

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Monday 9 May 2016 at 2.00 pm

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

Councillors H Bramer, JG Lester, GJ Powell, PD Price and P Rone

Cabinet support members in attendance Councillors JA Hyde and DG Harlow

Group leaders in attendance Councillors JM Bartlett, RI Matthews and AJW Powers

Scrutiny chairmen in attendance Councillors WLS Bowen and PA Andrews

Other councillors in attendance: Councillors EPJ Harvey, D Summers and EJ Swinglehurst

Officers in attendance: Alistair Neill, Jo Davidson, Geoff Hughes, Peter Robinson, Martin Samuels and Claire Ward

156. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

157. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

158. MINUTES

The cabinet member (infrastructure) asked that Minute 153 be altered to read:

The cabinet member (infrastructure) pointed out that farm business tenancies were agree on a rolling basis and that it was usual practice that notices to quit were served at least a year before the end of a given contract term.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the above correction, the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

159. SUPPORT SERVICES FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES IN HEREFORDSHIRE

Cabinet received a report on the procurement of orientation and support services for Syrian refugees settling in Herefordshire. The joint commissioning manager presented the report and made the following points:

It had been confirmed that 60 refugees (approximately 18 families), would be accepted gradually from September 2016. The profile of the expected refugee population was determined by the nature of the government's Vulnerable Persons Re-settlement

programme. People will be brought directly from camps and settlements around the Syrian borders and will meet at least one of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)'s seven vulnerability criteria. They would all come in family groups and children would be around half of the cohort. Approximately 20% or 12 refugees were likely to have complex needs in relation to health, social care or education.

The contracted service would be funded through monies allocated to local authorities on a per capita basis for each refugee in order to support them for the first two years. This funding would also be used to meet other costs including interpretation and translation, transport and any net costs of providing housing to refugees. It was one part of a package of financial support from government which also included support for NHS services and education of refugee children. It was expected that refugee families' specialist and particular needs would largely be met within the initial two year period.

In reply to questions from cabinet members and members in attendance, the following points were made:

- That it was likely that government would ask local authorities for additional pledges to take refugees in later years.
- That funding per head to councils for general support tapered off from £5k to £1k by year five.
- That schools would receive funding for refugee pupils whenever they arrived on roll, but that they would only receive the additional £4.5k for one year.
- That the approach being adopted built upon the experience in this area already gained in Birmingham and Coventry.
- That the council had five Arabic speaking interpreters to hand, one of whom was a Syrian national. There were a number of Arabic speakers in the city, and there was a campaign in hand to encourage these people to become involved as volunteers in the day to day issues that the refugees would have. Sensitive areas would be dealt with by professional interpreters.
- That the voluntary sector was playing its part, and campaign groups in Ross, Ledbury and Leominster had arranged to collect donations of clothes and domestic goods.
- That the council was confident of receiving a number of bids in response to its tendering exercise. Contingency plans were being worked up across all areas of the programme, including for a delay in being able to award a contract for the support service.

Resolved:

That:

- a) the commissioning of an orientation and support service for Syrian refugees by way of an open competitive procurement process be approved; and**
- b) authority be delegated to the director for adults and wellbeing to award a contract for the provision of the orientation and support service at the conclusion of a tender evaluation process, for a period of two years and for a total value not exceeding £540,000**

Cabinet received a report to consider the response to the proposals submitted by Hereford Library Users Group (HLUG) regarding the future operation of Hereford library and museum. The assistant director, communities presented the report and said that the recommendations would enable services to be resumed at the earliest opportunity, mitigating the effect on users if the building were to be closed for a long period. This was balanced with providing the HLUG or another party time to secure funding for a development scheme. If funds were not forthcoming for any development scheme within 2 years then the opportunities for the site and the services would be reviewed to consider options in light of value for money.

In reply to questions from cabinet members and members in attendance, the following points were made:

In reply to a member's question as to whether money from the library and museum support fund would only be available to organisations that have charitable status, the assistant director, communities said that organisation need to be based on a constitution and that does not necessarily have to be a charity.

The Leader of the Independent Group welcomed what has been achieved to date and thanked the library user groups and officers. He added that although the temporary library service was being utilised it was felt that it was inadequate for junior users.

The Leader of It's Our County commented that he was aware of the excellent work of the HLUG. He added that there appeared to be arguments for and against centrally located museums, however outreach services should be considered.

Clarification was sought on paragraph 48 of the report which stated that the HLUG must exist as a legal entity before any funding could take place compared to the Local Enterprise Partnership. The assistant director said that this was a report regarding Hereford library and museum, and external funders would award funding to a constituted group that is a legal entity.

Resolved:

That:

- (a) works to enable reinstatement of Hereford library and museum building, and relocation of the Wellbeing Information and Signposting Service (WISH) to the Broad Street site, Hereford be undertaken to a maximum cost of £500k;**
- (b) following completion of the works at recommendation a) above, the balance of the capital allocation be used as match funding for a development scheme, led by HLUG or other partner, subject to the development scheme being approved by the relevant cabinet member within a two year period; and**
- (c) a further report be prepared on the options for shorter term re-opening of the museum and art gallery at the Broad Street site, pending a decision on longer term options for sustainable delivery of the museum and archive service.**

161. UNIFIED RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING CONTRACT BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND HEREFORDSHIRE CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP (CCG), FEE INCREASE FOR CARE HOMES AND CHANGE IN PAYMENT PROCESS.

The director for adults and wellbeing reported that the council and the CCG fund in the region of 900 placements in residential and nursing care homes across Herefordshire, at an annual net cost of around £27m, with the largest proportion of this expenditure, £19m, being spent on council placements and the remaining £8m by the CCG. In order to facilitate choice for service users, as required by the Care Act 2014, the council and the CCG should secure placements on an individual 'spot' basis. To ensure fairness, the council set a rate for the cost of care each year, for older people residential and nursing placements, with a third party being able to pay a top-up if they choose a home where the fees are higher than the rate.

In reply to questions from cabinet members and members in attendance, the following points were made:

- That it would be the decision of the NHS as to whether an individual would be eligible for continuing health care funding. The intention was to review all of the high cost placements in order to ensure that the terms for social care and continuing health care cases would be the same for the local authority and the CCG.
- That there would be no risk to the council in the transfer of collection of the top-up fees. The council already had a significant team in place for the collections, and the ability of the council to recover payments would be better than that of individual care homes. Individuals would be more likely to pay the top-up fees for which they were liable if they received a council invoice.

The director said that he had had experience of care homes closing at short notice but that there was capacity within the system to rehouse people should this happen. The churn within the system meant that it was always possible to rehouse individuals, but that the council would seek to avoid this option as it could cause distress to the service user.

Resolved:

That:

- (a) a unified contract be developed by the council and the CCG for future spot placements, with the intention of implementation from September 2016 subject to agreement with the CCG and providers;**
- (b) the council approve the change in approach to pay Providers on a gross basis (i.e. inclusive of any client and third party contribution) rather than net, and to paying in arrears rather than the two weeks in advance and two weeks in arrears, effective from the implementation of the unified contract and subject to agreement with providers;**
- (c) as lead commissioner the council undertake a procurement exercise with a view to establishing an accredited list for the council and CCG of Providers in Herefordshire; and**
- (d) the Provider fee rate increase of 1% be agreed for 2016/17 (excluding placements still on the higher old usual price rates)**

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

CHAIRMAN