

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held as an online meeting on Thursday 4 June 2020 at 2.30 pm

Present: Councillor David Hitchiner, Leader of the Council (Chairperson)
Councillor Felicity Norman, Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillors Ellie Chowns, Pauline Crockett, Gemma Davies, John Harrington and Ange Tyler

Cabinet support
members in attendance

Councillors Peter Jinman and Jenny Bartlett

Group leaders in
attendance

Councillors John Hardwick, Alan Seldon, Terry James, Jonathan Lester and Trish Marsh

Scrutiny chairpersons in
attendance

Councillors Elissa Swinglehurst, Carole Gandy and Jonathan Lester

Officers in attendance:

Director for economy and place, Director for children and families, Solicitor to the council, Chief finance officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Director of public health and Head of community commissioning and resources

144. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Harvey.

145. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

146. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

147. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 5 - 6)

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 1 to the minutes.

148. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (Pages 7 - 8)

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 2 to the minutes.

149. CARBON MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020/21 - 2025/26

The head of environment climate emergency and waste services attended for this item.

The cabinet member environment, economy and skills introduced the report. She thanked colleagues for their work on the new plan and paid tribute to previous administrations for delivery of progress to date on reducing carbon emissions. An action plan would be produced showing the detail of the next phase of reductions. It was hoped that other organisations would work with the council to meet the objective of a carbon neutral county.

Points noted in discussion of the report included:

- The impact of the coronavirus on the way the council worked, for example reduced travelling and increased working from home, with some changes likely to become embedded over the long term;
- Schools represented 40% of the current emissions and would be a substantial part of the challenge to deliver reductions, it was recognised that children were supportive and interested in climate change and related projects;
- The use of LED street lighting had delivered important reductions but lighting would be maintained in key areas to maintain safety.

In considering comments and questions from group leaders the members of the cabinet noted that:

- Measures to reduce emissions would not necessarily cost money as they could include spend to save options, however where there were costs these would need to be budgeted for and the action plan would set out more details;
- Extreme weather events such as flooding were now likely to be more than just potential risks and the county would need to adapt;
- The inclusion of staff travel in measurements was welcomed;
- There was a limit to what the council could achieve on its own, businesses and the public would need to be engaged;
- The impact of the coronavirus on the economy and levels of unemployment might make it more difficult to deliver the changes proposed;
- There was a need to increase the number of charge points for electric vehicles, three new rapid charge points were being installed at points along the A49 as a strategic corridor and a report was expected later in the year on how the market for electric vehicles could be facilitated;
- Some changes that would deliver reductions involved areas that the council did not have direct control over for example building regulations and subsidies for domestic charging points and solar PV installations.

It was resolved that:

(a) the Carbon Management Plan (2020/21 – 2025/26) which sets out an interim target for the council to reduce its organisational carbon emissions by 75%, based on 2008/09 levels by 2025/26 is approved.

150. HOUSING-RELATED SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

The head of community commissioning and resources and the senior commissioning officer for the project attended for this item.

The cabinet member health and adult wellbeing introduced the item. The proposed initiative was part of wider work to reshape the market for vulnerable young people. A complimentary new provision to accommodate care leavers with complex needs was due to commence shortly. The proposed service had been designed in consultation with young people to make sure that the service reflected their needs. Those using the accommodation would have their own front door with support on hand, tailored to different levels of need. It was hoped that the floating support / outreach offer would give landlords of private and social rented accommodation the confidence to accept young people as tenants.

Points noted from discussion of the report included:

- It was anticipated that these young people would welcome the chance to learn the skills to transition to adulthood successfully and it was important to have buy in from the young people themselves;
- Support workers would recognise trigger points and adjust the level of support provided in order to mitigate risks as much as possible;

- A sinking fund could be set up to meet occasional costs of repair if properties were damaged but there was not expected to be much need for this;
- There were many benefits to having these young people living closer to home and it also contributed to a reduction in costs to the council by reducing the need for provision outside the county;
- The accommodation was being delivered with no capital outlay by the council;
- Support provided would include looking at how to be financially independent and access employment and training;
- The accommodation to be provided would not be suitable for wheelchair users but the floating support package could help provide support using other accommodation adapted for their needs;
- It was requested that the equality impact assessment be updated to reference support for young people with physical disabilities.

Cabinet members noted the following points in considering comments and questions from group leaders:

- There was widespread support for the proposed service;
- The focus was on provision in Hereford as consultation with young people showed this was where they wanted to reside as it had better access to education and training opportunities, the floating support offer would allow young people to move back to the market towns once they had transitioned.

The chairperson of the children and young people scrutiny committee welcomed the proposal. The scrutiny committee had not considered this service but had reviewed the parallel service for young people with more complex needs. The head of community commissioning and resources agreed to investigate if it were possible to arrange for scrutiny committee members to visit the accommodation. It was noted that the scrutiny committee would want to review the impact of the new service after 18 months or so.

The chairperson of the adults and wellbeing scrutiny committee supported the wider approach and recognised the role of councillors as corporate parents.

It was resolved that:

- (a) the commissioning by way of an open procurement process of an accommodation support service, along with floating support and mediation services for vulnerable young people, aged 16 to 25 years, be approved; and**
- (b) authority be delegated to the director of adults and communities, following consultation with the director for children and families and cabinet members, to award a contract for housing related support services for a period of up to five years and maximum cost of £3.1m.**

151. FUTURE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

The head of community commissioning and resources and the senior commissioning officer for the project attended for this item.

The cabinet member health and adult wellbeing introduced the report. It was explained that the UNHCR allocated refugee cases to the UK which were then allocated to each region. The approach taken by the council would be the same as in previous years, in that the council would identify suitable housing and put that forward to the local migration partnership with information about the needs that could be supported for example availability of school places. The partnership would then send through profiles of refugees and the council would have the option to decline where it did not believe it could meet the specific needs of an individual.

Councillor Davies left the meeting at 15:59 during consideration of this item.

Cabinet members noted that:

- Refugees brought richness and diversity to the county and there was a desire to support as many refugees as possible, taking account of the councils capacity;
- Refugees were generally settled in Hereford as there was a better supply of suitable accommodation and access to services, other locations such as Leominster had been considered and could be used if sufficient accommodation became available;
- Feedback from some previous refugee families had been received and taken into account in forming the future approach;
- Refugees could move to another area if they wished, however if they wanted to continue to receive support Herefordshire council would need to discuss this with the receiving council;
- Recent experience was that refugees settled well and no substantial issues had been experienced.

Group leaders were supportive of the proposal and noted the contribution of refugees to the county. They commended staff for how well refugees had settled previously and the people of Herefordshire for being welcoming to these individuals. It was suggested that the equalities impact assessment should include reference to schools, education providers and language support providers as key stakeholders.

It was resolved that:

- (a) a long term flexible commitment to the ambition of resettling at least 125 refugees over five years is approved; and**
- (b) authority to determine numbers of refugees resettled in any one year and any associated logistics is delegated to the director for adults and communities, in consultation with the cabinet member for health and wellbeing.**

The meeting ended at 4.10 pm

Chairperson

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 4 June 2020

Question 1

Mr I Wilkinson, Brierley

To: cabinet member, commissioning, procurement and assets

At the cabinet meeting in Leominster, Councillor Gemma Davies, committed to having metrics implemented with Balfour Beatty. I have been through the minutes and cannot see an update. Are clearly defined, agreed metrics with targets and a clear reporting timetable now in place and what are the review processes, penalties for non-performance and improvement goals?

Response

Thank you for your question. I can confirm that there are currently defined metrics within the BBLP contract for both the public realm contract and the Property and Building Maintenance contract. Both Cllr Harrington and I now attend monthly operational boards where the metrics are scrutinised and any issues raised at the earliest opportunity. We have also committed to ensuring that consultation for the public realm annual plan is done much earlier so that the plan and metrics can be better linked to the County Plan. This will be reflected in next year's annual plan.

We have just commissioned a review into social value and what metrics could be used to judge performances on contracts, tenders and applications. We are even more committed to ensuring that the where businesses provide services for the council that we judge them not just by finances but by other metrics such as utilisation of local businesses and environmental factors.

With regards to any penalty for non-performance at an operational level then this is corrected at the provider's cost, poor performance against the strategic measures of performance results in the failure to 'win' contract extensions.

Supplementary Question

It is good to see you have the metrics up and running and that you have a review process, but nowhere do you mention targets. It is pointless having metrics without targets. Targets are there to drive the right behaviours. E.g. there should be a target to reduce the number of management heads in the contract.

I am not sure why you would commission for work to be done, is this costing the ratepayer money. Have you approached other councils for their metrics?

APQC have a metric classification template which is pretty good

Response

A full written answer will be provided. Every metric has a target with it, so we have a performance rate which they must achieve and it's RAG rated so whenever it doesn't reach that target that then forms part of the operations board where we are able to challenge that and work out the reasons behind why it's not working.

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 4 June 2020

Question 1

Councillor Nigel Shaw, Bromyard Bringsty Ward

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

New housing land supply figures were due for publication at the beginning of April, can the cabinet member responsible now provide these, or confirm a date on which they will be published?

Response

The housing supply statement for 2020 will be based on the position as of April 1st but it is not the case that these figures were due for publication in early April. The assessment of the housing land position needs to have regard to the methodology set out in Government guidance and involves a considerable amount of staff resource in order to provide as accurate an annual position as possible. As with previous years, the intention is to complete the assessment by the end of July. This year the Covid-19 pandemic is providing a number of additional challenges to this process but it is still intended at this time to provide the position statement by July 31st. This will enable the returns to Central Government to be made within the required deadlines.

Supplementary Question

I appreciate that the statutory deadline for submitting the figures is the end of July. I was hoping that the cabinet member might by now at least have an idea if the Authority were going to come in over the three year land supply figure.

What contingency plans does the cabinet member have in place to bolster the existing Herefordshire Local Plan if the housing land supply is reported as below 3 years in July to stop a development freeze for all in the county?

Response

As you say the statutory return date is July. There has been a slight delay in getting out and visiting the sites as a result of Covid. In terms of what masterplan response, we are working on some and I can give you a written update once we have an understanding of where we are at the moment.

