

MEETING:	Council
MEETING DATE:	12 December 2014
TITLE OF REPORT:	Leader's report
REPORT BY:	Leader of the council

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

To receive a report from the Leader on the activities of Cabinet since the meeting of Council in September.

Recommendations

THAT: the report be noted.

Alternative Options

1 There are no alternative options; it is a requirement of the council's constitution.

Reasons for Recommendations

2 To ensure Members are aware of the activities of Cabinet.

Key Considerations

3 A list of the decisions taken by the executive since the last report to Council on 26 September is provided at appendix A; one was taken under the general exception

provision (less than twenty-eight but more than five days' notice), none were taken under the urgency provision (less than five days' notice). One decision (South Wye Transport Package) has been subject to call-in by overview and scrutiny. Over the course of five hours the decision was thoroughly scrutinised and all questioned responded to. The committee recommended that two elements be referred to the Cabinet and these will be considered on 18 December.

Budget

- 4 The projected overspend in adult wellbeing has stopped rising over the last couple of months. Additional savings delivered in other areas, notably economy, communities and corporate, are welcomed and effectively offset the social care overspend so that we are currently forecasting ending this financial year within budget. Early indications are that next year's targets will be tight but achievable; 2015/16 will require another £9m of savings over and above this year's savings to ensure we stay in budget.
- 5 The Chancellor's autumn statement signals further significant cuts to public spending. Estimates vary between £25bn and £40bn over the life of the next parliament. With health and education ring-fenced, we may expect the main cuts to fall on local authorities and the services they provide.
- 6 Following the recent budget consultation we have decided not to reduce council tax support in 2015/16. Hard work by officers, the finance team and Cabinet has made this possible but of course there can be no guarantee of maintaining this position in subsequent years.

Hereford United Football Club

- 7 The courts have allowed another extension to the club in respect of the winding up order being sought by creditors through the High Court. The club has been given until 15 December to pay the creditors; we await the outcome with interest.

Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

- 8 Government announced a further sum of 'growth deal' funding to be made available to LEPs for the financial period 2016/21; bids were required by 5 December. With our Marches LEP partners, and in line with the agreed Marches strategic economic plan, we have submitted a bid for money to support delivery of broadband, infrastructure, and the new university.

Waste disposal

- 9 With the Leader of Worcestershire County Council I recently visited the site of the new energy from waste plant. The site is truly impressive with basic groundworks including a massive 17metre deep hole which looks larger than a soccer pitch. A meeting of the waste advisory board in early December reported an upward revision of projected savings over the life of the plant to £160m over the 'do nothing' option. Whilst we continue to get objections from opponents of the scheme, there were no alternatives that withstood the necessary scrutiny.

Old Market, Hereford

- 10 I was delighted to see that the Old Market development in Hereford has secured a gold award at the British Council of Shopping Centres annual awards ceremony, winning the 'new centre of the year' category. This is fantastic recognition for the development and the city, and I congratulate all concerned.

- 11 Finally I would like to add my own voice to the many tributes paid to Councillor Barnett who sadly passed away at the beginning of November. Olwyn had given over 30 years' service to the community as a councillor. During that time she took on a number of roles including committee chairman, scrutiny member, cabinet member and, most recently, chairman of council; she remained focussed throughout on her role as a ward councillor. She was a formidable advocate for the communities in Mortimer ward, and unwavering in her passion for improving the wellbeing of the more vulnerable in the county.

Community Impact

- 12 The community impact of any decisions of the executive have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken.

Equality and Human Rights

- 13 Cabinet and cabinet members have paid due regard to the public sector equality duty in their decision-making, as set out in the relevant decision reports.

Financial Implications

- 14 The financial implications of any decisions of the executive have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken.

Legal Implications

- 15 The legal implications of any decisions of the executive have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken.

Risk Management

- 16 The risks associated with any decisions of the executive have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken.

Consultees

- 17 None.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Executive Decisions

Background Papers

- None identified.