

Chief Executive's Office

Chief Executive: N.M. Pringle

Your Ref:

Our Ref: NMP/CD

Please ask for: Mr. N.M. Pringle

Direct Line/Extension: (01432) 260044

Fax: (01432) 340189

E-mail: npringle@herefordshire.gov.uk

To: All Members of Cabinet:
R.J. Phillips (Leader)
Mrs. L.O. Barnett
P.J. Edwards
Mrs. J.P. French
J.C. Mayson
D.W. Rule MBE (Deputy Leader)
R.V. Stockton
D.B. Wilcox
R.M. Wilson

10th April, 2006

Dear Councillor,

MEETING OF CABINET
THURSDAY, 20TH APRIL, 2006 AT 2.00 P.M.
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD

AGENDA (05/24)

**HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL - NOTICE UNDER REGULATION 15 OF THE LOCAL
 AUTHORITIES (EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS((ACCESS TO INFORMATION) REGULATIONS
 2000 (AS AMENDED)**

Notice is hereby given that the following reports contains key decisions. When the decisions have been made, the Chairman of the relevant Scrutiny Committee(s) will be sent a copy of the decision notices and given the opportunity to call-in the decisions.

Item No	Title	Portfolio Responsibility	Scrutiny Committee	Included in the Forward Plan Yes/No
3	Comprehensive Performance Assessment - Improvement Plan	Corporate Strategy and Finance	Strategic Monitoring Committee	Yes
4	Herefordshire Connects Update	Corporate Strategy and Finance	Strategic Monitoring Committee	Yes (as ICT Strategy and Corporate Strategy)



Putting People First Providing for our Communities Preserving our Heritage Promoting the County Protecting our Future

County of Herefordshire District Council, PO Box 239, HEREFORD, HR1 1ZU

Main Switchboard (01432) 260000 - www.herefordshire.gov.uk

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest by members in respect of items on this agenda.

3. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - IMPROVEMENT PLAN

To approve the overall Council Improvement Plan. (*Appendix to follow*) (*Pages 1 - 2*)

4. HEREFORDSHIRE CONNECTS UPDATE

To note the completion of Phase 1 of the Corporate Strategy Review and to endorse the arrangements for proceeding to the next stage. (*Report to follow*)

5. DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

To note progress in developing the Disability Equality Scheme for 2006/09. (*Pages 3 - 8*)

6. PROPOSED USE OF FORMER DENCO CAR PARK AT HOLMER ROAD, HEREFORD

To consider entering into a lease with Hereford City Council for the site for the purpose of the development of a skateboard park. (*Pages 9 - 18*)

7. WESLEYAN CHAPEL, KINGTON

To consider the disposal of the Wesleyan Chapel on the open market. (*Pages 19 - 20*)

8. INTEGRATED COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT SERVICE

To receive an update on performance and development plans related to the community equipment service. (*Pages 21 - 26*)

9. HOMELESSNESS UPDATE

To receive an update on progress to date with homelessness prevention in Herefordshire and to provide an overview of the shape of the homelessness and housing advice services provided by Herefordshire Council since transfer from Herefordshire Housing Limited on 1st April, 2006. (*Pages 27 - 28*)

Yours sincerely,



N.M. PRINGLE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Copies to: Chairman of the Council
Chairman of Strategic Monitoring Committee
Vice-Chairman of Strategic Monitoring Committee
Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees
Group Leaders
Directors
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

The Public's Rights to Information and Attendance at Meetings

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:-

- Attend all Council, Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting.
- Inspect minutes of the Council and all Committees and Sub-Committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public Register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of the Cabinet, of all Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have a reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title.
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50, for postage).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.

Please Note:

Agenda and individual reports can be made available in large print or on tape. Please contact the officer named below in advance of the meeting who will be pleased to deal with your request.

The Council Chamber where the meeting will be held is accessible for visitors in wheelchairs, for whom toilets are also available.

A public telephone is available in the reception area.

Public Transport links

- Public transport access can be gained to Brockington via the service that runs approximately every half hour from the 'Hopper' bus station at the Tesco store in Bewell Street (next to the roundabout junction of Blueschool Street / Victoria Street / Edgar Street).
- The nearest bus stop to Brockington is located in Old Eign Hill near to its junction with Hafod Road. The return journey can be made from the same bus stop.

If you have any questions about this Agenda, how the Council works or would like more information or wish to exercise your rights to access the information described above, you may do so either by telephoning Mrs Christine Dyer on 01432 260222 or by visiting in person during office hours (8.45 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Monday - Thursday and 8.45 a.m. - 4.45 p.m. Friday) at the Council Offices, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford.



Where possible this agenda is printed on paper made from 100% Post-Consumer waste. De-inked without bleaching and free from optical brightening agents (OBA). Awarded the Nordic Swan for low emissions during production and the Blue Angel environmental label.

COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire or emergency the alarm bell will ring continuously.

You should vacate the building in an orderly manner through the nearest available fire exit.

You should then proceed to Assembly Point J which is located at the southern entrance to the car park. A check will be undertaken to ensure that those recorded as present have vacated the building following which further instructions will be given.

Please do not allow any items of clothing, etc. to obstruct any of the exits.

Do not delay your vacation of the building by stopping or returning to collect coats or other personal belongings.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To approve the overall Council Improvement Plan at Appendix 1. The Appendix will be circulated separately.

Key Decision

This is a key decision because it is significant in terms of their effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards. It was included in the Forward Plan.

Recommendation

THAT the Improvement Plan be approved.

Reasons

Following Inspection there is a requirement to produce an Improvement Plan.

Considerations

1. Following the Corporate Assessment (CA) and Joint Area Review (JAR) which combine to form the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) which were conducted in the Autumn of 2005 and the subsequent report the Council is required to produce an Improvement Plan.
2. Although the JAR has its own action plan within a framework for monitoring progress on specific actions there are important linkages across to the overall Improvement Plan particularly in relation to performance management, elements of the Youth Service and other Council wide issues, for example, Communications.
3. On 30th March, 2006 a meeting was held with the Lead Inspector for the CA and the Council's Relationship Officer to discuss the draft Improvement Plan. There is no prescribed format and the Council's chosen approach was to include the recommendations from the Corporate Assessment, to link the JAR Improvement Plan and to include elements which can be termed organisational momentum. This covers areas of work which the Council has commenced and which need to be

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Jane Jones, Director of Corporate and Customer Services on (01432) 260037

followed through.

4. The Improvement Plan will not carry every detail of major pieces of work but will cross-reference to underlying projects and processes. So, for example, on accommodation the Improvement Plan carries headline targets but the Accommodation Strategy underpins the document and is the main focus for monitoring progress.
5. This approach was endorsed by the Audit Commission. However given the ambitious nature of the Plan it was agreed that there should be a “rain check” at three months and a detailed examination of progress at six months. This would link in to the Audit Commission’s intention to carry out an indepth study of the performance management arrangements in September 2006. The Plan has been updated to reflect those timeframes.
6. It has also been amended to include references to Members’ Development and Induction Programme for new Councillors.
7. The introduction sets out the monitoring arrangements for the Improvement Plan. These arrangements are being progressed.

Risk Management

None

Alternative Options

There are no Alternative Options.

Consultees

None

Appendices

Draft Improvement Plan (to follow)

Background Papers

None identified.

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To note progress in developing the Disability Equality Scheme for 2006/09.

Key Decision

This not a key decision.

Recommendation

THAT the progress in developing the Disability Equality Scheme (DES) for 2006/09 be noted.

Considerations

1. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 requires organisations across the public sector to be proactive in ensuring that disabled people are treated fairly. However, this duty is not necessarily about changes to buildings or adjustments for individuals, it's all about including equality for disabled people into the culture of public authorities in practical and demonstrable ways.
 2. The tool used to demonstrate how public sector bodies will achieve this duty is the Disability Equality Scheme (DES). Local Authorities have to produce a DES by December 2006 that shows they have considered the impact of their policies, practices and procedures on disabled people.
 3. Herefordshire Council has had a DES since 2002, but this needs updating to take account of the new Duty to:
 - Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA
 - Eliminate harassment that is unlawful under the DDA
 - Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
 - Take steps to take account of disabled person's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other people.
 4. The programme of consultation and involvement (shown below) is on schedule, and the summary of the event held on 14th March, 2006 is shown at Appendix 1.
-

5. The results of the employee and public surveys will be used to guide the priorities of the DES, and inform the action plan. The PCT has contributed a section to the public questionnaire. The public questionnaire will be the second Council initiative to make use of the e-consult software, enabling people to respond on-line from the Council's website.

Timetable

14 March 2006	Hold "Involvement Meeting" for representatives of local disability organisations (The purpose of this was to inform the process of the consultation)
Month of April	Carry out employee disability survey
Month of May	Carry out public disability survey
23 May	Hold public "Open Forum" meeting for those who want to debate further the barriers they encounter in their everyday lives, and how to make improvements
May	Carry out focus groups to involve people with learning disabilities and children
August 2006	Draft DES to Cabinet for approval
October 2006	Publish DES

Risk Management

None.

Alternative Options

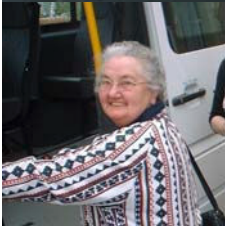
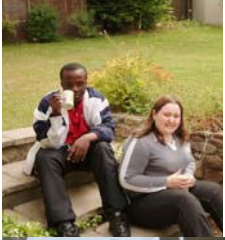
None.

Appendix

Summary of Involvement Meeting

Background Papers

None identified.



HEREFORDSHIRE
COUNCIL

Summary of Disability Involvement Meeting

14 March 2006
Three Counties Hotel

If you need help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call 01432 260216 or e-mail diversity@herefordshire.gov.uk

Outline of the Event

On 14 March 2006, the first Herefordshire Council “Disability Equality Scheme Involvement Meeting” was held at the Three Counties Hotel, Hereford.

George Salmon (Head of Policy & Resources and Chair of the Council’s Disability Working Group) opened the event by explaining the Council’s legal and moral responsibility to eradicating unlawful discrimination and making information and services accessible to all.

Lucy Davies (Assistant Solicitor) then explained the reasons why the Council needs to produce a Disability Equality Scheme, and asked the audience to guide this process by identifying the priorities on which the Scheme should focus.

The main priorities identified were (in no particular order):

- 1. Accessible Information** (incl. literature and signage)
- 2. Transport**
- 3. Coordination of Consultation**
- 4. Disability Officer for Herefordshire Council**
- 5. Work Placements/Training**
- 6. Housing** (provision and support needs)
- 7. Environmental Design** (incl. car parking, toilets, physical access, street furniture)

Some of the suggestions for changes to the questionnaire were:

- 1. The questionnaire is unsuitable for children and those with a learning disability**
- 2. Incorporate carer support**
- 3. Incorporate cycles lanes and Blue Badge scheme into questions**
- 4. Reduce the number of answer options to make the questionnaire simpler**

Harriet Yellin (Diversity Officer) introduced the audience to the draft public questionnaire which aims to identify what the key issues around disability equality are for Herefordshire. The audience were asked for their feedback on the proposed questions and wording.

Carol Trachonitis (Service Manager, Corporate Diversity Team) then outlined the Council’s approach to equality policies, and progress with the Equality Impact Assessment initiative.

The audience were then asked about their own contact with Herefordshire Council over the past few months, and whether their experience had been positive or negative.

Some of the comments about Council services were:

- 1. On the whole good service with friendly staff**
- 2. Many buildings inaccessible**
- 3. Some lack of staff understanding regarding issues that are relevant to disabled people**
- 4. Lack of disabled parking spaces and misuse of these spaces**

What Else Was Discussed

Disability Officer for the Council

Several people in the audience were keen that the Council should recruit an officer dedicated to Disability, with a remit for access, networking and coordinating consultation. The Council representatives agreed that much more work needs to be done with the disabled community, and on influencing other organisations to improve access and service delivery. However the Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity for all and to eliminate discrimination in all its forms. The Council is in the process of recruiting a second Diversity Officer who will have a personal understanding of the diversity agenda, and work across the whole scope of equality issues.

Currently the Council does have an Access Officer - who was present at the meeting - who has a specific remit for ensuring that the council fulfils its responsibility with regards to the DDA and accessible buildings. However it was felt that the Council should exert more influence on the private/commercial sector to make a real difference across the county.

Social Model of Disability

It was noted that there are discrepancies in the Council's adoption of the Social Model of Disability, in that we don't always fully adhere to it. The Council representatives accepted that this was the case, because it is sometimes more practical to use medical terms in order to get exactly the information we need, and also because it will take time to fully embed the Social Model into the organisation.

Diversity Monitoring

The personal information section at the back of the proposed public questionnaire generated some debate, with an audience member querying why the Council needs to collect this information. It was explained that this information will help the Council to understand the needs of the people it serves and continue to improve the services it delivers. In this way we will continue in our attempts to eliminate discrimination.

As a result of this discussion, the Council will produce a public information leaflet explaining in very simple terms the reasons why the information is needed, and how it will be used.

Who was Involved

75 Herefordshire disability groups were invited to attend the meeting, and 21 people from the following groups did attend:

- ABLE
- All About Ability
- Alliance Hereford
- Courtyard Audio Description Assoc
- Deaf Direct
- ECHO
- Guide Dogs for the Blind
- Hereford Centre for Independent Living
- Hereford Access for All
- Herefordshire Carers Support
- Herefordshire Disability Action
- Ledbury Access Group
- Older People's Voices Project
- Royal National College for the Blind
- St Owen's Centre
- The Multiple Sclerosis Society
- Herefordshire Disability Action

Written responses were received from:

- Amputee Support Group
- Herefordshire Fibromyalgia Information and Support Service
- Herefordshire Mencap
- Leominster Shopmobility
- Shaw Trust

The following Council services were represented:

- Children's Services
- Corporate Diversity Team
- Information & Communications Technology
- Legal
- Leisure, Parks & Countryside
- Property Services

What Happens Now?

1. The priorities identified will be incorporated where possible into the draft Disability Equality Scheme (however further consultation may result in them being amended).
2. The suggestions made about the public questionnaire will be fully explored and incorporated where appropriate.
3. The experiences of the audience noted in the final exercise will be used when analysing the results of the Council's many Equality Impact Assessments.
4. A survey of Herefordshire Council employee opinions will be carried out in April 2006, and results published at a later date.
5. The survey of public opinion will be carried out in May 2006, and results published at a later date.
6. More work will be done with schools and specialist organisations to ensure that children and people with learning disabilities are encouraged to participate.
7. A public Disability Forum will be held on 23 May at the Three Counties Hotel to more fully consult with those who wish to attend.
8. The Council's 2006-2009 Disability Equality Scheme (and Action Plan) will be published in October 2004.
9. The Disability Equality Scheme will be reviewed each year, and a report published.
10. The Council's Corporate Diversity Team will drive and co-ordinate the actions identified in the Action Plan to really make a difference to the lives of disabled people living and working in Herefordshire.

PROPOSED USE OF FORMER DENCO CAR PARK AT HOLMER ROAD, HEREFORD

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: RESOURCES

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected

Three Elms, Hereford.

Purpose

To consider entering into a lease with Hereford City Council for the site for the purpose of the development of a skateboard park.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

- THAT (a) the former Denco car park site be leased to Hereford City Council for the purposes of developing a skate park facility for use by the wider community.**
- (b) this lease be for a period between 10 and 25 years and to be offered at a peppercorn rent.**
- (c) the opportunity cost to the Council of not realising the market value of this asset be noted. This is estimated to be in the order of £10,000 p.a. at current levels.**

Reasons

The former Denco car park was handed back to the Council when the company relocated to Moreton Business Park in October 2005.

The consultation undertaken in accordance with the Council's Asset Disposal Policy has failed to produce a substantial full time requirement from within Council Directorates for the site.

Considerations

1. The Council owns the Freehold interest in 0.4474 hectares of land situated between the overspill car park to the Leisure Centre and the allotments.
2. An expression of interest in the site was registered by Hereford City Council for use as a Skateboard Park.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Colin Birks, Acting Head of Property Services on 01432 261890 and Tony Featherstone, Parks,
Countryside and Leisure Development Manager on 01568 798321

3. A planning application was submitted by Herefordshire Council for change of use of the area to allow a public skate park facility to be built on this site. This application was approved in December 2005.
4. The site is currently registered as corporate property and comes under the responsibility of the Resources Directorate.
5. The expressions of interest arising from the consultation were as follows:
 - a) Children's Services – Special Education Unit.
 - b) Strategic Housing – Residential development.
 - c) Adult & Community Services – Skate Park (to be managed by a third party).
 - d) Highways & Transportation – For a periodic Park & Ride Scheme.

Subsequent advice has suggested that the site would be unsuitable for residential or educational development in planning terms.
6. Should the Council wish to consider leasing out the site an annual income of approximately £10,000 p.a. could be expected from its present planning use classes.
7. Despite nearly 10 years of constant reviews of land ownership, this Council and its predecessor Hereford City Council, have failed to identify an appropriate site for the development of a skateboard facility.
8. The matter of the provision of skate park facilities in Hereford City has been repeatedly raised at subsequent full Council meetings of this Council over the last two years, and most recently by Notice of Motion by Councillor Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes.
9. The future use of this site was considered by the Cabinet Members for Community Services and Resources on 2nd February, 2006.
10. The leasing of the site to Hereford City Council would be negotiated on a term of between 10 and 25 years at a peppercorn rent and with a break clause of 12 months by either party.

Risk Management

1. The potential risks for the management of this site will be transferred to the City Council.
2. The Council will lose an income of provisionally £10,000 as a result of this lease arrangement.

Alternative Options

Alternative Option 1

The Council advertises externally for expressions of interest in the site with a view to a commercial leasehold opportunity.

Alternative Option 2

The Council seeks to dispose of the land at a market consideration.

Consultees

All Directorates of Herefordshire Council via Directors and Heads of Service.
Hereford City Council.
Local Members.
Halo Leisure.
Wheeled Sports for Hereford.

Appendices

1. Letter dated 15th March, 2006 from the Leader of the Council.
2. Report to Cabinet Members dated 2nd February 2006.

Background Papers

None identified.

Leader of the Council
Councillor R. Phillips

Mr M Fellows
Town Clerk
Hereford Town Council
Town Hall
St Owen Street
HEREFORD

Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Please ask for: Natalia Silver
Direct Line / Extension: (01432) 262072
Fax: (01432) 383031
E-mail: nsilver@herefordshire.gov.uk

15th March, 2006

Dear Mr Fellows,

LEASE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SKATEBOARD PARK

In relation to our meeting yesterday regarding the development of a Skakeboard Park at the current Denco carpark, I would like to confirm our offer of a lease.

That:

- The lease would be for between 10 – 25 years depending on the requirements on funders, this would be at a “peppercorn” rent with a yearly break clause
- The lease will be between Herefordshire Council and Hereford City Council, with the latter operating as the accountable body for the Skateboard Park with final responsibility for its upkeep and security
- Any agreement with Halo Trust for the day to day management of the site is outside the financial agreement with Herefordshire Council, and should be negotiated between Halo and the City Council
- Consideration is given to the planning conditions for the development of the site, particularly regarding flood lighting

As mentioned at the meeting I would recommend that a realignment of the site in relation to an entrance to the Racecourse is not pursued because of the resource implication.

I would like to finally make the point that we are encouraged to see the progression of the Skakeboard Park for all young people in the City, and that our contribution has enabled the development of the project.

Yours sincerely,

ROGER PHILLIPS
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL



FUTURE USE OF FORMER DENCO CAR PARK AT HOLMER ROAD, HEREFORD

REPORT BY DIRECT OF ADULT & COMMUNITY SERVICES

**REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES & CABINET MEMBER
FOR RESOURCES**

DATE REPORT WILL BE CONSIDERED: 2ND FEBRUARY 2006

PROPOSED DATE OF DECISION: 2ND FEBRUARY 2006

Wards Affected

Three Elms, Hereford

Purpose

To seek a decision on the future use of the former Denco car park at Holmer Road, Hereford.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

- THAT**
- a) Part of the former Denco car park site be leased to an appropriate third party for the purposes of developing a skate park facility for use by the wider community.**
 - b) This lease be initially for a 3 year period to enable the organisation to fund raise and establish the facility. The opportunity to extend this lease up to 10 years be considered should this be the condition of any long term funding award.**
 - c) The opportunity cost to the Council of not realising the market value of this asset be noted.**

Reasons

The former Denco car park was handed back to the Council when the company relocated to Moreton Business Park in October of last year. The Council now has to determine the future use of the area which is situated between the Hereford Leisure Centre and the allotments on Holmer Road.

The consultation undertaken in accordance with the Council's Asset Disposal Policy has failed to produce a substantial full time requirement from within Council Directorates for the site.

Considerations

1. Hereford City Council have identified a strong body of support for the development of a skateboard park on this site.
2. There is a private company that has indicated that should a skate park facility be developed on this site that they may be prepared to provide substantial capital funding for that undertaking.
3. A planning application was submitted by Herefordshire Council for change of use of the area to allow a public skate park facility to be built on this site. This application was approved in December 2005.
4. The site is currently registered as corporate property and comes under the responsibility of the Resources Directorate.
5. The expressions of interest arising from the consultation were as follows: -
 - a) Children's Services – Special Education Unit
 - b) Strategic Housing – Residential development
 - c) Adult & Community Services – Skate Park (to be managed by a third party)
 - d) Highways & Transportation – For a periodic Park & Ride Scheme

Subsequent advice has suggested that the site would be unsuitable for residential or educational development in planning terms.
6. External expressions of interest have been received from halo, in respect of an overspill car park to that existing for Hereford Leisure Centre and a local garage for a parking area. There has, however been no formal external advertisements to suggest the availability of the land.
7. Should the Council be minded to externally advertise the availability of this land to seek market interest, the likely rental would potentially be as much as £10,000 per annum. The market value in disposal terms may be significantly more.
8. Given the information available at present, the most economically advantageous option to be recommended, based upon good estate management advice, might be
 - a) An external letting for which we would get a rental income (potentially £10k pa) combined with
 - b) A covenant requiring that the land be made available for Park & Ride requirements at specific times of the year, and
 - c) That periodic use be made of the area by halo to facilitate overspill parking for major events, namely during the evenings and weekends.
9. Despite nearly 10 years of constant reviews of land ownership, this Council and its predecessor Hereford City Council, have failed to identify an appropriate site for the development of such a facility.
10. The matter of the provision of skate park facilities in Hereford City has been repeatedly raised at subsequent full Council meetings of this Council over the last 2 years.

11. Provision of this type of facility in other market towns within the County has been undertaken by the appropriate Parish Councils at no cost to this Council. The only exception to this is where the Council has provided its own land at Wilton car park in Ross-on-Wye for pieces of equipment to be placed for the purposes of skateboarding activity. The equipment was funded by the community.

Risk Management

1. Skate park provision is a costly activity in both capital and revenue terms. Facilities are subject to European Safety Standards and inspection regimes by ROSPA qualified inspectors on a regular basis are required to indemnify the occupier against insurance claims.
2. The activity by its nature is hazardous and the potential for injury high. The need for a managed site is imperative to ensure that personal and public safety are not compromised.
3. The Council needs to be mindful that in supporting one facility in a market town it does not inadvertently create a precedent in the eyes of other potential or existing providers. Members have expressed a desire to see a strong degree of consistency applied to the level and nature of the support provided for this type of activity.
4. In the granting of any lease, the Council would need to satisfy itself of the competency and capacity of the proposed organisation wishing to develop such a facility. It may also wish to take a view of the ability of that organisation to adequately resource the ongoing maintenance and development needs of the site.
5. Local experience has shown that such facilities are not without adverse publicity. There is a potential reputational risk to the Council and its partners should the initiative be unsuccessful.

Alternative Options

Alternative Option 1

The Council adopts the option detailed in Consideration 8 of this Report.

Alternative Option 2

The Council advertises externally for expressions of interest in the site with a view to a commercial leasehold opportunity.

Alternative Option 3

The Council seeks to dispose of the land at a market consideration.

Consultees

All Directorates of Herefordshire Council via Directors and Heads of Service

Hereford City Council

Local Members

Halo

Wheeled Sports for Hereford

Background Papers

None at this stage

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
on Mr Geoff Hughes, Director of Adult & Community Services on (01432) 260695

WESLEYAN CHAPEL, KINGTON

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: RESOURCES

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected:

Kington Town

Purpose:

To consider disposal of the Wesleyan Chapel, Kington on the open market.

Key Decision:

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation

THAT approval be given to proceed with the disposal of the Wesleyan Chapel on the open market.

Considerations

1. The Wesleyan Chapel was originally acquired by Leominster District Council. It is a Listed Grade II building that has been in a poor state of repair for many years.
2. In order to keep the building wind and water tight, over the last 5 years the Council has incurred grounds maintenance costs of £3,200 and building maintenance costs of £11,081.74, including in 2004/05 roof and structural repairs of £7,210.90.
3. Over the last two years officers, Cabinet Members and local interested parties have endeavoured to find a sustainable use for the Wesleyan Chapel in Kington town centre. Given the Chapel's central location the Kington Area Regeneration Partnership were particularly anxious to include community usage into any proposals for the building.
4. Since 1992 a number of feasibility reports have been prepared on potential uses for the building; these include a youth hostel, Info Centre and Library and a Sure Start Centre. More recently a mixed private sector and community use was considered. In all cases the high cost of conversion and the ongoing revenue costs rendered each scheme non-viable.
5. The costs of conversion range from £950,000 to in excess of £1.6 million.
6. External sources of funding were explored including Heritage Lottery, Objective 2 and Rural Regeneration Zone, and although some end uses could be eligible for funding the level of grants available were inadequate for the extent of work that would be involved.

7. Meetings have been held recently with representatives from Kington Regeneration to look at the business case for retention. It has been concluded that a viable business case cannot be achieved.
8. In terms of the Leominster District Adopted Plan policy K7 indicates that civic and/or community uses would be appropriate for the building although other uses, e.g. commercial are not necessarily ruled out. The Local Plan indicates that the garden land could provide for ancillary requirements of any use within the building itself, e.g. car parking and servicing, and there has been permission in the past (now expired) for retail uses on the land. The policy also stresses the importance of retaining the stone wall along the western edge of the site.
9. Officers have investigated the possibility of de-listing the Chapel, but following consultation with planners it appears that this option is fraught with difficulties. A de-listing is unlikely, as there is no precedent for a local authority being granted approval to de-list a building.
10. AWM advised that in the current market the building could hold development potential for a mixed commercial/office and residential type scheme.
11. A number of local agents have been approached. Most were confident that they could secure the sale of the building. Disposal by means of auction is, therefore, proposed. It is proposed that this capital receipt be earmarked for the Accommodation Strategy.

Risk Management

The major constraint for the building is likely to be its Grade II listed status. The local plan indicates that 'particular care will be required for the restoration and conversion in order to ensure that the architectural characteristics and features of the building are retained'

Consultees

- Advantage West Midlands.
- Kington Area Regeneration Partnership.
- Local Member for Kington.

Background Papers

None identified.

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT SERVICE

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: SOCIAL CARE ADULTS AND HEALTH

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To receive an update on performance and development plans related to the community equipment service.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

That the proposed plans for current and future development of the Integrated Community Equipment Service to meet growing demand for specialist equipment services for people with disabilities across Herefordshire be approved.

Reasons

Following the presentation of a report on 15th December, 2005 Cabinet requested an update report on performance and a Business/Action Plan, detailing the programme of work for ICES.

Considerations

1. The Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) is a joint service provided by Herefordshire Council under a pooled budget arrangement with Herefordshire Primary Care Trust. In 2005/6, the pooled budget is £486,940. This budget covers all running costs, including accommodation and staffing costs, as well as the purchase of equipment items.
2. Integrated Community Equipment Services were established under guidelines issued by the Department of Health requiring health and social care to work together. ICES has now become an essential part of mainstream services and is a key component in the prevention agenda, the importance of which has been highlighted in the recent Department of Health white paper on the future of community services.
3. Performance is monitored by the key indicator BVPI56/D54, which measures the percentage of items satisfactorily installed within seven days of the decision to supply date. The service has worked hard over the past year to improve the ratings for this indicator. This has involved working across both health and social

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Sue Dale, Prevention Services Manager on 01432 261778, or Jo Hart, Partnership Manager on 01432 383485

care to improve time scales on a range of activities. The target for 2005/6 is 86%. Current projections show that 91% of items are being installed within seven days of the decision to supply, therefore we are exceeding our 2005/6 target. This places Herefordshire in the top quartile of our comparator authorities.

4. Appendix 1 is a Business Action Plan, which shows those areas of activity, both current and planned, outlined in the report presented to Cabinet in December 2005. It identifies the actions required to implement these plans, together with an outline of the resource implications. These plans will inform the ICES Management Advisory Board's work plan for the coming year. The Board is made up of stakeholders in the service, including representatives of user organisations. Recommendations for improvements and changes to the service will be developed by the Advisory Board and submitted to the Older People's Programme Board for approval and for funding decisions.
5. At this stage the majority of actions identified in the Business Action Plan will be supported through existing resources and will not require any additional investment. However, it has been identified that the introduction of a new Driver/Fitter Service, to deliver and install equipment, will require an increase of £30,000 per annum in the current ICES budget. A Joint Commissioning Strategy for ICES is being developed to plan for future service developments, which will meet the needs of a growing older and vulnerable population in Herefordshire. It is proposed that the Commissioning Strategy be submitted to Cabinet in March 2007, in order to highlight areas where future investment will be required.

Risk Management

In order to meet the needs of a growing older and vulnerable population in Herefordshire it is recognised that there will need to be future investment in ICES in order to provide a service that supports these service user groups to continue to live in their own community.

Alternative Options

Not applicable.

Consultees

A process of consultation will be undertaken within partner organisations and with other stakeholders by the ICES Management Advisory Board, on proposed developments within the service. All proposed developments will be submitted to the ICES Older People's Programme Board.

Background Papers

None identified.

Herefordshire Integrated Community Equipment Service

Business Action Plan 2006/7

a. Current Activity

Area of operation	Target	Action(s) required	Resource implications	Timescale
Hospital Discharge	To ensure that discharges are not delayed by the need for equipment to be in place	To work with health and social care colleagues to address equipment needs as a part of the planning for discharge.	Within available resources	September 2006
Intermediate Care	Provision of equipment within 7 days of decision to supply	Work with Intermediate Care teams to ensure an integrated assessment/delivery/fitting process	Within available resources	September 2006
Links with Housing	<p>a) Installation (fitting ready for use) of equipment items by in-house handyman agency to improve performance ratings (D54/BVPI56).</p> <p>b) Close working with Housing OT</p> <p>c) Minor adaptations (funded by ICES, delivered by Private Sector Housing through You @ Home) carried out within 7 days</p>	<p>a) Following the Driver Fitter pilot scheme, evaluate and, if appropriate, develop as a part of the ICES service</p> <p>b) Housing OT appointed. In post from 3 April</p> <p>c) Establish internal service level agreement with Private Sector Housing</p>	<p>a) Estimated Driver/Fitter pilot cost £2000, to be met from existing revenue budget. A bid for continuation funding will be made to Older Peoples Programme Board, annual cost c£30K.</p> <p>b) No revenue cost</p> <p>c) No revenue cost</p>	<p>a) Pilot scheme February 2006; full introduction planned for April 2006, depending on funding.</p> <p>b) On going.</p> <p>c) September 2006</p>
Direct Payments	Support and contribute to PI C51 (Direct Payments) – target for 2005/6 = 100 service users receiving a Direct Payment	<p>a) Finalise policy & procedures for equipment and put in place</p> <p>b) Develop policy & procedures for minor adaptations</p>	To be met from revenue as no separate funds are identified for this. There will be implications for the Section 31 ICES budget due to loss of economies	<p>a) April 2006</p> <p>b) Work to be commenced beginning 2007.</p>

Area of operation	Target	Action(s) required	Resource implications	Timescale
Direct Payments			of scale in purchasing and fewer items will be returned for re-use.	
Competency Framework	<p>Broaden range of staff able to access equipment Reduce OT waiting times for assessments.</p> <p>Average wait for OT assessment: 7 months N.B. These assessments are holistic and not purely related to equipment needs. The OT service is implementing a range of strategies to address this issue.</p>	Implement competency frameworks so that care staff are able to undertake simple assessments for equipment	Staff time. Training section time. NB Saving on OT time	September 2006
ICT – software upgrade	Upgrade to version 4 of MESaLS software to allow direct access to online ordering by clinicians and to improve management reporting	ICT agreement Order and install new software. Staff training Clinician training	Capital (£15k) already identified	April 2006 Software provider has given notice that support is to be withdrawn from the current version by September 2006.
Compliance with BVPI56/D54- % of items satisfactorily delivered and installed within 7 days.	<p>Target for 2005/2006 86%</p> <p>Target for 2006/2007 88%</p>	Improve satisfactory installation returns by making equipment ready for use at time of delivery	See above (Links with Housing a))	March 2007

b) Future Activity

Area of operation	Target	Action(s) required	Resource implications	Timescale
Telecare and Smart Houses	Support PI C32 (Help to Live at Home)	Run 3 development projects – dementia; intermediate care; frail elderly.	Preventative Technology Grant to initiate and develop the infrastructure. £114k Year 1 £192k Year 2 Bid for Supporting People monies to joint fund development. Expect that savings made elsewhere will be assigned for the long term.	From April 2006 to March 2008
Wheelchair Service	a) ICES contracted to store & distribute wheelchairs b) Wheelchair service to co-locate	a) agreement with wheelchair service b) Suitable premises required	Income generator for pooled budget. Estimated value of contract £16k The service has around 3,500 users.	a) PCT has recently extended the existing contract for a further year to April 2007 to allow further discussions to take place. b) See Location of Services (below)
Short term wheelchair loans	Introduce a loan service for Herefordshire, to operate under ICES	Scope volume and need. Determine eligibility. Develop procedures.	Development money of £10k required. Additional revenue of approx £5k p.a. required to operate the service and to maintain stock. Identify funding through Older People's Programme Board	March 2007

Area of operation	Target	Action(s) required	Resource implications	Timescale
Mobility Aids	Incorporate walking aids currently managed by community physiotherapists into ICES	Scope volume and identified need.	Income generation for pooled budget as existing funding will be transferred to ICES.	March 2007
Location of Services	Occupy larger premises to allow for expansion. To include additional services outlined above; assessment, demonstration and training facilities; increased storage, cleaning, maintenance and office space.	Identify suitable premises Plan logistics of move	Capital (£100k) already identified. Additional funding from inclusion of further services and through Older People's Programme Board.	March 2008
Commissioning Strategy	Develop joint commissioning strategy for all ICES services	Identify funding streams and agree levels of service provision	Staff time	March 2007
Local Targets for performance	Develop local performance indicators to track service development and outcomes e.g. % of equipment re-cycled.	Agree targets with partners and stakeholders via Management Advisory Board. Increase awareness amongst users of the need to return equipment.	Staff time (see also ICT – software upgrade above)	March 2007

Sue Dale – Prevention Services Manager
March 2006

HOMELESSNESS UPDATE

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: SOCIAL CARE ADULTS AND HEALTH

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

To receive an update on progress to date with homelessness prevention in Herefordshire and to provide an overview of the shape of the homelessness and housing advice services provided by Herefordshire Council since transfer from Herefordshire Housing Ltd on 1st April, 2006.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

- That (a) the report be noted; and
- (b) reports on progress and developments in homelessness prevention services and the work of the Homelessness and Housing Advice Steering Group, now services have been transferred back in-house, be submitted to Cabinet on a regular basis.

Reasons

The number of homelessness presentations and acceptances in Herefordshire has risen steadily since 2002, accompanied by a significant rise in spending on temporary accommodation. There were 510 homelessness acceptances in 2004/05.

In July 2005, Cabinet agreed a number of 'spend to save' initiatives, based upon a homelessness prevention agenda. Since then, changes have been implemented which have led to an improving position around homelessness prevention in Herefordshire. Herefordshire Council is now once again providing homelessness and housing advice services following the transfer of services back in-house from Herefordshire Housing Ltd.

Considerations

1. Two full time equivalent homelessness prevention officers have dealt with over 100 homelessness cases since they took up post in January 2006. Less than 10% of these cases have gone on to become homelessness applications under the Housing Act 1996. These officers are also tackling some of the wider issues around homelessness prevention such as liaising with private landlords and setting up a programme of interventions in schools.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Richard Gabb, Head of Strategic Housing Services, 01432 261902, or Derek Allen, Homelessness Service Change Manager, 01432 261567

2. The spend to save fund has enabled 30 successful homelessness prevention payments to be made between January and March 2006. The total value of these payments is £9,000, representing a projected saving of approximately £300,000 by preventing temporary accommodation bookings to bed and breakfast establishments.
3. Successful mediation services are being provided by Herefordshire Mediation, which has enabled young people to stay at home where appropriate and Women's Aid has ensured sanctuary options are being explored where appropriate, in cases of domestic violence.
4. The number of new families booked into bed and breakfast accommodation monthly has fallen steadily from 24 in November 2005 to 9 in March 2006, leading to an improved out turn position in this particular budget year.
5. Under the previous arrangements staff were located in one central office in Hereford. Now the team is back in-house, they are based across a number of locations in Herefordshire, utilising the opportunities afforded by the Info in Herefordshire model.
6. Negotiations with Shelter are taking place over re-specifying the Herefordshire project 'Homeless to home' service to give an increased homelessness prevention focus, to include co-location with Strategic Housing staff. These new arrangements are being trialled now.
7. The historical accumulation of the number of families living in temporary accommodation remains a challenge, although this number is reducing slowly. A new one-year secondment will be available within the homelessness team, designed to focus on monitoring temporary accommodation usage and encouraging active bidding by homeless service users.
8. Early indicators remain encouraging for an improving position during 2006/07. For comparison, during the final quarter of 2004/05, 188 homelessness applications were made, resulting in 118 acceptances. During the final quarter of 2005/06, 94 applications were made, resulting in 45 acceptances.

Risk Management

The budget for bed and breakfast accommodation in 2006/07 may not be adequate, despite additional budget being allocated. The implications will be reported as part of the integrated performance report throughout the financial year.

Continued use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families could result in judicial review proceedings being taken against the Council by families accommodated in Bed and Breakfast for longer than six weeks contrary to the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order (England) 2003.

Alternative Options

Not applicable.

Consultees

Not applicable

Background Papers

None identified.