

MEETING:	Council
MEETING DATE:	25 September 2015
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 July.

Recommendations

THAT:

- (a) 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 (covering

the period between 3 July and 4 September) is provided at appendix 1; two were taken under the general exception provision (less than twenty-eight but more than five days' notice) and the relevant overview and scrutiny committee chairman was notified. None were taken under the urgency provision (less than five days' notice). No decisions were subject to call-in.

- 4 The council's local development plan is reaching the end of the lengthy process of adoption and it is anticipated that the document will be available for Council to adopt in October. Having regard to the national guidance, the chairman of the council has agreed to call an extraordinary meeting of Council to enable us to proceed quickly to adoption; to ensure that all members are fully briefed on the plan and the process which has been followed in its development a seminar or members is being arranged for early October.

Devolution

- 5 Government is encouraging local authorities to consider bidding for combined authority and/or devolution deals. Rural authorities agree that combined authority arrangements are not appropriate to their needs. We understand that some neighbouring authorities are preparing their own devolution bids.
- 6 We believe that the interests of our residents are best served by an independent Herefordshire and therefore are exploring the devolution route, working with potential public sector partners and with extended Marches local enterprise partnership (LEP) involvement.
- 7 To that end we have written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government registering our intention to submit a proposal, and are aiming to prepare a submission by the end of the year.
- 8 Current cooperation with our partners in the LEP would continue and could potentially be extended as a result of devolution involving all or any of the LEP partners. Those partners have been advised of our intention and are fully supportive.

Refugees

- 9 Government has decided to accept 20,000 refugees during this Parliament. Local authorities have been asked to assess their ability to support this objective, although to date we have no indication of numbers or timing. The director of adults and wellbeing is leading the Herefordshire team making that assessment, working as part of the West Midlands Strategic Migration Group.
- 10 Numerous requests for action or offers of help have been received from individuals and organisations following this decision. The urge to do something quickly is driven by commendable compassion and emotion. The multiple considerations arising from economic, linguistic and cultural problems however, require a considered and sustainable solution. Meanwhile, we suggest that the many generous offers of donations are channelled through appropriate agencies.

Budget consultation

- 11 Response has been encouraging with over 1,000 submissions so far. The consultation finishes on 9 October and analysed results should be available by mid-month. These will help inform eventual budget decisions as will the comprehensive spending review due late November.

Chief executive's objectives

- 12 In line with the framework for assessment agreed by the employment panel, the annual performance and development programme for the chief executive began before the election. Following consultation with group leaders this process has now been completed. A summary of the agreed objectives is attached at appendix 2 for information.

Community Impact

- 13 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

- 14 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

- 15 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

- 16 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

- 17 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

- 18 None.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Executive decisions taken
- Appendix 2 – Chief executive's objectives 2015/16

Background Papers

- None identified.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Councillor AW Johnson, Leader of the council on Tel (01432) 260494