

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Thursday 21 November 2013 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor AW Johnson (Chairman)

Councillors: H Bramer, JW Millar, PM Morgan, GJ Powell and PD Price

In attendance: Councillors TM James, AJW Powers, P Rone and A Seldon

44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors RJ Phillips (Cabinet Support Member External Liaison) and WLS Bowen (Herefordshire Independents Group Leader).

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

46. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2013/15: QUARTER 2

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services introduced the report of the Assistant Director Organisational Development which reviewed performance for the first half of 2013-14. It was noted the report was framed around the two key priorities of: creating and maintaining a successful economy; and enabling residents to be independent and lead fulfilling lives with resources focussed on supporting the most vulnerable.

In response to a question from the Cabinet Member Infrastructure about the rising numbers of planning applications being received, the Director for Economy, Communities and Corporate ('Director' subsequently) reported that the applications were being dealt with within in the relevant timescales, so there was confidence that there was sufficient capacity to deal with those currently in the system. He added that rising numbers would increase income, potentially enabling the authority to increase capacity if required.

In response to a question from Councillor Powers, the Director advised that the National Planning Policy Framework required every local planning authority to have a deliverable Five Year Housing Land Supply. A test case had recently gone to Public Inquiry, in relation to land at Home Farm, Belmont; an outcome was expected before Christmas 2013. The authority considered that it had demonstrated that it had a supply of between 4.6 and 8.6 years, depending on the methodology used. The Director said that the adoption of the Local Development Framework would enable development to come forward which would exceed a five year supply. In response to a further question, the Director said that progress with the supply issue related to the complexities of local plan adoption rather than officer capacity, adding that many local authorities were in the same position.

Councillor Seldon advised that, at the last meeting of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Assistant Director Economic, Environment and Cultural Services had been asked to provide a definitive definition in relation to the Five Year Housing Land Supply and a

draft was being prepared for circulation. He added that, having looked at the websites of various local authorities, Stratford-upon-Avon District Council appeared to have one of the most concise explanations.

In relation to the economic development paragraphs of the Corporate Performance Report, Councillor Seldon questioned whether consideration was being given to alternative sites for major employment land, perhaps along the M50 corridor, if targets were not met in respect of the Hereford Enterprise Zone. The Director advised that he attended the Enterprise Zone Executive Board and reported that significant progress was being made, with detailed negotiations being held with six companies. He also advised that the planning permission identified that there was capacity for further transport on the estate and, although there were issues with the local road network at peak hours, the majority of enquiries related to the operation of shift patterns which would have limited impact on existing capacity.

In response to a question from Councillor James about planning applications that had been approved with weight given to the housing land supply issues, the Director advised that the authority could not unpick previous planning permissions and re-iterated the importance of avoiding delays in the adoption of the Local Development Framework.

Councillor Powers noted that Councillor Phillips had recently stepped down from the Cabinet to focus on the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), and questioned the reporting accountability for this role. In response, the Leader confirmed that Councillor Phillips would report directly to him and it would be his responsibility to keep the Council updated on information regarding the LEP as it occurred. The Director added that related reports on EU Investment Strategy and LEP Growth Proposition would be brought to Cabinet for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the performance for the first half of 2013/14 be noted.

48. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer - Finance which provided Cabinet with assurance on the robustness of budgetary control and monitoring across the Council. The report also highlighted the key financial risks within directorates and identified the mitigation measures being implemented to bring the Council within its overall approved budget. The Chief Officer - Finance drew attention to the following points:

- i. The Council continued to forecast an overspend for the year; this was approximately £3.3m at September 2013, compared to £3.9m in August 2013.
- ii. There had been significant improvement in Adult Wellbeing; with a projected overspend of £3.4m at September 2013, compared to £4.3m in August 2013. However, there were additional net pressures in other directorates of £0.3m.

The Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing commented on the progress made in Adult Wellbeing, with the £0.9m improvement having been achieved through a combination of £0.3m from the Economy, Communities and Corporate Directorate and £0.6m coming from reducing demand, reorganising packages and bringing staff back into the Council from Wye Valley NHS Trust. He said that he was encouraged by the work on 'virtual wards' which was helping people to stay at home rather than going into hospital or onwards to residential homes. He also said that, although issues were still being worked through in terms of data accuracy, it appeared that matters were moving in the right direction.

In response to questions from Members in attendance:

1. The Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing advised that the budget made provision for winter pressures, however nobody could predict the severity of the weather during the winter months.
2. With reference to paragraph 7.3 of the report about the 'Additional action ... to bring forward additional savings proposals from across the Council', it was reported that a series of meetings was to take place in the coming week involving the Leader, Cabinet Members and the Chief Officer - Finance to go through budgets line by line with the purpose of being clear about what was achievable, what was at risk and what plans were in place to support those areas at risk. The Leader emphasised that it was important to avoid overspends in the coming year. He also said that he would report back to Group Leaders following these meetings.
3. The Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing advised that a number of pieces of commissioning work were going on at present, alongside a range of other activities, with the aim of achieving a budget for next year that could be adhered to but would also facilitate greater competition in the market and choice for service users.

The Leader added that the Cabinet was taking a more robust approach to the budget setting for 2014/15 than might have been the case in previous years.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) **Cabinet notes the projected overspend of £3.3m for 2013/14, an improvement on the August position of £0.6m, the potential impact on reserves and the 2014/15 budget;**
- (b) **Cabinet supports the continuing action by Directors to identify further financial savings to mitigate the impact; and**
- (c) **Directors and financial resources are focussed on identifying savings for the remainder of 2013/14 and future savings for 2014/15 to 2016/17.**

49. CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES: SHORT BREAKS AND RESPITE SERVICE PROVISION

The Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing introduced the report of the Lead Commissioner (Short Breaks) which sought approval to commit Council funding of up to £1.3m (£443,000 per annum) over the next three years in the procurement of services for children and young people with disabilities. This was part of a £3.3m pooled budget between Herefordshire Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

The Head of Commissioning (Children's Services) highlighted the key points of the report:

- a. The statutory duties of the Council and the CCG were outlined.
- b. The Herefordshire Review of Services for Children and Young People with Disabilities and Complex Needs had clearly identified the availability of short breaks and respite care as a significant support to children, young people and families. This included a specific recommendation to commission an integrated range of short break provision and to pool resources across partner agencies to prevent overlap and support best value.

- c. Current contracts were due to cease in January 2014 and a new approach had been taken to procurement in Herefordshire, using the Commissioning Prospectus; this was appended to the report. This was outcomes focused and parent and carers had been involved in the commissioning process, and would continue to be involved in on-going monitoring and evaluation of the contracts.
- d. The tender process and next steps of the procurement were outlined. It was reported that new providers were coming into market in Herefordshire, the number of buddies / support workers would be increased, and a new foster carer service provided. It was reported that further work was to be undertaken, particularly to ensure that there were no gaps in the services.

In response to a question from Councillor James, the Lead Commissioner (Short Breaks) provided an overview of the options available to meet the varying requirements of children and young people with disabilities and complex needs. Councillor James commented that Members should be aware of the remarkable commitments made by parents, carers and families and the need to support them appropriately. The Leader added that this work was entirely in support of the core aims of the Council.

RESOLVED: That funding commitment of up to £1.3m over three years be approved as the Council element of a total pooled budget of £3.3million over the next three year period, to support the awarding of contracts for short break and respite care services for children and young people aged 0-19 years with significant disabilities in Herefordshire.

50. EXECUTIVE ROLLING PROGRAMME

Cabinet reviewed and approved the Executive Rolling Programme.

Councillor Seldon reported that a special meeting of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been arranged for the afternoon of Thursday 5 December 2013 in relation to the Waste Management Contract. He also reported that a Task and Finish Group on Cultural Services was nearing completion and, arising from a Notice of Motion at Council on 18 October 2013, a Task and Finish Group was about to commence in respect of the consultation on the proposed merger of the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Leader reported that, along with the Leader of Worcestershire County Council, he had visited the Minister of State in respect of waste issues on Monday 18 November 2013. The Minister had undertaken to have his staff talk with officers from the councils about possible solutions and further information would be reported as it came through.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) **the Executive Rolling Programme be approved;**
- (b) **consideration be given to identifying any elements for referral to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and**
- (c) **the Executive Rolling Programme be scheduled for future review by Cabinet on a quarterly basis.**

The meeting ended at 2.40 pm

CHAIRMAN