

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Thursday 9 March 2017 at 2.00 pm

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

Councillors DG Harlow, JG Lester, PD Price and P Rone

Cabinet support members in attendance Councillors BA Durkin, NE Shaw and EJ Swinglehurst

Group leaders in attendance Councillors TM James, J Hardwick (as substitute for R I Matthews) and EPJ Harvey (as substitute for AJW Powers)

Scrutiny chairmen in attendance Councillors PA Andrews and WLS Bowen

Other councillors in attendance: Councillors CR Butler

Officers in attendance: Geoff Hughes, Jo Davidson, Martin Samuels, Claire Ward and Mark Taylor

72. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Bramer.

73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

74. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

75. COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND

The cabinet member for health and wellbeing introduced the report.

The strategic wellbeing and housing manager drew attention to the supplementary information that had been published regarding the status of Marches CLTS. It was clarified that this organisation provided services and support for community housing developments but was not itself a community land trust and therefore was not eligible for any funding earmarked for grant aid to community land trusts.

The strategic wellbeing and housing manager highlighted that £252k had been paid to Herefordshire Council from the Community-Led Housing Fund. Subject to the submission of appropriate schemes a further £251k was expected to be released. The timescale for submission required a prompt decision.

The proposed schemes for submission were listed in the report. It was noted that there was a broad range of forms of community-led housing including community land trusts, co-housing schemes, self-build housing and self-help housing which made use of vacant or obsolete properties. Funding would be allocated with a focus on schemes which were already in development with land identified or on ways to build capacity within the council to support future community housing projects.

A group leader welcomed the funding but expressed concern that too much might be used on capacity building within the council and not enough on delivering projects on the ground. The cabinet member for health and wellbeing stated that the council would not be spending funding on consultants but that it was important to have good support mechanisms in place to deliver projects.

In response to a question the strategic wellbeing and housing manager stated that opportunities on larger development sites to have an element of community housing were already being considered and that there was good read across emerging development plans. The council would be open minded about the models of community housing that could be supported. He stated that this should be seen as the first year of a five year programme and that it was important to lay good foundations and explore which options had the most potential for future delivery.

The cabinet member for transport and roads noted that the sum allocated was relatively small in capital terms and asked if the council should focus on one or two projects to ensure delivery on the ground, rather than starting many feasibility studies that did not deliver tangible results. The strategic wellbeing and housing manager responded that the suggestion had merit but the council wanted to keep an open mind on options for delivering community housing and this would require some exploratory work.

A cabinet support member noted that the funds had to be spent by March 2018 and it was unlikely that the funds would be translated into bricks and mortar in this space of time given the length of the planning process. The strategic wellbeing and housing manager stated that the council was free to spend the allocation as either capital or revenue and that there was at least one co-housing scheme which had already made good progress through the planning process. Further guidance on expenditure was awaited from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The cabinet member for economy and corporate services asked what the anticipated allocation for years 2-5 of the programme was. The strategic wellbeing and housing manager stated that it was not clear but the expectation was that the funding would be at least of the same level as that received in the first year.

Resolved that:

- (a) the proposals detailed at paragraph 9 of the report for the use of funding to a maximum of £503k from the Department of Communities and Local Government under the Community-Led Housing Fund be approved; and**
- (b) authority be delegated to the director for adults and wellbeing to allocate the available community-led housing funding to specific programmes, grants and initiatives in order to implement the proposals.**

76. END OF JANUARY CORPORATE BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

The cabinet member for economy and corporate services introduced the report. He highlighted a number of key points:

- a projected £250k underspend for 2016/17;
- continued reduction in headcount in economy, communities and corporate directorate;
- standards maintained despite pressure;
- successful bids for cyber security centre project and for development of the university;
- city link road project behind schedule due to bad weather in December but now catching up; and
- energy from waste plant live.

The directorate services team leader spoke on the report. He noted that almost 70% of indicators showed a positive shift in performance.

A group leader commented that underspend in the economy, communities and corporate directorate was being used to cover overspends elsewhere. She felt that it was difficult to understand the exact position as it was presented in net form. She further commented that it was difficult to see where income went within the directorates and what specific income was spent on.

The cabinet member for health and wellbeing responded that the projected overspend in the adults and wellbeing directorate was very small compared to the gross budget. The quality of services was being maintained despite the pressures and Herefordshire Council was one of the top performers in the country.

The cabinet member for young people and children's wellbeing stated that the council should be viewed as a whole and that the structure that had been put in place meant that one directorate was responsible for gaining income and the two others focused on providing services that were needed in the best way possible. While the council had clear savings targets there would always be a need to react to urgent situations, especially when dealing with the most vulnerable members of the community.

It was noted that some council income streams were difficult to predict and this presented a challenge when setting budgets. For example, a number of grants had been announced or confirmed since the 2017/18 budget had been set and the outcome of contract negotiations for services could not be guaranteed.

The chairman of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee commented that overspend in the adults and wellbeing budget was much reduced from previous years and that the control of the budget deserved praise. The chairman of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented that the standards in the children's wellbeing directorate were much improved, having been graded inadequate only a few years before.

Resolved that:

- a) performance for the first ten months of 2016/17 was reviewed and no further actions to secure improved performance were determined.**

77. PUBLICATION OF ANNUAL REPORTS FOR ADULTS AND WELLBEING 2016

The cabinet member for health and wellbeing introduced the report. She noted that a suite of documents had been produced which showed how the adults and wellbeing directorate was delivering services. Some of the reports set out background information while others showed the direction of travel. The documents would provide a framework for future work and set the context for discussions with council partners.

In response to a question the director of public health stated that the suite of documents supported the plans already approved by the cabinet for delivery of services in the future. The documents set out where public health could play a part in these services.

In response to a query from a cabinet support member the director of public health explained that the lifestyle trainer service included a number of different elements and that the cost of the team overall was £198k.

The cabinet member for infrastructure commented that while the figures in the documents had previously been reported it was useful to have all the information pulled into one place. Members had had an input to and the opportunity to comment on the information in the documents.

The cabinet member for young people and children's wellbeing noted that the percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of foundation stage had improved significantly and now stood at 72%. This was above the England average. This improvement would allow for future targeting of resources to those who were more disadvantaged. The cabinet member also noted that the dental health of children in Herefordshire was disappointingly poor and an area for improvement.

The director for adults and wellbeing commented that the adults and wellbeing directorate was in a very different place compared to three or four years previously. Around three quarters of authorities were expected to overspend on their adult social care budget for 2016/17. Herefordshire was expecting a relatively small overspend and there was a chance that this would be eliminated by the end of the year. The documents produced showed a clear picture which would be used in dialogue with partner organisations and when the council needed to take difficult decisions on commissioning of services.

Resolved that:

(a) the following be approved for publication:

- **annual report of the director of public health 2016**
- **adult social care local account 2015/2016**
- **market position statement 2017/20**

(b) the following plans be approved and used to guide resource allocation over the period 2017/2020:

- **adults wellbeing plan 2017/20**
- **public health plan 2017/18**

The meeting ended at 2.57 pm

CHAIRMAN