

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at Shire Hall, St Peters Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Thursday 19 March 2015 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor AW Johnson (Chairman)

Councillors: H Bramer, JW Millar, PM Morgan, GJ Powell and PD Price

In attendance: Councillors WLS Bowen, BA Durkin, TM James, FM Norman, AJW Powers, Ms H Coombes, Mrs J Davidson, G Hughes, Mr A Neill, Norman and Robinson

70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors CNH Attwood, RI Matthews and P Rone.

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

72. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

73. PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT

The Cabinet Member, Health and Wellbeing, introduced the third annual Public Health report. This year, the report focuses on children and young people and provides an overview of recommendations from the last report.

The Interim Director of Public Health described how the focus on children and young people recognises that although Herefordshire is a healthy county, sitting within the top 20% of counties for quality of health, there needs to be more focus on the younger section of the community. A range of partners are working together to recognise the link between poor health and social factors and the importance of access to services which impact on community resilience.

Dental public health has been identified as an area for further improvement, with links to diet, sugary foods and obesity. Herefordshire has also been identified as a pilot site for a diabetes prevention programme. The style of the report is intended to encourage greater public engagement.

The Chair of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee expressed concern about dental issues and the fluoridation of the water supply as a contributing factor in good dental health in children. It was explained that fluoridation in Herefordshire is complex for a number of reasons. The cost effectiveness of fluoridation needs to be scoped and in the meantime, there are other measures such as engaging parents in the use of fluoride toothpaste at the same time as addressing the matter of over-consumption of sugary drinks and foods. Access to free dental healthcare is also an important factor, along with effective health promotion from professionals.

The leader of the Green Group emphasised the importance of Herefordshire's geography as the natural environment is known to bring health benefits. Access to greenspace was acknowledged as an important factor in health and wellbeing across all age groups, and is supported by conservation organisations through such concepts as the green gym. The environment plays an important role in the transport plan, giving people the opportunity to cycle and walk safely and feel encouraged to be more physically active.

The Cabinet Member for Children and young People responded to the earlier comment regarding dental health, explaining that health promotion work is in place with health visitors targeting 3 and 4 year-olds.

The leader of It's Our County welcomed the report and its focus on children and young people, noting prevention work as a key public health action. However, there was concern about there being sufficient resources to address these issues effectively. The Interim Director of Public Health explained that Public Health England had recognised that rural counties were not receiving sufficient finance in funding allocations in order to provide the level of service required. There is always more that can be done around both primary and secondary prevention and ensuring that adults too are healthy and active in order to minimise health problems and reliance on complex health packages.

A typographical error was noted in the report's recommendations and it was confirmed that the recommendations were to be addressed to Cabinet rather than Council.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received by Cabinet and published as required by the Health and social Care Act 2012.

74. HEREFORDSHIRE OLDER PEOPLE'S HOUSING STRATEGY AND PATHWAY

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing introduced the report. He highlighted that there is an expected increase in people over the age of 65 in the county for whom there is a limited choice for downsizing or finding new housing. The strategy is intended to remedy this.

The Programme Director, Housing and Growth, presented the strategy. It responds to the issues affecting the availability of suitable housing for older people in the county in terms of rurality, demographics and financial challenges, by looking for new approaches to resolving the problems.

The age group with the highest growth rate is the over 85s who also experience health issues such as dementia and physical health conditions. Herefordshire has a dispersed older population, with people often living in larger, detached housing. The majority of people own their homes and are relatively well-off, but are faced with a lack of choice of alternative housing. There is, however, potential within communities to support people to remain in their own homes, although currently there is a lot of social isolation with frequent reports of people saying they are lonely most or all of the time and have limited contact with other people. The recommendations, which are based on key research, promote the following action points:

- Setting-up advice and assessment tools for families to look for information and support to help in a crisis. This needs to be developed to support people to enable decision making and planning for the future.
- Developing the service offer to help people stay at home such as through the expansion of Telecare. The value of accessing home maintenance and gardening services is recognised as a factor in choice of accommodation due to the

implications of moving home and this needs to be simplified by co-ordinating agencies.

- Developing the right housing mix to support the population and increase choice. Targets are to 2030 and working with developers and housing associations is key in order to change their perception of the market so that there are more development schemes which are marketed to older age groups.

A pathway has therefore been developed to set out how people plan and make decisions for their long-term wellbeing and this strategy is an important development for this age group.

The Cabinet Member for Children and young People welcomed and commended the strategy as there are common issues across all age groups.

The Chair of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented that housing needs to be inexpensive and developed around the county as a whole.

The Group Leader for the Greens commented that all housing should be energy efficient and affordable. The types of housing also need to recognise that not all people benefit from single-story accommodation as use of staircases can bring health benefits because they encourage people to be more active. Co-habiting also needs to be considered as a concept as this can address loneliness.

The Group Leader of the Liberal Democrats commented that people are not getting the right housing for their needs and that being on the outskirts of towns and cities reduces accessibility of services. Whilst it is more expensive to build bungalows, they are an essential part of the housing mix for this age group and there need to be incentives for developers to build in areas that are accessible to services. The Programme Director for Housing and Growth added that neighbourhood planning is key in this and the strategy will inform parishes in their planning. There is an increased demand for bungalows and two-bedroomed homes, and co-habiting has also been referenced in the strategy.

The Leader of the Council added that in his ward there are arrangements in place for accommodation although homes are expensive and there needs to be a co-ordinated approach to planning policy and other avenues for accommodation need to be explored.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing thanked those responsible for developing this work and commented that stakeholders are fully involved and so the strategy needs to be actioned.

At this point, the Leader offered his apologies and left the meeting. The Deputy Leader took over as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing added that implantation of the strategy has been discussed with the Planning team.

RESOLVED:

- That**
- (a) the Herefordshire Older People's Housing Strategy and Pathway Action Plan be approved; and**
 - (b) the Programme Director, Housing and Growth, following consultation with the Cabinet Member, be instructed to undertake final minimum amendments as required, prior to publication.**

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People introduced the report which focuses on a proposed strategy to keep young people in foster care beyond the age of 18 where it would improve their life opportunities and wellbeing.

The Head of Looked After Children presented the key points of the strategy which seeks to remedy previous issues regarding access to employment, finance and avoiding offending. The strategy extends the role of the corporate parent to provide further support in recognition that not all 18 year olds are ready to be fully adult, thus representing a vulnerable group as they make the transition into adulthood.

Each year there is a small number of young people in fostering who are affected by these issues. The strategy involves additional expenditure on supported lodging for these people plus greater in-house provision and oversight.

The Group Leader for the Liberal Democrats commented that this is a positive strategy. This was echoed by the Chair of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee, recognising the need to support those young people who need to continue to remain in foster care whilst they make the transition into adulthood.

The Deputy Leader expressed support for the strategy although commenting on its title. The Head of Looked After Children explained that this was a national campaign which could take on a local title.

RESOLVED:

That the Staying Put policy and procedures be approved and implemented with immediate effect.

76. WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES CONTRACT UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Contracts and Assets introduced the report which refers to the deferral, until 2023, of the purchase of the Energy from Waste plant site in Hartlebury. If deferred, the reserve would be retained and would reduce the need for the council to borrow. There has also been a new financial split between Herefordshire and Worcestershire which is based on tonnage and brings savings to the council.

The Head of Corporate Finance confirmed an improved position following financial negotiations and the savings gained based on the split. The deferral would not change the council's rights, but the payment would be reduced because of a reduction for the recycling site. It is therefore of benefit to the council to make the purchase at the end of the PFI agreement in 2023.

The Chair of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked for assurance that this did not affect the recycling facility. The Director for Economy, Community and Corporate, confirmed that the Energy from Waste plant is separate from the recycling plant.

In answer to a question from the Group Leader of It's Our County regarding the Joint Working Arrangement summarised in the report, in particular relating to the desirability of Mercia extending the contract beyond 2018, the Head of Corporate Finance confirmed that there is the option to extend the contract by five years. She added that this element of the original PFI contract was not varied.

A request was made by the Group Leader of It's Our County for a briefing paper on this matter.

RESOLVED:

That (a) the conclusion of the agreed joint waste PFI contract variation and associated joint working agreement be noted; and
(b) the deferral, until December 2023, of the purchase of Herefordshire's share of the Hartlebury waste site be approved.

77. CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN 2015-16

The Assistant Director for Place Based Commissioning presented the plan which is an enabler for residents to live fulfilled lives and for the promotion of a successful economy. There is a requirement to have this plan in place supported by quarterly performance reports, with actions supported by Cabinet decisions.

RESOLVED:

That the 2015/16 corporate delivery plan be approved.

The meeting ended at 3.04 pm

CHAIRMAN