

MINUTES of the meeting of CABINET held at THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD on Thursday 1 May 2008 at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillor RJ Phillips (Chairman)

Councillors: LO Barnett, AJM Blackshaw, H Bramer, JP French, JA Hyde and JG Jarvis

In attendance: Councillors PA Andrews, WLS Bowen, ACR Chappell, GFM Dawe, PJ Edwards, TM James and RI Matthews. Also in attendance was Regional Divisional Commander Mark Turner from the West Mercia Constabulary.

68. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation.

69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

70. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman with typographical error amended prior to publication.

71. RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

The Cabinet Member Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources presented the report and advised Cabinet that the Race Equality Scheme should be considered as a responsibility for the whole Cabinet and not solely included in the Leader's portfolio of Corporate Strategy. The proposed Scheme was a clear and well set out document covering a variety of issues which all Members needed to respond to as community leaders.

The Head of Policy and Performance advised that the Race Equality Scheme:

- Was one of the authority's three statutory schemes
- Provided an opportunity for closer joint working with the Primary Care Trust and the Herefordshire Hospitals Trust
- Considered the larger agenda (as opposed to focussing on detail).

It was clarified that the scheme solely focused on the single issue of race equality and did not encompass the wider elements of Disability and Gender.

A question was raised on the various groups/associations that were consulted and it was asked if the indigenous population had been consulted also. Cabinet was advised that consultation had been undertaken with a variety of groups, however as consultation was voluntary not all participated. A Town and Parish Council core group was also consulted. It was emphasised that there was an onus on Members to drive forward on the issues with their parishes.

This important document was commended as it illustrated robust cross organisational working. It was additionally highlighted that the post of Race Equality Development Officer crossed organisational boundaries and provided a unifying approach, as evidenced by the work undertaken with migrant workers.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet approve the Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan

72. HEREFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND DRUGS PARTNERSHIP - PARTNERSHIP PLAN

Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Community Services introduced the item and welcomed the Chairman of the Partnership, Mr Geoff Hughes, Director of Regeneration, Regional Divisional Commander Mark Turner who was attending in his capacity as Deputy Chairman of Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership and Jane Rose Partnership Manager. The Cabinet Member advised that he represented Members of Herefordshire Council on the Partnership and that the development of the strategy had been undertaken by all Partners. It was explained that the three year Plan encompassed both the merged Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Drugs Action Team and set out how the five broad priorities identified would be addressed. The Plan outlined the role of each partner and their contributions to delivering upon the agreed objectives. Wide consultation had been undertaken which included a variety of methods including, interviews, focus groups and surveys.

Mr Geoff Hughes, Chairman of the Partnership advised Cabinet that this was the first time that the collective organisations which made up the Partnership had undertaken a strategic assessment and produced such a plan, which it was hoped would be an important element to help deliver the Local Area Assessment targets.

Divisional Commander Mark Turner emphasised that data relating to the fear of crime and the perception of anti-social behaviour were seen to vary markedly between some ward groups, with respondents living in Leominster and Hereford City South most likely to perceive their local area to have a high level of anti-social behaviour, whilst those in the Kington area were the least likely. It was stated that the results of the analysis regarding fear of crime had not seen many significant changes compared to 2006 (which saw a significant improvement) this remained 'disproportionate' to the actual crimes. The Divisional Commander emphasised that the overall crime in Herefordshire was low, however Government required the measuring of the fear of crime as well as actual crime. He additionally highlighted that the 16-24 age group were the group most fearful of crime, and that this age group was the group most at risk of being both the victims of, and perpetrator of crime. Funding and commitment was required to support this age group, however it was stated that the loss of the LPSA (which provided half of the funding for the community safety work) had led to the unsustainability of four posts. The Partnership structure was currently being considered and partners were being requested to fund any shortfall in funding. He was pleased to highlight that road traffic fatalities had decreased.

In response to a question raised by a Member, the Director of Children's Services

stated that two schools had not responded to the survey purely due to the burden placed upon them to complete surveys. Members were advised that the Council was currently looking at streamlining the number of surveys distributed.

Responding to questions raised on the accuracy of data, the framing of questions and the inclusion of Parish Councils, the Partnership Manager advised that Parish Councils had not provided data directly, however there had been several opportunities to be involved and input into the process, e.g PACT meetings, mobile promotion, however it was stated that consideration would be given to approaching Parish councils directly in the development of future plans. Questions for the surveys had been based on national youth and lifestyle surveys and set in the context of qualitative data.

Concern was expressed that some targets had not been set within the strategy. This was due to changes in national recording systems and definitions, therefore this year would be the baseline year in some areas.

General comments were made with relation to the problems caused by young people and their relationship with alcohol, which seemed to be in some cases a greater problem than drug taking and associated activity. The Divisional Commander advised Cabinet that the police and trading standards were working effectively together to tackle issues relating to underage drinking. Members additionally drew attention to those seemingly lesser crimes e.g Fly tipping, litter and dog fouling, which were anti-social, and which, if ignored could lead to escalating crime. It was stated that the Council needed to communicate more effectively on the anti-social aspects of such behaviour and advertise wider the means by which these crimes were reported.

There was general consensus of the need to develop and encourage a vibrant, lively and safe nighttime economy.

The Cabinet acknowledged the assistance of the West Mercia Constabulary in supporting and co-operating with the Council.

RESOLVED

That the Council adopt the Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership Plan.

73. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report which sought the approval of the Cabinet to the use of a joint risk management strategy, policy and toolkit for use by both the Council and the PCT. Additionally, approval was also sought for the use of an Assurance Framework for reporting jointly all high risks previously reported separately in both organisations which would provide a greater degree of certainty to auditors and which would be reported to Cabinet as part of the Integrated Performance Report.

Head of Financial Services (David Powell) advised Cabinet that significant progress had been made in the last eighteen months on risk management issues and the package of documentation reflected the amalgamation of best practice from both organisations. The supporting documentation provided information relating to matrices, templates and frameworks, all of which were important in supporting the progress of the organisation in relation to the Use of Resources target.

In response to a comment seeking clarification on the liability of Councillors and HPCT Non Executive Directors and detail of insurances for both groups, the

Corporate Risk Manager stated that due to the nature and legislative basis of the organisations, separate insurance cover existed, the details of which would be provided to the member.

A member suggested that further consideration be given to the definition of Level 1 of the Likelihood Score that currently read; 'Can't believe that it will happen'.

The joint working that had been undertaken by the officers in both organisations to develop the integrated risk management documentation based on best practice was acknowledged and illustrated how the organisations were working together for the benefit of the residents.

RESOLVED

That:

- (a) The combined risk management strategy, policy and toolkit be adopted for use throughout the Council; and**
- (b) The Assurance Framework be used for reporting corporate high risks.**

74. LEARNING DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP CONTRACT

Prior to presenting the report, the Cabinet Member for Social Care Adults and Health, expressed her thanks and appreciation to Mr Geoff Hughes the former Director for Adult Social Care for the support he had provided during his time as Director. Other Members echoed these sentiments during the discussion of the item. Eleanor Brazil was welcomed as the Interim Director of Adult Social Care.

Councillor Barnett reminded Members that the Cabinet had authorised the continuation of discussions into drawing up a contract for the Learning Disability Accommodation and Support Contract with Midland Heart. The process had included the holding of a seminar and consideration of the draft contract by the relevant scrutiny committee. Separate negotiations were on going regarding buildings and around the service provision for the benefit of individuals with learning disabilities.

The Interim Director Adult Social Care advised Cabinet that it was considered that there would be a seamless handover in the provision of service from the Council to Midland Heart, with the emphasis on improving service delivery. Robust systems had been developed with Midland Heart and the Council had worked on developing and defining its own role over the next five years.

In response to a concern that the report did not contain detailed financial information (including transfer of buildings) and that no alternative options to the contract had been provided, the Cabinet Member assured Members that there had been a tremendous amount of work undertaken on developing the Contract at every stage and appropriate assurances had been sought. The Director of Resources confirmed that both financial and asset management officers had been fully involved in the process.

It was confirmed that the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee had received much robust information on the development of the Contract and was happy to support its progress to authorisation. It was further stated that the close working between this Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet Member was welcomed and proved constructive. It was recognised that there was a need for the Scrutiny Committee to also monitor progress and outcomes.

The Interim Director, Adult Social Care stated that with relation to financial

implications, more services were being provided to a greater number of users with the same amount of money by moving to individual living and accessing different funding streams e.g housing benefit, supporting living monies etc.

In response to a question which sought to quantify the size of the risk to 'resistance' of moving from the traditional service model by individuals, staff and family carers, the Interim Director, Adult Social Care, stated that resistance was a common feature of change. It was underlined that much work had been undertaken with staff, families and service users to determine their needs and aspirations, and it had been evident that younger people had differing expectations, thus the thrust of change had come about by the service users. It was hoped that the opportunities for them should be greater

The Chief Executive confirmed that, whilst the Resources Directorate was integral to the process, it was important that the accountability lay in the appropriate structures, and not solely with the Resources Directorate.

RESOLVED that:

Cabinet authorise officers to finalise contractual terms and conditions and enter into a contract between Herefordshire Council and Midland Heart to provide Accommodation and Support for people with a learning disability on the basis described in the report.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

CHAIRMAN