

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Three Counties Hotel, Belmont Road, Belmont, Hereford, HR2 7BP on Thursday 29 July 2021 at 2.30 pm

Present: Councillor David Hitchiner (chairperson)
Councillor Liz Harvey (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Felicity Norman, Gemma Davies, John Harrington, Diana Toynbee, Jenny Bartlett, John Hardwick, Peter Jinman, Elissa Swinglehurst, Jonathan Lester, Terry James and Bob Matthews

Officers: Chief Executive, Acting deputy chief executive - chief finance officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Acting Director for Adults and Communities and Interim director of economy and place

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies from Councillors Ellie Chowns, Pauline Crockett and Ange Tyler.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

27. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 7 - 8)

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 1 to the minutes.

28. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (Pages 9 - 10)

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 2 to the minutes.

29. TO SET OUT THE COUNCILS NEW INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND WASTE HANDLING PILOTS

Cabinet member, commissioning, procurement and assets introduced the report, details of which are contained within the agenda pack.

It was noted that this was a comprehensive report which incorporated the work of the task and finish group. Waste was an important service which the council delivered to every resident in Herefordshire.

There needed to be a recognition that waste had a value and that transporting waste over long distances was unnecessary and not environmentally friendly. It was noted that there were income streams which could be generated from waste.

Thanks were expressed to the residents who had responded the survey and to community groups for their work in keeping the county clean and tidy.

The group leaders were supportive of the strategy.

Resolved that

- (a) The cabinet authorises the new Integrated Waste Management strategy for Herefordshire, adopts to the new targets within the document as detailed in Appendix A and authorises the development of a benefits realisation action plan to achieve the agreed targets;**
- (b) The cabinet authorises the design, development, procurement and implementation of the proposed waste handling pilot schemes and approves the expenditure of up to £1.5m from the council's waste reserve to progress and implement the schemes;**
- (c) The cabinet authorises the expenditure of the Section 106 allocation for recycling projects up to the value of £92,000 to progress the proposed waste handling pilot schemes through design, development, procurement and implementation; and**
- (d) The cabinet authorises the Section 151 officer to take all operational decisions relating to the above recommendations.**

30. MENTAL HEALTH AFTERCARE ARRANGEMENTS AS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 117 OF THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT 1983

Cabinet member for education and skills who would be the cabinet member for health and wellbeing from 1 August introduced the item, details of which are contained within the agenda pack.

It was noted that it was important to get the right care in place for people when they left hospital. There was a joint standard assessment methodology with the NHS. Due to the merger of the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Worcestershire CCG, both counties were working in the same way.

It was suggested that the voice of the user may be beneficial and the acting director of adults and wellbeing agreed to pursue this suggestion.

The group leaders were supportive of the policy and suggested that the Health and Wellbeing Board and Scrutiny review the arrangements in due course.

RESOLVED that

- (a) The draft joint policy and draft standard operating procedure for section 117 mental health aftercare are approved; and**
- (b) The Acting Director for Adults and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for health and wellbeing and the Director for Children and Families is authorised to make all operational decisions to ensure implementation of the policy and procedure, agreeing any operational changes to the documents, including those arising from case law, as required for their implementation.**

31. 2022/23 BUDGET SETTING AND CONSULTATION

Cabinet member, planning, corporate services and planning introduced the report, details of which are contained within the agenda pack.

Residents, including young people, were encouraged to provide their views as part of the consultation process.

It was noted that there would be a process of participatory budgeting combined with a Citizens Assembly to look specifically at the use of new homes bonus money on climate change and getting to zero carbon.

The group leaders provided the views of their political party.

RESOLVED that

That:

- (a) the proposed timetable for the development and adoption of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the 2022/23 budget be approved;**
- (b) the approach for consulting on budget proposals for 2022/23 be approved; and**
- (c) for a Citizens Assembly to be held in the late autumn to carry out a participatory budget process to inform ways of allocating the anticipated New Homes Bonus funding**

32. MAJOR CONTRACT PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The cabinet member for commissioning, procurement and assets introduced the report, details of which are contained within the agenda pack.

The report was an update on a review of the major contract performance report which had been presented to cabinet on 24 September 2021. The proposals to strengthen the oversight on major projects was welcomed.

The group leaders provided the views of their political party.

Resolved that

- (a) Cabinet note the outcome of a whistleblowing investigation and, in line with the approved improvement plan, a contract management and commissioning resource is created in the corporate centre to provide capacity to support the delivery of the improvement plan using the Programme Management Office (PMO).**
- (b) Cabinet approve the establishment of an improvement board to include senior officers and Cabinet members**

33. RECOVERY AND INVESTMENT FUND

Cabinet member for finance, corporate services and planning introduced the item, details of which are contained within the agenda pack.

It was noted that when the more detailed work was done, there may not be a lot of demand for this fund.

The group leaders provided the views of their political party.

RESOLVED that

- a) **Cabinet approve further investigation into the establishment of a recovery and investment fund to support Herefordshire businesses post Covid 19.**
- b) **Cabinet approve the principles and objectives of investment for a Herefordshire Recovery and Investment fund as detailed in paragraph 13.**
- c) **Cabinet authorises the Acting Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, to develop the scheme details based on the principles set out within this report and report back with the final proposals.**

34. ALLOCATING THE USE OF THE CLIMATE RESERVE

Leader of the council introduced the report, details of which are contained within the agenda pack.

It was hoped that the partnership would help to inform the council's priorities.

The group leaders provided the views of their political party.

Resolved that:

- (a) **The council establishes a new countywide partnership, the Herefordshire Climate and Nature Partnership (as per the Terms of Reference in Appendix 2);**
- (b) **The Herefordshire Climate and Nature Partnership is included on the council partnerships register as a significant partnership;**
- (c) **That the new Herefordshire Climate and Nature Partnership develops and leads the delivery of an ambitious new Herefordshire Climate and Nature Strategy for Herefordshire to become net zero carbon and nature rich by 2030;**
- (d) **A new dedicated Delivery Director is recruited to accelerate the delivery of the Council's climate and nature projects; 305 AGENDA ITEM 10**
- (e) **£50,000 be allocated and drawn down from the climate reserve to procure external communications resource to support the active promotion and engagement of the Herefordshire Climate and Nature Partnership;**
- (f) **£40,000 be allocated and drawn down from the climate reserve to procure specialist consultancy support to develop a new Herefordshire Council Nature Strategy;**
- (g) **£50,000 be allocated and drawn down from the climate reserve to procure specialist consultancy support to develop a new Building Retrofit Strategy and to undertake an options appraisal for accelerating building retrofit across the county;**
- (h) **£220,000 be allocated from the climate reserve to establish a new Climate and Nature grant scheme to empower local community groups, organisations and parish councils to apply for funding, which the council will consider and award, to deliver carbon reduction and ecological enhancement projects across the county (as set out in Appendix 1);**

- (i) That delegated authority is given to Interim Director for Economy & Place in conjunction with Cabinet Member Economy and Environment and Section 151 Officer to draw down the full value of the climate reserve in year and to take all operational decision to deliver the above recommendations; and**
- (j) That Cabinet receives an annual report and project plan as part of a decision to draw down the following year's climate reserve.**

The meeting ended at 4.47 pm

Chairperson

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 29 JULY 2021**Question 1****From: M Burns, Hereford****To: Cabinet member, infrastructure and transport**

If the plan for an urban wetland park, (from a consortium led by Herefordshire Wildlife Trust) on the former Essex Arms site by the City Link Road is approved, will the aim to include a pedestrian/cycleway across the park to link the station transport hub and central Hereford and NMITE also be welcomed?

Response

Thank you for your question. Yes, the ambition would be to provide high quality walking and cycling routes whenever possible and although there are no detailed plans for the area you refer to yet, the direction would be to designers to provide such a link here. That link could then join up with the shared footway / cycleway that runs along the City Link Road to the train station.

Question 2**From: A Bridges, Hereford****To: Cabinet member, finance, corporate services and planning**

Given the improvements to governance and oversight of capital projects agreed with Audit & Governance by the then Chief Executive back in January 2018, were the then Leader of the Council (Cllr Lester) and the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure (Cllr Price) made aware of the acquisition overspend and financial risk mounting on the City Link Road project?

Response

The cabinet member decision in November 2017 set out the HCCTP cost increases and how these were proposed to be funded utilising the majority of the risk and inflation contingency allocations within the overall HCCTP – which included all the LEP-funded active travel and public realm projects.

Whilst land costs have increased since that time the detail of increased costs set out in that 2017 cabinet member report were based on the project position and information at that time and were set out in detail in the key considerations and financial implications section of that report.

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 29 JULY 2021**Question 1****From: Councillor Graham Andrews, Kings Acre Ward****To: Cabinet member, commissioning, procurement and assets
Cabinet member, finance, corporate services and planning**

The recent weeks has highlighted the large variances in project management control that has been completed on significant high profile projects, that have been late on delivery and over budget.

I see new Senior Project Managers are now in place, however will HC continue to outsource projects to provider such as BBLP who appear have a poor delivery record HC, or will HC engage their own Project Managers for all future projects, where control is more accountable?

Local Project Managers in local projects may provide greater results

Response

Thank you for your question Cllr Andrews. You are correct to highlight that historical project management failures have been a matter of concern in certain areas of the council and that legacy issues continue to come to light.

Since coming into office we have made it a priority to create a Project Management Office (PMO) and to staff it with professional and experienced project managers and now Delivery Directors to lead on the many important projects in which this council is investing.

Our substantial public realm partnership contract with BBLP has been independently examined. The shortcomings to which you refer stem more from the way the contract has historically been operated.

Item 8 on today's agenda is about learning the lessons from how this contract has previously been managed. The recommendations propose the improvements necessary to the way the council operates this contract in the role of 'Customer' which are necessary to derive the full benefit from this partnership arrangement in future. These new contracting and commissioning posts in the PMO will put the checks and balances in place to create and maintain the constructive tension between supplier and customer that are necessary to deliver and demonstrate future value to our residents.

We shall continue to use the flexibility that a mix of in-house and contracted-in project managers provides in order to manage the fluctuations in work flow on the delivery of large and complex projects. Whether the Project Managers are our own permanent staff or are specialists working with us for short periods of time, you can be assured that the culture of professional project management is now with us and is here to stay at Herefordshire Council.

