

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Hall, Shire Hall, St Peters Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Thursday 9 October 2014 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor AW Johnson (Chairman)
Councillor PM Morgan (Vice Chairman)

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

In attendance: Councillors CN Attwood, WLS Bowen, J Hardwick, TM James, JG Jarvis, JLV Kenyon, FM Norman, AJW Powers

Officers: Jo Davidson, Geoff Hughes, David McCallum, Alistair Neill and Bill Norman, Peter Robinson, Robert Vickers

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors: RJ Phillips, JA Hyde, RI Matthews

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - AUGUST 2014

Cabinet received a report setting out the forecast outturn position for 2014/2015 based on financial information as at the end of August 2014.

The Chief Financial Officer explained that the council is forecast to break even this year. The councils External Auditors have given all areas of financial performance a green rating, an improvement on last year's amber and red ratings.

Revenue contingency budget has been vired to allow extra grass cutting and to contribute to the cost of temporary buildings for Colwall Church of England Primary School.

Capital spending is forecast to be £8.8m higher than budgeted. This is due to being successful in a number of grant applications and the re-profiling of expenditure and will not be a cost to the council.

It was reported the latest forecasts predict overspends of £972k in Adults and Wellbeing, and £484k in Children's Wellbeing with an underspend of £225k in Economy, Communities and Corporate.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing gave Cabinet details of the current and future changes being put into place in Adults and Wellbeing. It was confirmed the changes

implemented so far this year mean there is confidence of being in an ongoing position of stability.

In answer to a members question about possible winter pressures the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing gave details of changes being put into place in the system, which if achieve their aims, should mitigate any winter pressures.

The Chief Executive confirmed the creation of a transformation board bringing together the Wye Valley NHS Trust, 2gether, the Clinical Commissioning Group and Herefordshire Council.

The Cabinet Member for Young People and Children's Wellbeing advised the savings targets for Children's Wellbeing have so far been 70% achieved and plans are on target with every effort being made to break even by the end of the year.

The main issues facing the directorate have been a 12% increase in children in care and staffing costs in safeguarding services.

The Director of Children's Wellbeing went onto confirm an increase in social workers has reduced the caseloads of individual staff and there has been a reduction in the turnover of permanent staff. The current percentage of agency staff at management level is 20% and at front line level 46%. There is a movement of newly qualified social workers into posts which will release some agency staff.

In answer to a members question it was confirmed the cost of using agency staff is an additional £1m. There are plans in place to develop in house social workers, however the team will always require experienced staff which are more difficult to recruit and there is a need to encourage experienced people into the county. Targets are in place to recruit permanent staff and these are currently being met.

Following issues raised by members in attendance concerning next years budget the Chief Financial Officer confirmed this will be worked on over the coming months, with the budget based on anticipated future demands, and future savings being made in a controlled situation, whilst remaining mindful of unforeseen changes and risks.

Assurance was given by the Chief Financial Officer that funding had been identified for the £2m estimated cost of work required at Colwall Church of England Primary School.

Resolved

THAT:

- (a) Cabinet notes the council is projected to spend within its budget for this financial year;**
- (b) Cabinet notes the capital and treasury projected outturns; and**
- (c) Cabinet agrees the virement of 2014/15 revenue and capital contingency budgets to meet in year pressures within Directorates**

33. HEREFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT AND BUSINESS PLAN

The Independent Chair of Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB), David McCallum, presented members with the annual report for 2013/2014 and the board's business plan for 2014/2015.

It was confirmed the report had been delayed pending the outcome of the Ofsted report of Children's Services and the Ofsted Review of the Safeguarding Children Board.

The key points of the report were highlighted to members along with how these feed into the business plan. It was concluded the board had made improvements in the last 2 – 3 years but there is still a long way to go and ongoing support is needed.

Concerning Appendix 2 of the annual report Mr McCallum confirmed attendance protocol is in place and this has been followed in the past year. He confirmed it is regrettable the Ministry of Defence attendance level was low at strategic board and steering group meetings and this matter would need to be revisited. Concerning lay members of the board it was confirmed there have been real benefits to having a public view brought to their discussions.

The chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) confirmed the committee had seen the report at its last meeting, and following the publication of the Jay Report, a specific HOSC meeting will take place to look at the safeguarding issues in Development Area 3 of the action plan.

Concerning the issue of child sexual exploitation, Mr McCallum confirmed the board recognise the issues of vulnerable children and identifying perpetrators, and confirmed there is little doubt that these issues are in Herefordshire. It was added that children who can appear 'streetwise' are also at risk of being vulnerable and exploited. He confirmed previous workshops on this subject have been well attended by third parties and other organisations but the board cannot be complacent and have in development a child sexual exploitation strategy and action plan.

Concerning working with schools, Mr McCallum advised members an education forum takes place once each term with representatives from schools and the board. Approximately 80 – 100 representatives from schools attend; usually the schools dedicated safeguarding leads. It was confirmed the board are looking at how to communicate with schools to encourage more to engage with their work.

Resolved:

THAT CABINET:

- (a) Notes the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Herefordshire as assessed by the HSCB;**
- (b) Acknowledges the priorities of HSCB in relation to specific safeguarding issues in Herefordshire;**
- (c) Considers how Herefordshire Council is contributing to service improvement through commissioning within Herefordshire with regard to these safeguarding issues; and**
- (d) Makes any comments to the board about its future work programme.**

34. OUTCOME OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE PEER CHALLENGE AND ACTION PLAN

Members were presented with the outcome of the Adult Social Care Peer Challenge, which took place in June 2014, and the resulting action plan from the areas of improvement identified.

Members were advised of the three areas of scope of the review and the three main outcomes that were identified.

- The clear vision of the leadership with staff, officers and members all engaged.
- Stronger links with service users are needed.
- Areas for further focus were identified.

The Assistant Director, Homes and Community Services, confirmed to members the details from the outcome of the Peer Challenge had now been distilled to create an action plan for each of the issues identified.

It was confirmed there is a monitoring process in place, and updates will be reported through governance structures.

In order to clarify the “clawed back” amount of £929k identified in the report the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing confirmed this was a large amount of money which was identified in accounts as unspent as a result of end of year reconciliation work. There are two aims in place to tackle the issue of unspent direct payments. Firstly to work with customers to make sure they understand what they can spend and secondly to make sure the correct amount is allocated.

In answer to a query about point 30 of the action plan the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing clarified that Frameworki is a nationally used IT programme and extra software has been developed so that it can be used to produce reports needed as a result of the Care Act.

Resolved:

THAT:

- (a) Note the outcome of the review attached at Appendix 1;**
- (b) Approve the action plan attached as Appendix 2 as the response to the areas for improvement identified;**
- (c) Make recommendations for any further actions to be added to the action plans**

The meeting ended at 3.58 pm

CHAIRMAN