

3. Supplement to the agenda for

Cabinet

Thursday 1 May 2025

2.30 pm

**Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4
0LE**

3. MINUTES

Draft minutes of 27 March 2025

Pages

3 - 16

Herefordshire Council

DRAFT**Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Thursday 27 March 2025 at 2.30 pm**

Present: Councillor Jonathan Lester, Leader of the Council (Chairperson)
 Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst, Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillors Graham Biggs, Harry Bramer, Barry Durkin, Carole Gandy, Philip Price and Pete Stoddart

Cabinet members in attendance online Councillor Powell

Group leaders in attendance Councillors Liz Harvey (in person), Claire Davies (online), Stef Simmons (in person for Cllr Toynbee) and Ben Proctor (in person for Cllr James)

Scrutiny chairpersons in attendance Councillor Ben Proctor, Toni Fagan (online)

Other councillors in attendance: None

Officers in attendance: Luenne Featherstone, Hilary Hall, Claire Porter, Tina Russell, Rachael Sanders, Rosie Thomas-Easton, Alfred Rees-Glinos, Samantha Gregory

75. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies from members of the cabinet.

There were apologies from cabinet support members, councillors Hurcomb and Mason.

There were further apologies from councillors, Crockett, James, Stark and Toynbee.

It was confirmed that councillor Proctor would substitute for councillor James as group leader for the Liberal Democrats. Councillor Simmons would substitute for councillor Toynbee as group leader for the Green Party.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

77. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

78. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 13 - 14)

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

79. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from councillors.

80. REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were no reports from scrutiny committees for consideration at this meeting.

81. DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26

The member for finance and corporate services introduced the report. It was highlighted that the Delivery Plan was directly linked to the Council Plan 2024-2028 which was approved at full council on the 24th of May 2024.

The Council Plan together with the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFS) were the overarching policy framework documents, where decisions will be taken and resource is allocated over the next three years.

It was highlighted that the administration had set themselves an ambitious target of 113 deliverables and 259 milestones.

Under 'People' it was noted that the council will enable residents to realise their potential to be healthy, to be part of great communities supporting each other and for all children to have the best start in life. There were 6 objectives with 32 two key deliverables and 88 key milestones.

Under 'Place' it was noted that the council will protect and enhance its environment and ensure that Herefordshire was a great place to live. The council will support the right housing in the right place and will do everything it can to improve the health of its rivers. There were 9 objectives, 44 listed deliverables supported by 94 key milestones.

Under 'Growth' it was noted that the council will create the conditions to deliver sustainable growth across the county, attracting inward investment, building business confidence, creating jobs, enabling housing development along with providing the right infrastructure. There were 6 objectives, 19 listed deliverables and 38 key milestones.

Under 'Transformation' it was noted that the council will be efficient, embrace best practise, deliver innovation through technology and demonstrate value for money. There were 6 objectives, 18 deliverables and 39 key milestones.

It was confirmed that the monitoring of the Delivery Plan would be completed quarterly at Cabinet and would also include an addendum to cover the Transformation Strategy milestones. It was confirmed that routine financial monitoring against the approved revenue and capital programme would be included in the quarterly budget reporting to Cabinet. It was further noted that monthly progress reports would be provided to the Corporate Leadership Team, annual service plans (outlining service area priorities and key areas of focus) would also be included. Finally, annual individual performance and development plans would be written.

It was confirmed that development of any projects within the Delivery Plan for 25/26 would seek to minimise any adverse environmental impact and would identify opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance.

Comments from cabinet members. The Delivery Plan was noted to be a positive and ambitious Plan. The format of the Plan meant it was clear to see if items would be delivered or not, increasing transparency and openness. Within the Environment directorate the cabinet member was looking forward to the regenerative farm mentoring program, the Wye catchment, the nutrient management plan and the solar car port items being progressed. It was highlighted that the Council Plan was the 'golden thread' that leads through all the plans, and it was positive to see the areas of People, Place, Growth and Transformation progressing. It was noted that regarding the 'community open spaces grant' 70 expressions of interests were received, and business cases from the shortlisted applicants were awaited. It was positive to see the number of voluntary sector organisations (large and small) who were working hard with local residents, and

the cabinet member was looking forward to seeing the applicants' business cases. It was noted that infrastructure will be busy in the next year with the delivery of the Transport Hub, alongside active travel measures. It was also noted that it was an exciting year for roads and regulatory services with the new contractor and all the highway resurfacing schemes.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. It was raised that comments from the scrutiny working group on the Delivery Plan were not seen within the Delivery Plan.

It was queried what the impact of the tasks would be and how will members and the public know if a task had been delivered well and effectively. Similarly, it was unclear how the first year of the Delivery Plan joined up with the second year in the Plan. A closure report was suggested to report on what had been delivered, what hadn't and how that fed into the new Delivery Plan for 2025-26. It was also raised that without impact measures in the Delivery Plan members could not see what the ambition for residents was and whether it was being achieved or not.

Regarding the housing crisis it was raised if the acquisition fund for housing provision would be spent (as agreed by council in July). Disappointment was expressed that by March 2026 only the long-term strategic model for the delivery of housing across the county would be finalised. It was queried whether homelessness would have gone up, down or stabilised.

Comments from the scrutiny working group were highlighted. Reassurance was sought regarding the alternative curriculum provision and the framework of providers. It was raised that the framework should allow for smaller groups, who were already engaged in the community, to be included to ensure more choice.

Regarding the active travel programmes, it was raised that more needs to be done and 20mph zones were asked to be considered to support climate change, health and reduce obesity levels in the population. It was commented that to achieve active travel, and enable residents to walk and cycle, 20 mph zones should be introduced as evidenced within DfT guidance and seen in Cornwall.

More information was requested to be included regarding safer schools and streets project, what were the actual deliverables and what would the change be.

Regarding section 106 it was queried what the risks were in achieving the milestones and the deliverability of the project.

It was queried what the date was for the bus summit.

It was raised that the local nature recovery strategy was not referenced in the milestones and deliverables in the Delivery Plan.

In response to queries, it was confirmed that the outcomes, impacts of the deliverables and further detail requested were included in the existing service plans. These would also be reported on in the quarterly performance reports to cabinet. These reports were detailed yet concise, to ensure individuals read them without being overloaded.

It was also noted that cabinet had not formally received the recommendations of the scrutiny working group.

It was confirmed that the closeout report will be completed in late May 2025 when the quarter 4 performance report was delivered. This could include elements of the Delivery Plan from this year which were not completed, and it was understood a small number would be carried forward to next year.

Regarding successful or unsuccessful deliverability of the holiday activity food programme and household support fund, it was also highlighted that the report included issues around tooth brushing and issues within Public Health. It was confirmed that the Health and Wellbeing board received regular updates on the numbers involved in these activities and figures for 2024/25 could be provided to members.

It was noted that the recommendations allowed for minor amendments. Therefore, the comments from group leaders and the recommendations from the scrutiny working group (once received), could be reflected on and amendments could be made to finalise the Delivery Plan where considered appropriate.

Councillor Stoddart proposed the recommendations, and it was unanimously resolved that:

That:

a) Cabinet approves the Delivery Plan 2025-26 as set out in appendix A;

b) Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make minor amendments to the approved Delivery Plan 2025-26.

82. OFSTED MONITORING VISIT FEEDBACK

The member for children's and young people introduced the report. Noted this was the sixth monitoring visit and took place on 18th and 19th of February 2025. The focus of the inspection was around the quality and timeliness of the social work assessments following referrals into the multi-agency safeguarding hub and those that were deemed to meet particular levels of need, including those activities under section 17 of the Children Act and section 47 of the Children Act.

It was highlighted that the headline findings reported by Ofsted referred to the timely completion of assessment and support conducted by social workers and family support workers and that they were having a positive impact. The inspectorate also commented that the leadership was now making tangible progress to improve the quality and consistency of practise within those assessment teams.

The thresholds guidance document inspection found that those thresholds were being appropriately applied and that informed decisions were being made about the level of intervention. Regarding children being accommodated into care, the inspectorate found that these decisions were at the right threshold and that these decisions were appropriate. The inspectorate reported positively on the conduct of strategy meetings and the focus on dealing with risk within those discussions.

In respect of re-referral rates, it was confirmed that the service were aware, and this was the subject of further work and analysis, in particular the service are looking to understand what may be around barriers to accessing early help for families to sustain positive outcomes. It was noted that this was also an indicator of improved confidence from partner agencies to re-refer matters back to children services where they felt the need to do so.

Partnership working was something that had been mentioned by the inspectorate on previous visits, the inspectorate reported on the range of professionals and agencies that were involved in making an important contribution to those assessments as well as providing support to those families.

It was noted that Ofsted also reported positively about effective information sharing and that decisions were being made together with partners. It was highlighted that in respect of working with children and families, Ofsted reported that many social workers

developed meaningful relationships with parents and carers in a skilled way. It was confirmed that during that period of assessment they were undertaking direct work with children and families to make sure that responses to risk were appropriate and timely.

There was a focus on young carers and there was positive reporting about the comprehensive of the assessments and the child focused reporting that staff advocated for and supported children. Ofsted recognised that was informing the service's audit work, and that was giving meaningful insights on the impacts of the service's practise.

Regarding quality of practise, Ofsted found good quality and timeliness in the assessments. The cabinet member highlighted a number of elements which were in the report, noting that section 47 enquiries were thorough, the risks were fully understood and explored, and safety plans were being shared in a timely way. Ofsted also reported positively on the progress with the pre-birth assessment work.

Regarding management and leadership, Ofsted found that there was strong understanding and commitment across the whole council. The cabinet member noted that Childrens Scrutiny should be recognised for their work in exploring that impact across the whole council on previous occasions.

Ofsted reported positively on the service's strength and quality assurance activity. It was noted there were three elements of quality assurance activity in the improvement plan. The cabinet member noted it was pleasing to see it being recognised by the inspector and it was clearly contributing to that forward momentum.

The service acknowledged there was still more work to do on its audit activity, but forward progress was being seen.

It was highlighted that the service's workforce reported again to Ofsted that they enjoyed working for Herefordshire Council, they felt engaged and supported by managers and leaders quoting regular supervision, good quality learning and development and officer support for the newly qualified social workers. All of which contributed to the continued success to improve the council's permanency recruitment.

The council are in anticipation of one further monitoring visit prior to full inspection, which is expected to likely be before the end of 2025.

In summary the cabinet member noted that tangible progress had been made across several areas and reflected on comments that had been made in previous monitoring visits. Notably, recognition of the improvement in the quality and practise of social work assessments and the leadership seeing that tangible progress. The previous concerns regarding the pace of progress but this was clearly moving on significantly now. The appropriate application of thresholds in the partnership working elements, including that effective information sharing, reference to the skill of social workers building effective relationships with children and families, recognising the voice and influence of children and families influencing that practise, the fact that the decisions being made to bring children into care were appropriate to protect them from further harm.

The cabinet member wished to place on record to all who contributed to this forward progression, particularly the leadership of the director, their leadership team and the leadership of the council's partner agencies.

Comments from cabinet members. The Leader noted that it was heartening to see the feedback, particularly that the thresholds were appropriately applied. It was confirmed by the cabinet member that best practice was being adopted and applied. The cabinet member noted from a recent visit to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub that it was important that the partnership understood the thresholds and what the appropriate

responses were. It was also noted that the partner agencies have a responsibility to provide early help and support on an individual agency basis as part of the overall contribution to make meaningful progress for the council's children and families.

Thanks were given to the director and the cabinet member for their dynamic leadership which was clearly showing in the quarter 3 budget report that they were on budget and were making £2m of savings this year. This showed that leadership, direction, guidance and grip made the difference not just money.

The chair of children's scrutiny committee, councillor Fagan, provided their views and commented that the role of scrutiny was to act as a critical friend to the service. It was noted that whilst this report had not been to the scrutiny committee, items within it had been discussed at scrutiny over the past few years.

It was really welcomed that the needs of children and families were now being met and the quality and consistency of practises had improved. Also, that the threshold of intervention were being appropriately applied and where needed, appropriate action was being taken to protect children from harm.

Councillor Fagan stated it was encouraging to see the relational work happening with families, involving the partners across the county and social care, noting it was working well together. It was further noted that the implementation of the families first approach across that partnership would hopefully go from strength to strength.

It was welcomed and continued to be encouraged to see the inclusion of child friendly Herefordshire in corporate plans. It was noted there was more to do to engage all partners and businesses operating throughout Herefordshire to ensure there was a genuine and county wide commitment to all children and young people in the county, not only those within the social care system.

It was noted that Ofsted positively acknowledged the development of relational working in social care and that social workers and family support workers were working well with families providing immediate responses to help parents meet their children's needs or manage the risks.

It was noted that audit activity was well embedded in the service, and the feedback from children and parents was another indication to scrutiny of the improvements in the service.

It was acknowledged that the investment and development of the service's social work team was fabulous as there was a long period with a lack of confidence in that sector, and it was very difficult to recruit. The increased permanency of the workforce was noted as extremely heartening to see the positive development in this area.

It was noted that the council needs to ensure that momentum is not lost and ensure the needs of children with complex issues are addressed. It was also noted that understandable language should continue to be used with children and families, continue to ensure the complaints process was easily accessible where needed, invest in early help and the workforce. Councillor Fagan noted it was essential to take children and families with the service as it moved forward on this journey and restore confidence in the service, that has children and families at the heart of everything it does.

Councillor Fagan expressed appreciation to all the hard work that had gone into this at every level and the fabulous social workers that have joined Herefordshire Council.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. Congratulations were extended to all involved in contributing to the progress and the positive letter from Ofsted. Solid

foundations within the council and across the partnership were positively acknowledged. It was positive to see the increase in pace and direction of travel. It was also positively acknowledged that the reliance on agency staff had reduced and that young social workers were being supported.

Regarding re-referrals, concern was expressed why these had increased and understanding the reasons for this was very important to gain learning, improve decision making and improve practice. A key point moving forward is to ensure children who are returned to their families, into their home environments, are supported to enable them to remain there.

It was noted there was still work to be done and the language in the report was recognition of where the service was. It was noted that focus should remain on this important area.

The Leader noted in respect of comments at the Improvement Board (on 26 March 2025) there were a lot of positives and good news, but this was also the time to pick up the pace and build on the good foundations to ensure all the good practice that was starting to be embedded takes hold and to build on that momentum. It was confirmed there was total political commitment to ensure the council remained on the improvement journey and it was further confirmed the priority was not to lose momentum, to achieve the good practice and good outcomes.

The cabinet member for children's and young people provided assurance that upon the director's arrival they produced a robust and clear Improvement Plan that was focused on what needed to be delivered against the Ofsted recommendations. It was confirmed that the focus was on momentum and there was still room to improve. It was acknowledged that the framework to deliver that, was the Improvement Board and the Improvement Plan as updated by the director.

It was raised following discussions at the Improvement Board yesterday, that the families commission report was difficult reading and the follow up meetings with families were also difficult to hear. However, it was important to hear that. The cabinet member confirmed from the services work to explore with children and families the impact of service intervention, it was confirmed that 84% of those families said they felt through the intervention they were helped to address their problems and to reduce the risks.

It was noted that the council was been supported by its improvement partner, Leeds and it was being explored that when this concludes what the council could do to continue to secure service improvement support. The cabinet member confirmed there was a robust and sharp focus on those areas and the service still needs to continue to progress, whilst recognising the progress that had been made to date.

Councillor Lester proposed the recommendations, and it was unanimously resolved that:

That:

- a) Cabinet receive and note the feedback and service response from Ofsted Inspectors' Monitoring Visit Outcome letter.**

83. SEND INSPECTION UPDATE

The member for children's and young people introduced the report. It was noted that this was a joint inspection conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, it was

joint because it was Herefordshire Council and the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board.

The cabinet member reflected on a few elements and acknowledged the strong leadership from the service director and the chair of the Integrated Care Board. Also, the contributions from all partners including education settings, care and health providers and from parent carers voice.

It was noted that the joint inspectorate reported positively on the strengths of the local area partnership both at a strategic and operational level. There had been a huge amount of work delivered through the operational group and with a great degree of detail of measures, data and the impact of outcomes.

The inspectorate recognised the investment in workforce development and increasing capacity as a strength, they reflected that the partnership was highly responsive to meet needs. The staff across the whole partnership were recognised for building positive relations with children and young people, listening and responding to their views. It was also recognised that professionals knew the children and young people well.

A feature of the report focused on how the local area partnership supported children, their progress towards next steps and their preparation for adulthood. It was highlighted that the report referenced the youth employment hub noting that it 'already making a significant difference for young people who access the service'.

The educational settings across Herefordshire were referred to positively throughout the report. The inspectorate recognised that vulnerable groups were noted and supported by alternative providers including Herefordshire People Referral Service, which included those who may have faced exclusion, absence or had medical needs which meant they couldn't access education in the same way.

It was recognised that there was work to do regarding the council's alternative provision, as some of the buildings were in a poor state of repair. It was confirmed that the service was in the process of producing a business case to improve the building conditions and to locate to one site, instead of two sites.

The importance of referencing the range of additional activity beyond education was noted, for enrichment and engagement in community and allowing children with special educational needs and disabilities to fulfil their potential.

The report noted the high-quality alternative provision in the council's specialist settings and were recognised as being innovative in providing appropriate solutions for meeting the more complex health and learning needs.

Children and Young people reflected that they felt well supported by and listened to by the school and college staff.

It was noted that the council's performance in Education Health and Care Plans was, in most cases, within statutory timescales and Herefordshire performed well against national performance. The special educational needs coordinator network were praised for its joint work across the partnership schools, school social care and health providers. The inspectors found that children and young people known to early help services were provided swift support from education health and social care teams. It was noted that the quality of assessments was recognised as being positive and the inspectorate confirmed that disabled children and young people who received a service from social care were well supported into adulthood. There was also positive recognition of the children with disability team, the inspectorate confirmed that they particularly understood children's needs well.

It was identified that changes in social workers was an issue. This was acknowledged by the cabinet member, and it was confirmed this was being progressed.

It was confirmed this was a joint inspection with health, and no extended waits were identified for a child to access child and adult adolescent mental health services.

It was confirmed that four areas of improvement were identified by the joint inspectorate. Three were largely for health partners, one was regarding the council to promoting its offer more widely. It was confirmed that the four priorities for improvement would be addressed through the Special Educational Needs strategic board and the operational delivery group.

It was confirmed that the local area partnership will be subject to its next full inspection within the next three years.

There were no comments from cabinet members.

Councillor Fagan as chair of children and young people scrutiny committee commented that scrutiny considered this item last week and it was positively received. The work being carried out for children with SEND was phenomenal, especially with the increasing rise in demand.

Councillor Fagan confirmed that co-production worked very well in Herefordshire. However, scrutiny noted a difference in what parents told the carer group compared to what they told the inspectorate, and more work could be completed around communication.

It was noted by scrutiny that schools in Herefordshire came out strongly, and the work SEN co-ordinators were doing to support children in the schools was strong.

It was noted by scrutiny that there was a huge need for alternative provision placements and extra places were needed for children going through the Pupil Referral Unit and special school places. It was also noted that more communication was needed to raise awareness of the short breaks offer.

Scrutiny noted that a concern regarding the provision of health services, it was understood that therapeutic services were improving in the county. However, due to the rise in autism and neurodiversity in the county, the triaging process was leaving children without the proper support they needed.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. The improvements that had been made were welcomed. Involvement of partners in the co-production of the report was also welcomed.

It was queried what the potential threats and implications would be to the council and the children of the county from the government changes to NHS England, from ICB's reducing their expenditure by 50% and the potential for merger.

Accessing the commissioned services for speech and language provision was raised as a concern. It was noted in the report that access for some support did not require a formal diagnosis. However, to access speech and language in secondary school there had to be an identified specific need. The report was unclear if this meant a formal diagnosis or an identified need by other means. Another issue was diagnosis for autism, it was noted there was limited access to support and the pathway to diagnosis for neurodivergence was a further issue. Services that were no longer being commissioned, despite active referrals for that service, was a concern. It was noted that whilst this was a

health issue, it had an impact on the council as well. A clear way forward was requested.

It was noted the services across the council could learn from the joint inspection report in terms of co-production and service user voice.

In response to queries, support from group leaders was welcomed and all the points raised by them stressed the point regarding good partnership working. Similarly, the point on good practice being transferrable to the council was welcomed. It was acknowledged that Herefordshire schools played a high role in support the children and families in ensuring the right support was there.

It was reinforced that the partnership was aware and were prioritising access to assessment where it was needed and the fact that sometimes you don't necessarily need an assessment to be able to access the appropriate support.

Regarding changes to the National Health Service and the potential impact on the Integrated Care Board it was confirmed that the council has a strong Special Educational Needs and disabilities partnership, which was ready to take up those challenges. It was confirmed there was post inspection meeting on 26 March to consider the necessary actions, and these will be monitored through that partnership board.

Councillor Lester proposed the recommendations, and it was unanimously resolved that:

That:

- a) Cabinet to receive and note the feedback from the published Ofsted report (Appendix 1).**

84. EDUCATION STRATEGY

The member for children's and young people introduced the report. It was noted as important to recognise that the county hosts 100 schools across a range of maintained schools, standalone academy or multi academy trusts. Most of the schools were typified as high performing schools and education settings, rated positively by the inspectorate, Ofsted.

It was noted that this strategy had five key priorities, and the strategy was supported by a service delivery plan, its success was measured by a range of performance indicators which also complemented the Council Plan.

It was confirmed that the education strategy had been informed by coproduction and developed by a wide range of stakeholder engagement, including insight from children, young people and importantly schools' early years settings and post 16 providers.

It was noted that the Special Educational Needs, the alternative provision assurance board and the roundtable governance group would receive regular updates on progress.

There were no comments from cabinet members.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups.

The production of the strategy appeared sensible and was welcomed. The Delivery Plan of how the strategy would be achieved was awaited. It was requested that a record of the measures as they currently were, should be published now at the beginning of the strategy to see the council's current aspirations over the life of the plan. It was raised that explanation of the Gatsby benchmarks would also be beneficial.

It was requested that where asterisks are used, the reference points should be on the same page. It was noted that the school numbers as of summer 2024, were 110 not 99 as listed and it would be helpful to have that disparity explained.

It was commented that more context would have been welcomed regarding education in terms of the attainment gap, the current value, the attendance and looked after children attainment, to provide a picture of the current state and where the strategy was proposing to take the council.

Concern was raised over the level of influence over multi academy trusts and academies. Whilst it was about partnership working, it was not clear how much engagement there would be and whether the council was resourced sufficiently given that funding had been diverted to those schools.

In response to queries it was confirmed that the asterisk point would be corrected if needed. It was confirmed that the accounting for schools included the independent schools as well. It was noted that the council will persist good partnership working.

It was confirmed that the Gatsby principles reflected the contribution of education towards future careers and there was a commitment that the Education Strategy would work in tandem with the Skills Strategy as it's being developed.

Regarding multi academy trusts it's important to point out that the director of education and their team have effective working relationships with all schools, not just maintained schools and there is a partnership approach to this work.

It was noted that in the emerging Children and Well Being Bill there is a focus on multi academy trusts and there are conversations regarding the role of the inspectorate across all schools. The council would need to see where that goes nationally before conclusions could be drawn.

Councillor Lester proposed the recommendations, and it was unanimously resolved that:

That:

- a) The Education Strategy 2024/29 is endorsed; and**
- b) Delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director for Children and Young People to take all operational decisions, as set out within this report and appendix**

The leader confirmed two closing points, firstly there was an open invitation to the all member briefing next week (week commencing 31 March) on children's services. This would be on the Improvement Plan and how the council are responding to that Improvement Plan and how the council was renewing its focus.

It was also confirmed that the focus of the council was in delivering the best for its children, putting its resources and improvement plan into children as the future to ensure they have the best start in life.

The meeting ended at 16:15

Chairperson

Agenda item no. 4 - Questions from members of the public

Question No.	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Gill Jinman, Ewyas Harold	Having read the BBC News article of 2 nd March https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwygwexlqxzo with some dismay as it suggested that the brief for procuring a professional services provider to undertake the SOBC to take the Golden Valley Parkway station project further will not be completed, please will the Cabinet explain how it has used the allocated funding of £50,000 to progress the plans to which it has previously committed?	Cllr Price
Response: The Council continues to support this as a strategically important proposal for the County and wider region, and we await the results of the Transport for Wales study of routes which will determine if there remains any capacity for an additional station between Abergavenny and Hereford. Once this has been completed the Council will be in a better position to understand the work required to identify a potential location for the station and the merits of a full business case. In the meantime the funding previously allocated will continue to be held for this project.			
Supplementary question: I am pleased to hear that the previously allocated funding will continue to be held by the Council for the Golden Valley Parkway Station Project. While the Council waits to hear the results of the Transport for Wales Study, will they agree to discuss the project with Dr Nigel Harris of the Railway Consultancy, who has one of the best understandings in the country of railway business planning and performance, and who has been involved with all the business plans and feasibility studies in relation to the Golden Valley Parkway since 1998? His knowledge of the project, which I believe would include the fact that a potential site for the station was identified during my husband's time as a Councillor, and of local and national railway issues that could positively or negatively affect the plans, might best inform cost-effective decisions going forward. I'd be grateful if you could let me know how and when I can learn of the reply to this.			

Supplementary response:

The Council is happy to discuss the project with Dr Nigel Harris to ensure that a business case is able to be as informed as it can be. Officers will make contact to set up a meeting in due course.

PQ 2.**Response:****Supplementary question:****Supplementary response:**