

**MINUTES of the meeting of General Overview & Scrutiny Committee held at Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Tuesday 10 March 2015 at 10.00 am**

**Present:** Councillor WLS Bowen (Chairman)  
Councillor BA Durkin (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:** AM Atkinson, AJM Blackshaw, Mr P Burbidge, DW Greenow, J Hardwick, EPJ Harvey, JA Hyde, AJW Powers, A Seldon, Mr P Sell and DB Wilcox

**Education Co-optees:** Mr P Burbidge and Mr P Sell

In attendance: Councillors JW Millar (Cabinet Member, Young People and Children's Wellbeing) and P Rone (Cabinet Member, Transport and Roads)

Officers present: C Baird (Assistant Director Commissioning and Education), B Baugh (Democratic Services Officer), A Brookes (Governance Services Manager), L Fraser (Head of Learning and Achievement), A Hough (Head of Educational Development), G Hughes (Director for Economy, Communities and Corporate), W Welsby (Head of Commercial Services)

**56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors ACR Chappell, TM James and RL Mayo. Apologies had also been received from Miss Lowenstein, an education co-optee.

**57. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Councillor J Hardwick substituted for Councillor ACR Chappell, and Councillor JA Hyde substituted for Councillor RL Mayo.

**58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Non-pecuniary interests were made, in respect of agenda items 8 (School examination performance) and 9 (The council's approach to the development of an educational capital investment strategy for July 2015), by the following members: Councillors WLS Bowen, BA Durkin, EPJ Harvey, A Seldon and by Mr. Burbidge and Mr. Sell.

**59. MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

In response to a comment from a committee member, who was not present at the last meeting, the Chairman confirmed that the minutes reflected accurately the committee's recommendations in relation to the item 'Review of Lease Restructuring with Hereford United (1939) Ltd'.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meetings held on 18 February 2015 be approved as a correct record.

**60. SUGGESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No suggestions from the public had been received.

**61. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No questions from the public had been received.

**62. TASK AND FINISH GROUP: BALFOUR BEATTY LIVING PLACES - PUBLIC REALM SERVICES**

The Chairman introduced the report of the Task and Finish Group: Balfour Beatty Living Places - Public Realm Services for consideration by the committee prior to its submission to the Executive. The Chairman said that a thorough review had been undertaken and he thanked the contributors, members and officers involved, particularly the Head of Commercial Services and the Interim Procurement Manager.

The Head of Commercial Services reported that the group had held discussions with a number of stakeholders, including Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP), and he considered that the report recommendations supported the approach that had been taken by the authority. He added that the recommendations were already being considered, with the intention of providing committee members with the Executive response prior to the pre-election period.

A committee member noted that the group had explored issues in relation to the handover from Amey to BBLP and commented on the need to ensure that the learning points were not lost. The committee member commented on the potential for locality stewards to become overworked and overburdened, particularly with statutory inspections, and recommended the following additional wording to recommendation 8 "That the work of the locality stewards should be monitored closely for signs of slippage in programmes and, if this occurs, that BBLP and Herefordshire Council should discuss a way of reducing the pressure on locality stewards to enable programmes to proceed".

A number of members commended individual locality stewards on their personal and technical abilities.

In response to a question from a committee member, the Chairman suggested that a briefing note be provided to the committee on the uptake of the lengthsman scheme by town and parish councils. A committee member suggested that councils that had implemented the scheme could share positive experiences with others.

Referring to recommendation 9 about members' requests, a committee member noted that the locality stewards did not have the ability to authorise works, with decisions made by other BBLP teams, and he considered it essential that a transparent appeal process was introduced. He also commented that the relevant cabinet member should maintain an overview of significant dispute issues.

The Cabinet Member Transport and Roads noted the continuing need for robust contract management and for issues to be addressed as they arose.

A committee member suggested that there was a need to understand why some parish councils did not wish to take up the lengthsman scheme and to address any concerns that they might have.

Another committee member commented that:

- i. parish councils should not be put at a disadvantage should they choose not to engage in the scheme and alternative arrangements should be accommodated;
- ii. it was disappointing that the enhanced lengthsman scheme had not been in sync with the budgeting timetable for many parish councils, as this might have increased uptake; and
- iii. referring to recommendation 7, in relation to insurance claims, it was considered that assurance was needed that inspections were being undertaken and defects were being rectified within appropriate timescales. In response, the Head of Commercial Services said that the purpose of the recommendation was to ensure that responses to claims were supported by appropriate levels of detail.

The Cabinet Member Transport and Roads advised that: 91 town and parish councils had joined the lengthsman scheme to date; there was only a single lengthsman scheme, with all local councils encouraged to move towards enhanced features; and lengthsman were being offered appropriate training and support to enable them to take on more responsibilities over time.

A committee member suggested that it would be helpful if the various roles and responsibilities of different parties were defined within a single document, particularly to inform members at the beginning of the next council term.

Further to point ii. above, a committee member suggested that better coordination of projects and the budgeting process would enhance local councils' confidence in the authority.

In response to points made by a committee member about recommendation 3, in relation to any decommissioning / commissioning process, it was reported that: the recording and management of asset information was a dynamic situation and consideration was being given to updated software; there was a comprehensive system and capability to manage asset information; the locality stewards had tablets to record inspections; in securing monies from the National Pothole Fund, the government office had recognised the council's professional approach to asset management; and BBLP had internal arrangements for the supervision of sub-contractors.

A committee member noted that the scoping statement for the task and finish group included "To consider the approach taken to grass cutting and grounds maintenance during the first year and make recommendations for the future" but no reference was made to this in the report. The Chairman considered that the issues had been sufficiently discussed and were understood, nevertheless an additional recommendation could be added to capture learning within a formal report to the committee during the next administration.

The Cabinet Member Transport and Roads commented on the potential benefits of community ownership and responsibility for local assets.

The committee considered whether an additional recommendation should be included to require an annual report to be submitted to the committee on BBLP performance. On balance, it was considered that recommendation 5, "That the council and BBLP continues to work together to host a 'members' seminar / member briefing' every six months...", should be sufficient.

The Cabinet Member Transport and Roads welcomed the group's report and considered that it endorsed BBLP for a job well done so far. He added that there were good indications that a positive relationship could be maintained between BBLP and the council going forward.

The Chairman said that the committee would appreciate the Executive response at the earliest opportunity.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (a) **The report of the Task and Finish Group: Balfour Beatty Living Places - Public Realm Services be approved for submission to the Executive, subject to the additions:**
- i. The following wording be included within recommendation 8, “That the work of the locality stewards should be monitored closely for signs of slippage in programmes and, if this occurs, that BBLP and Herefordshire Council should discuss a way of reducing the pressure on locality stewards to enable programmes to proceed”; and**
  - ii. That an additional recommendation be included as recommendation 13, “That a formal report be made to the committee during the next administration to capture learning from recent experiences in relation to grass cutting and grounds maintenance”.**
- (b) **The Executive’s response to the review be reported to committee members at the earliest opportunity after the Executive has approved its response.**

**63. SCHOOL EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE**

The Head of Learning and Achievement provided the committee with an overview of the report and associated presentation, the principal points included:

- i. Slide 2 of the presentation should refer to Key Stage 1 covering years one and two in primary.
- ii. Overall, it had been a positive year, improving on the previous year’s results. Attainment and achievement in key measures included:

Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS] (5 year olds): the percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development was in line with the national average.

Key Stage 1 (7 year olds) and Key Stage 2 (11 year olds): attainment in Reading, Writing and Mathematics had improved year on year but, particularly for Key Stage 1, there were improvements still to be made.

Key Stage 4 (16 year olds): performance was slightly better than the national average, with Herefordshire being one of only six local authorities with improved results in terms of 5+ A\*-C GCSEs, including English and Mathematics. It was noted that seven secondary schools were performing above the national average. Pupils at St. Mary’s RC High School had achieved 87% in this measure, putting it in the top percentile in the country; St. Joseph’s RC Primary School had also attained excellent results.

Key Stage 5 (19 year olds): average point scores continued to be above the national average.

- iii. Numerous examples were given of individual primary schools that attained consistently good and outstanding results. Nevertheless, overall attainment in Key Stage 2 was slightly below the national average.

- iv. Pupils who were eligible for pupil premium (including looked after children, pupils who received free school meals, and pupils with English as an additional language) were performing below the national average.
- v. The areas of focus for the current year included: testing in Key Stage 1 to ensure that pupils could read as well as possible in order to access the curriculum; reducing the gaps at all key stages for pupils who were eligible for pupil premium or who were vulnerable, this would remain a key area of focus; and raising standards above national average in EYFS and further above national average in Key Stage 4.

In response to questions from the Chairman about the use of pupil premium by schools, the Head of Learning and Achievement reported that:

- Information was being collated on which schools were using pupil premium to the best advantage, with the intention of disseminating practice to other schools; it was noted that the Minister of State for Schools had commended John Kyrle High School in relation to its use of pupil premium.
- Ofsted reports had not indicated any concerns about local schools not publishing details of pupil premium allocation and spending. The Chairman said that further assurance about this would be helpful for public understanding.

In response to questions from a committee member:

1. The Head of Learning and Achievement confirmed that all looked after children in the cohort for GCSEs in 2014 were in education, training or employment in September 2014. The Assistant Director Commissioning and Education acknowledged that the GCSE results for the cohort might appear disappointing at face value but emphasised that the approach, through the virtual head teacher role, was focused on supporting the needs of each individual and circumstances could change year on year.
2. The Assistant Director commented that the education landscape was increasingly complex and the authority was working with the relevant bodies to collectively address performance issues.
3. In response to comments about the need to provide looked after children with the appropriate environment and support to help with their studies and revision, it was suggested that a presentation previously received in respect of corporate parenting be made available to all members.
4. The Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing noted that there had been some significant improvements but pupils eligible for free school meals and pupils with English as an additional language continued to achieve less well than the same groups nationally. He added that officers were facilitating meetings between head teachers to share experience.
5. The Assistant Director advised that the authority was retaining an element of pupil premium to enable the virtual head teacher to support looked after children and information about this could be provided to members.

In response to questions from another committee member:

- The Assistant Director acknowledged the need to address the gaps between Herefordshire and national trends in respect of EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and particularly in respect of disadvantaged pupils.

- The Head of Educational Development advised that: schools meals supply arrangements were delegated to schools; with the introduction of universal infant free school meals, information had been collated on the range of suppliers, many of which were local; the School Food Trust monitored the quality of school meals; not all pupils entitled to free school meals made use of the provision; and, in terms of correlation between food and attainment, wider issues around deprivation were perhaps more significant. The committee member commented on: the potential for children to educate their parents and carers about healthy meals; the need to understand supply arrangements and to promote local food sources; and the benefits of children learning to prepare and cook meals.

Mr. Sell made the following observations:

- a. The effectiveness of the school improvement framework in Herefordshire should be reflected upon, particularly given the challenges faced by the local authority in providing support to schools with diminishing resources, and there had been upward movement in a number of key indicators.
- b. The Hereford Diocese and the Arch Diocese of Cardiff were involved in the Herefordshire School Improvement Partnership and had supported the work of local authority officers to help schools in difficulty.
- c. The local authority role was becoming more strategic, helping with brokering and commissioning rather than undertaking activities itself.
- d. Although it did not have a direct responsibility for academies, the authority was expected to oversee standards.
- e. The authority needed to be mindful that it might need to have conversations with the sponsors of sponsored academies, rather than an individual governing body; it was for the sponsor to delegate powers and responsibilities and there was no requirement for a local governing body.
- f. The authority also needed to be mindful of the potential for other schools to join an existing academy trust or a multi-academy trust.

Mr. Burbidge commented on:

- i. Improvements were taking place in the education sector in the county, despite the removal of resources to support schools.
- ii. Peer group involvement, meetings, training and the exchange of good practice could help to raise standards but teachers had to teach properly and this should be a key objective.
- iii. The need to support the local agricultural economy was acknowledged but many schools employed companies to provide food and, although there might be a wish for them to source food locally if possible, ultimately they had to deliver to a price. It was questioned what could be achieved with further monitoring or inspection.

A committee member suggested that officers could work on a matrix, in conjunction with the Herefordshire Rural Hub, to identify and monitor food sources and provision in schools.

A committee member noted the importance of stability in home environments and in the support arrangements for looked after children, adding that the Executive needed to

consider relevant staffing structures carefully. The Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing made a number of comments, including: the small size of some schools meant that children with individual needs could have a disproportionate effect on performance figures; the high turnover of social workers continued to be an issue for the county; and stable placements were not the only factor in attainment. The Assistant Director reminded the committee of the 'Pledge to those children and young people looked after by Herefordshire Council' that had been endorsed by Council (26 September 2014, minute 28 refers) and suggested that an update could be provided to members on how this was being fulfilled from an education perspective.

A committee member said that some members have received a helpful Quarterly Performance Report on education provision and related statistics and suggested that this could be circulated wider. In response to a question, the Cabinet Member acknowledged that individual high performing or under performing schools could have disproportionate impacts on overall figures but there was no evidence available on how this was reflected in the figures of other authorities. The Assistant Director added that, although Herefordshire was in a positive position comparatively in terms of the numbers of good and outstanding schools, the proportion of outstanding schools was less than might be expected.

A committee member made a number of further comments, including:

- The authority had endorsed the Herefordshire Food Strategy and this had included a number of actions in relation to the education sector. It was suggested that delivery of these actions be assessed initially.
- It was suggested that an understanding was needed about what was appropriate for Herefordshire to aim for. The Assistant Director said that some aspirations were identified in the Education Strategy and that there was sufficient information about the current position in Herefordshire to warrant the authority being more aspirational about performance going forward.
- In view of the success of particular schools, the need to share experience and best practice was emphasised and the authority could promulgate this.
- It was questioned how assurance could be provided around the authority's public sector equality duty, with particular reference made to children from traveller communities.
- Comments were made about the challenges for disadvantaged children to catch up with their peers in primary school, particularly if they had not benefitted from a nursery school setting.
- It was commented that there was a need for effective handover between primary and secondary schools to ensure that pupils did not lose momentum, progress and interest.
- It was suggested that an understanding was needed about how widely distributed pupils with English as an additional language were in the county and what pressures this might put on particular schools. The Assistant Director said that information was collated on this and that there was a support team in place to work with individual schools.

The Assistant Director said that transition was an issue that had been identified by the School Improvement Partnership and there was more work to be done on this; head teachers were particularly interested in achievement trajectories between Key Stages 2 and 4.

The Head of Educational Development commented on work that was ongoing with children's centres in relation to the scheme to provide additional nursery provision for disadvantaged two year olds and to identify children's development needs.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to enable recommendations to be prepared. Upon recommencement of the meeting, recommendations were proposed, discussed and amended where necessary. The final recommendations agreed by the committee are reproduced below.

The Chairman commented on the need to encourage schools to share experiences and best practice, to be mindful of the issues around transition, and to enable individual pupils to realise their potential. In response to a question, the Assistant Director confirmed that School Examination Performance could continue to feature as part of the annual work programme for the committee.

**RESOLVED: That the following be recommended to the Executive:**

1. That officers reprise the actions within the Herefordshire Food Strategy in the context of food provision and education in schools and that the committee be updated with the current position in terms of the delivery of those actions.
2. That a report be prepared on the monitoring and support provided to vulnerable groups qualifying under the public sector equality duty, particularly in relation to groups with protected characteristics.
3. That officers check whether schools are fulfilling their requirement to publicise the use of pupil premium on their websites.
4. That an update on progress be prepared on the retention of an element of pupil premium to support looked after children, particularly with regard to the delivery of improved outcomes.
5. That an assessment be made of the distribution of the support demand for English as an additional language across Herefordshire schools and suggestions made for the most efficient service and support delivery.

**64. THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EDUCATION CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR JULY 2015 (Verbal Report)**

The Head of Educational Development gave a presentation on the Education Capital Investment Strategy. The principal points of the presentation and related discussion are summarised under the slide headings below.

**Herefordshire's Education Strategy**

1. Part of the strategy was 'establishing a coherent case for capital investment from whichever funding source'.
2. A breakdown was provided of the different types of educational establishments and pupil numbers.
3. Questions within the presentation included:
  - With more autonomous schools how is renewal coordinated?
  - Are school buildings supporting improved outcomes?



- What evidence / documentation have we to support requests for more capital resources?
- Has the Local Authority (LA) got the places in the right place so parents can exercise choice?
- How does the LA show it is fulfilling the statutory duty to provide sufficient school places?
- How can 'another Colwall' be avoided?

### **What is the Education Capital Investment Strategy trying to achieve?**

4. It was intended to be a clear strategy to set out, over the next 5-20 years and beyond, how the council:
  - Supports the delivery of the best outcomes for children and young people
  - Fulfils its duty to supply enough high quality schools places
  - Ensures its schools are fit for purpose and energy efficient
  - Offers funding models
  - Supports/suggests the approach to managing change/development
5. It was emphasised that it would not be a blueprint but it would provide a framework and set of criteria, reflecting shared understanding and respecting local situations.

### **Support of high quality places**

6. The following points were identified:
  - Most parents/carers get their first choice
  - Population not set to change significantly
  - Need to plan for housing development and when it gets built
  - Academies can admit more than their planned admission numbers
  - Currently have surplus places overall but some schools are under pressure and others have space

### **Fit for purpose and energy efficient**

7. Considerations included:
  - Suitability - number and size of classrooms and hall, overall plot size
  - Repair or replacement - toilets/roof/heating/windows/brickwork
  - Disability access
  - Energy efficiency
  - Location proximity to a population centre
8. It was commented that, for various reasons, the authority wanted to move towards a more modern estate.

### **School Education Capital Investment July 2015**

9. It was noted that a range of stakeholders would be engaged to inform the strategy and to move forward collectively for the purposes of: improved outcomes; opportunities to lever in external funding; and efficient and effective use of resources.

## **Some tricky issues**

10. These were identified as: managing change; funding; school size - quality of learning and viability; expansion of high quality popular schools; and future technology implications.
11. In response to a question from the Chairman, the Head of Educational Development advised that every LA maintained school had a school condition survey and, as part of the strategy, officers were looking closely at management information; it was noted that any change needed to be based on accurate and detailed information and there should be consensus.
12. In response to a further question from the Chairman, the circumstances in relation to the damp problem at Colwall CE Primary School were explained.
13. A committee member expressed concern that this item was not been supported by a written report and the presentation had not been made available to members before the meeting, thereby putting the committee at a disadvantage in terms of making comments and suitable recommendations. In response, the Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing advised that the Strategic Plan for Herefordshire had been considered by Cabinet on 13 November 2014 (minute 39 refers) and this presentation sought to update the committee on progress to date in relation to the estates element. The Governance Services Manager acknowledged that officers should ensure that their items were supported by appropriate documents but noted that members would be provided with an opportunity to consider the draft strategy in the next municipal year. The Assistant Director Commissioning and Education emphasised that this was the start of the process and the presentation was also being delivered to school governors and head teachers to ensure broad involvement from an early stage.

### **Tricky issue 1 - Managing the change**

14. The related questions included: what are the triggers?; who is best placed to influence and shape change?; and how do we support and facilitate?
15. It was recognised that managing the change was crucial, as well as managing expectations, particularly in terms of timescales and funding. It was also noted that some people would have sentimental attachments that would need to be handled appropriately. Therefore, it was important to engage with everyone that might wish to be involved in the process.

### **Tricky issue 2 - Funding**

16. An overview was provided of the following:
  - Options for funding:
    - Use of DfE grants
    - Recycling funding (e.g. Aylestone/Broadlands)
    - Dedicated schools grant (DSG)
    - School revenue
    - Academies fund
    - CIL and Section 106
    - Business sponsorship/investment
    - Corporate borrowing

In addition, dioceses might be another source of investment.

- A clear agreed plan provides opportunity to lever in external/additional funding
  - Combined approaches
17. The Head of Educational Development said that it was likely that there would be a mixture of different funding streams and it was considered that an agreed plan would enhance opportunities to access external funding.

### **Tricky issue 3 - School size - quality of learning and viability**

18. Questions within the presentation included:
- Curriculum offer?
  - Financial viability/pupil numbers?
  - Rurality/transport?
  - Leadership/figurehead?
  - Value for money?
  - Local authority no longer runs some schools
  - Does size matter?
19. It was noted that there was a wide spectrum of schools in Herefordshire, many with small roll numbers, and consideration needed to be given to curriculum implications, economies of scale, and leadership approaches.

### **Tricky Issues 4 - Expansion of high quality popular schools?**

20. Considerations included:
- Presumption in current system
  - Market forces approach?
  - Better outcomes for children and young people?
  - Pleases parents/carers (vs communities surrounding schools)?
  - Schools affected negatively feel it's unfair?
  - Fortunes/perceptions change
21. It was noted that there was a presumption that parents had a degree of choice, reflecting a market forces approach. However, this could have an impact on local provision; it was reported that, on average, only 50% of pupils in Herefordshire went to their local catchment school.

### **Tricky issue 5 - Technology**

22. Questions within the presentation included: will school buildings be serving the same functions 10 years from now?; and will there be more home learning?
23. It was noted that the use of mobile devices within classrooms had made some dedicated IT suites redundant, reflecting the need for flexibility going forward.

### **Draft Principles**

24. The following points were identified:
- i. High quality learning environments are more likely to deliver the best outcomes for all children and young people

- ii. All schools need to be:
    - in good condition with clear improvement programme
    - suitable / compliant
    - Class and hall sizes, toilets, permanent buildings, accessible for disability
  - iii. High quality popular schools will be supported to expand
    - Ofsted judgment is outstanding/good
    - 3 year trend of outcomes is good
    - Parental preference is in excess of published admission number over time
  - iv. Across Herefordshire there will be a mix of size of school but there is no specific size which would consider closure. However
    - Schools with less than 105 on roll should have a plan for sustainability into the future (shared leadership, merger, succession planning) (33 schools - 19 standalone)
  - v. If a community wants a school it should be prepared to support it financially.
25. The Head of Educational Development said that some principles were fundamental, whereas others were open to debate. In particular, attention was drawn to the need for smaller schools to plan for the future and for schools to be in the right places within, and properly supported by, the community.

### **Timeline**

26. The following timeline was given:
- November/December 2014 - Set up and overview
  - December/January 2015 - Data collation and consultation on principles
  - February/March 2015 - Confirmation of accuracy of school data re condition, suitability, popularity etc
  - March 2015 - Analysis of data and discussion about ideas for moving forward
  - June 2015 - Report preparation
  - July 2015 - Report to Council
27. The Head of Educational Development anticipated that by July 2015 the authority would have a more sophisticated view about the issues and how it could engage with people about certain proposals and reforms. He emphasised the need for dialogue about future options and the need to think further ahead. He added that officers would be talking to schools about the accuracy of data and about the draft principles.
28. In response to a comment by the Chairman, the Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing noted that this presentation provided a position statement and it was important that all councillors were involved, including this overview and scrutiny committee.
29. A committee member welcomed the overview provided and the general approach being taken. However, in view of the imminent local elections, the committee member considered the proposed timing unfortunate, particularly as new councillors might not have enough time to understand the complexities or have the opportunities to engage with their communities in a meaningful way. It was suggested that, whilst officers could continue to develop the draft strategy, the schedule should be pushed back if possible. The Chairman said that he would discuss this further with the Cabinet Member and officers.

30. A committee member noted the extent of neighbourhood and parish planning processes that were being undertaken in the county and suggested that these could be valuable conduits to explore the issues raised in the presentation and to address some of the tricky issues identified.
31. In response to questions, the Head of Educational Development explained some of the demographic and trend data used in the presentation slides.
32. Referring to draft principle v. above and the relationship with the Core Strategy, a committee member commented on the need for engagement to be less top-down, as this could increase resistance within communities to housing and other development.
33. Mr. Sell made a number of points, including:
  - The National Society of the Church of England had commissioned a review of small schools and, informed by this, diocese across the country were producing small schools strategies and exploring alternative models of leadership and partnership, with encouraging results
  - For many people, there was inherent value in historic buildings and maintaining a continuum of education.
  - It would be erroneous to identify church schools as council assets; an overview was given of different trustee arrangements and examples were provided of problems experienced in the past with the local authority incorrectly registering such assets.
34. The Assistant Director Commissioning and Education noted the complexities involved and re-iterated the need to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and achieve a collective way forward for Herefordshire.
35. Mr. Burbidge concurred that the council should not make assumptions about assets and said that it needed to avoid the mistakes of the past. He added that councillors not only had responsibilities to their constituents but also had responsibilities for education provision across the county and for the delivery of quality education for all children and young people.
36. A committee member commented that the scope of the project now appeared broader than a school estate strategy, particularly given linkages to strategic planning processes which were still evolving.

The Chairman noted the need to consider the issues during the next administration.

**RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted and a further report be provided to the committee during the next municipal year.**

## **65. WORK PROGRAMME AND TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

The committee received a report which noted progress against the work programme during the current municipal year. The Chairman noted that the work programme would need to be reviewed and updated at the start of the next administration.

The Vice-Chairman provided an overview of the work being undertaken by the Task and Finish Group on Development Management (Planning) and said that the associated report would be made available for consideration by the committee at its next meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Vice-Chairman, committee members and support officers for their input during the year. He also thanked members of the public for their attendance and for the interesting questions that had been received.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

The meeting ended at 1.12 pm

**CHAIRMAN**