

MINUTES of the meeting of CABINET held at THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD on Thursday, 12 June 2008 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor RJ Phillips (Chairman)
Councillor (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: LO Barnett, AJM Blackshaw, JP French, JA Hyde,
JG Jarvis, PD Price and DB Wilcox

In attendance: Councillors ACR Chappell, PJ Edwards and SJ Robertson

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: H Bramer Cabinet Member Resources, GFM Dawe and RI Matthews, Members in attendance.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor ACR Chappell declared a personal interest in Agenda item 4 Wyebridge Sports College, Determination of Statutory Notices.

15. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2008 be deferred to the next meeting of Cabinet.

16. WYEBRIDGE SPORTS COLLEGE - DETERMINATION OF STATUTORY NOTICES

The Cabinet Member Children's Services presented the report and informed Cabinet that the Secretary of State was unable to approve the opening of an Academy unless and until there had been an agreed close of Wyebridge Sports College. The Cabinet Member added there had been no suggestion from the Secretary of State to indicate the opening of the Academy would be refused on the 1 September 2008. Cabinet raised the question on how much consultation had been carried out with other schools and colleges and in particular with Herefordshire Sixth Form College and was reassured that considerable consultation had been carried out. It was added that concern had been raised as to whether there would be enough students for the sixth form at the Academy as Herefordshire already had a high performing Sixth Form College in the county for students.

Cabinet was advised that traditionally the children from the South Wye area that had attended Herefordshire Sixth Form College in the past had left college prior to taking any exams. It was added that the Government Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) insist that every academy has a sixth form and for the proposed size of the Wyebridge Academy this would need to be for 200 students. The Head of Commissioning and Improvement stated that he had pointed out to the sponsors and the trustees that the number of children applying to take up a place might not reach the figure of 200. Continuing discussions were being held with all the colleges on course proposals. The Principal designate for Wyebridge Academy had had discussions with local businesses with regard to the skills they would like to

see that young people had prior to coming into the work place. It was hoped to reflect these skill requirements in the courses provided in the sixth form, which would provide an alternative to students who did not wish to go down the academic route. The Leader reiterated the importance of working with the existing providers of higher education in Herefordshire for a successful outcome.

Members in attendance from the South Wye area confirmed the importance of the academy and commended the Head of Commission and Improvement for the hard work and achievements he had made in the area. Cabinet was reminded of when the school had been in special measures and the great improvements that had been made since then and how important it was to do the best for the children in the South Wye area.

The Leader spoke on behalf of Cabinet and all Members of the Council on the forthcoming retirement of George Salmon, Head of Commissioning and Improvement, and thanked him for all the support and help he had given to the schools across the county and to Councillors.

RESOLVED: That the closure of Wyebridge Sports College on 31 August 2008 be approved.

17. POLYTUNNELS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Cabinet Member Environment and Strategic Housing presented the report to Cabinet and emphasised that the recommendation for the publication of the supplementary planning document was only for consultation purposes and was not final. The Cabinet Member added that extensive consultation had already taken place with representatives from the farming/growing industry, local community and interested lobby groups. The process had been helpful and suggestions and comments had been gathered from both sides, which had been summarised and could be viewed on the website.

It was added that a balanced approach had been taken in drafting the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and set out within the policy were 21 supplementary guidelines to assist future planning applications. The Cabinet Member referred to two of the guidelines. Guideline 1: Economic Benefits – the benefits of polytunnels in enabling the production of increased quantities and qualities of soft fruit, the sustainability benefits of reducing food miles and the contribution to the rural economy. Guideline 2: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – in marginal cases where economic benefits are being weighed against landscape impact, priority would be afforded to the landscape over all other planning considerations. The Cabinet Member reiterated the need for a balanced approach and that the document was only for consultation. He added as a point of interest that Wychavon Council was seeking advice from Herefordshire on dealing with polytunnels.

Cabinet complimented officers on the report, the draft Supplementary Planning Document and for the way they had worked with the fruit growing industry and the community.

RESOLVED: That the publication of the draft Supplementary Planning Document be agreed for consultation purposes.

The meeting ended at 2.25 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN