D Summers and EJ Swinglehurst

Officers: Mr A Neill, Mrs A Brookes, Mrs J Davidson, Mr G Hughes, Mr P Robinson, Mr M Samuels

91. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor TM James.

92. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

93. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That subject to Councillor FM Norman being recorded as “in attendance” rather than as a Cabinet Member, the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Leader welcomed the new director for Adults and Wellbeing, Martin Samuels.

It was agreed that the health and safety policy (agenda item 94), would be moved to the last item on the agenda for today’s meeting.

94. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

The Youth Justice Plan was presented by West Mercia Youth Offending Service (YOS). This was an annual plan determined by the Youth Justice Board, and which linked to other plans in the county. The plan reported positively for last year and the current year, with 11% fewer young people entering the system and a reduction in youth custody.

The plan used a national tool which measured performance in real time, month by month and there was closer integration in Herefordshire with regard to Families First and looked after children and links to the Children and Young People’s Plan. There was a clear plan for further progress in 2015/16.

In answer to a query from the Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Services regarding a review of the YOS, it was clarified that the review has led to a recommendation that the Police and Crime Commissioner hosts the service. In his role as chair of the Community Safety Partnership, the Member also asked if issues

regarding tracking of data were resolved. It was confirmed that data was now being tracked monthly. Further clarification showed that with regard to a reduction in the numbers of young people reoffending, whilst the cohort was smaller, there were more young people with complex needs who were at greater risk, although reoffending rates were reducing. It was confirmed that regional figures were provided in the plan so that a profile for the county could be seen.

It was also noted that the report contained abbreviations which had dual meaning, such as FTE meaning both full time equivalent and first time entrants.

The group leader of Herefordshire Independents welcomed the reduction in figures and asked about the 37% of children who are in care. It was explained that looked after children have more complex needs and mechanisms were in place to gather feedback from these children about how the service could be improved. It was noted that children and young people who engaged with the YOS were less likely to offend; however, more was being done to improve this service as offending was still occurring.

The group leader of It's Our County welcomed improvements in the service but observed that the county had the highest first time entrant (FTE) figure in the region only partly due to the detection rate. He noted that Herefordshire was a demographically smaller partner but had the highest statistic on FTEs and sought assurance that there were sufficient resources to reduce FTEs. It was clarified that the county did have a higher detection rate and that there was comparatively less use of community resolution and therefore the FTE rate was higher than in other areas.

The service was consulting with young people about provision and there was good progress and use of resources despite a further in-year reduction in resources.

The director for children's wellbeing explained that there was a relatively higher proportion of looked after children entering the county due to the availability of accommodation. Since residential children's homes tended to have higher callout rates to police, there was more work required on restorative justice and direct work with homes. She added that it was the responsibility of corporate parents to decide whether to criminalise a looked after child and this was a particular issue for Herefordshire. As regards resources, there was recent consultation on a 6% in-year reduction to the grant from the Youth Justice Board to the YOS; it was not considered that this would adversely affect a continued downward trend in figures.

In answer to a question from the Green group leader regarding the service's effectiveness at preventing reoffending, it was clarified that each person was assessed with regard to either transition into probation or retention in the YOS and there was a member of staff looking at new ways of working.

The leader of the Green group made a further observation regarding satisfaction levels in service provision for those involved in drug use and those experiencing upsetting thoughts, which meant that one person in four was not getting the right help. It was confirmed that the YOS was engaged in the new contract for drug and alcohol services.

RESOLVED

That the Youth Justice Plan be recommended to Council for approval.

95. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

The Children and Young People's Plan was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Young People and Children's Wellbeing. The plan provided a clear vision for

Herefordshire to ensure that young people had the best start to life. It also minimised the impact on services as people grow older, therefore good for the county as a whole, and reminded councillors of their responsibilities as corporate parents. A child friendly version was being developed. Acknowledgement was given to all who developed the plan.

The assistant director, education and commissioning, explained the plan's key points:

- relationship to the health and wellbeing strategy and specific targets, recognising the work with partners to identify priorities including resources and savings;
- working with troubled families, with a focus on early help and targeting direct services and supporting 600 families which would draw in finance;
- targets to reduce first time entrants (FTEs) and reoffending;
- improving performance in such issues as breast-feeding, immunisations, health visitors and school nurses;
- mental health linked to adults' services to redesign services;
- improving safeguarding and recognising pressures on placements;
- focus on adolescent services and those not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and their contribution to the economy;
- recognition of recent legislation regarding changing care plans to develop single pathways for disabled children moving into adulthood.

In response to a comment from the group leader for Herefordshire Independents regarding risk management and the statistics provided regarding mental health, it was confirmed that the plan was intended to be clear about responsibilities and resources and the partnership provided a vehicle to identify risks. I

It was recognised that people needed access to the right mental health support at both at national and local level and that developments in mental health services needed to be seen as it was expected that the number of people identified with mental health issues would grow. It was also recognised that emotional health needs could be addressed as a wider issue on the basis that supporting those needs in earlier years made people more resilient as adults.

The chair of the general overview and scrutiny committee commented on the plan's reference to safeguarding and questioned the level progress made in this area, for example with the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The director for children's wellbeing clarified that the key issue was to retain focus on safeguarding and practice improvements and to develop the MASH further to cover all age-groups with further input from police and other partners.

In response to a further question regarding children coming into the county, it was explained that the issue of advance notification had improved and better arrangements were in place, although there remained issues where children were placed in an emergency and so systems had to catch up with their situation.

The leader of It's Our County (IOC) welcomed the preventive approach and asked how the plan linked to the public health agenda and budget. It was confirmed that the plan was produced with input from the public health team and that there was a member of that team focused on children and families.

In answer to his further question regarding the development of healthy child services and the family nurse partnership, it was clarified that service developments would allow for better local planning within the national framework.

The Cabinet Member for young people and children's wellbeing acknowledged a further comment from the IOC group leader regarding community engagement and the potential

role of parish councils and the third sector. He commented that, in order to avoid duplication, it was important to recognise that the plan belonged to the county rather than the council. He added that parish and town councils played an important role in ensuring services were provided.

The leader of the Green group asked about financial implications associated with funding the work with troubled families. In response, reference was made to the outcome that partners were to identify 600 families and that work with them would continue and as there was no reliance on funding, there was no associated risk. The approach taken centred on multi-agency work with families with particular problems such as offending and truancy. There was a new scheme to fund volunteers to work with families in order to draw communities in and identify areas where communities can help and this was seen as a sustainable way of meeting high level and infinite needs against finite funds.

The chair of the health and social care overview and scrutiny committee observed that the plan referred to free school meals provision being linked to a child's development, although it is now the case that meals are provided to all children. It was clarified that this criterion still existed for the purposes of data collation.

RESOLVED

That the children's and young people's plan be recommended to Council for approval.

96. CAPITAL SUPPORT FOR THE FEDERATION OF AYLESTONE BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE COLLEGE (ABEC), BROADLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE

The assistant director, education and commissioning, presented the report and reminded cabinet of an earlier report that was presented on 13 November 2014. The report related to two separate schools and early years provision which faced significant capital spend requirements and surplus places if they remained in situ. The scheme moves provision to one site with revised costs. This would provide high quality provision and a new primary school, and represented a forerunner for other projects in the school capital investment strategy.

The chair of the general overview and scrutiny committee commented on apparent mismeasurement and miscalculation connected with the scheme and asked for explanation. The head of educational development explained that the projected costs were investigated and were greater once more detailed work took place on the scheme, although it still represented best value for the council.

The Cabinet Member for young people and children's wellbeing emphasised the importance of moving forward with the scheme to consolidate assets, and pointed out the significantly higher cost of building from new. It was important to now look at what had been achieved with the scheme and how this would influence how future projects would develop within the strategy.

The chair of the general overview and scrutiny committee commended the report.

The group leader of It's Our County (IOC) expressed concern regarding the process followed for getting the scheme to this stage and that contract design and management of this scheme highlighted the value in doing this well.

The Leader commented on the need to ensure all facts and best deals were gathered and there were other previous contracts which highlighted this.

The Cabinet member for economy and corporate services commented on the process followed for developing this scheme given the limited capital funds for schools.

The group leader of Herefordshire Independents welcomed the scheme and observed that it created an environment which supported children to make an easier transition from primary to secondary education. In answer to his enquiry regarding the future of the vacated site, it was clarified that it would be included in capital estates.

Commenting on the identification of risk, the director for children's wellbeing reminded cabinet of the element of risk associated with large scale projects, which had been identified and reported at the outset and of the benefits and outcomes that this scheme would bring for schools and for children.

The Leader commented on the value of learning from all schemes.

RESOLVED

That

- (a) the impact of the reduced estimated value of the land which will reduce the anticipated contribution to corporate resources, as set out at paragraph 9 of the report be noted; and**
- (b) it be recommended to Council that an additional £250k of funding be approved to relocate Broadlands primary school onto the Aylestone Business and Enterprise College (ABEC) site.**

97. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Cabinet member for economy and corporate services introduced the health and safety policy and strategy which was a statutory requirement and had been refreshed and updated. The management structure and lines of responsibility had been updated and included in the corporate risk register.

It was noted that from January to April 2015, incidents under the Reporting of injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) had reduced by 50%.

Cabinet members were asked to note that the health and safety management board included three council members and views were sought on membership to be forwarded to the cabinet member for economy and corporate services.

RESOLVED

That the updated health and safety policy and strategy for its implementation be approved.

There followed a short statement before the close of the meeting from the Cabinet member for economy and corporate to announce that in interest of public and staff safety it was decided to temporarily close Hereford library and museum with effect from today.

Questions on this matter would be dealt with following the close of the Cabinet meeting.