

REPORT OF THE MEETINGS OF CABINET HELD ON:

27 March, 10 April and 1 May 2008

Cabinet Members: RJ Phillips (Leader of the Council),
JP French (Deputy Leader),
LO Barnett, AJM Blackshaw, H Bramer,
JA Hyde, JG Jarvis, DB Wilcox.

1. DECISIONS RESERVED TO COUNCIL UNDER PART 4 OF THE CONSTITUTION:

- 1.1 The following plans were considered by Cabinet and commended to Council for approval. They are subject to separate reports on the Council agenda:
- Corporate Plan 2008-2011 (Cabinet: 27 March 2008)
 - Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011 (Cabinet : 10 April 2008)
 - Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership – Partnership Plan (Cabinet: 1 May 2008)

2. NOTICES OF MOTION

- 2.1 Cabinet considered no motions to Council at the meetings covered by this report.

3. KEY DECISIONS BY INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBERS WHICH WERE NOT INCLUDED IN THE FORWARD PLAN

- 3.1 **Children's Centres Phase 2 - Golden Valley / Peterchurch.** The Cabinet Member Children's Services made a decision on 11 April 2008 approving the project for a partnership between the Council's Children and Young People's Directorate and the Parochial Church Council of Peterchurch. The project will re-order the nave at St Peter's Church to allow community activities that would include 10 hours per week for a Children's Centre.
- 3.2 **Funding Agreements with Halo and the Courtyard.** The Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services made a decision on 12 March 2008 approving the funding for Halo and The Courtyard on a three year rolling basis that will be reviewed annually.
- 3.3 **Proposed Disposal of Property at Grange Court.** The Cabinet Members for Resources and for Economic Development and Community Services made a joint decision on the disposal of property at Grange Court. This was an exempt item.

4. CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE (Chairman of Cabinet – Cllr RJ Phillips)

Report on Decisions Taken

- 4.1 **Annual Governance Statement**

4.1.1 The Cabinet was informed that following the Department for Communities & Local Government Circular 03/2006 and the Use of Resources 2008 assessment, a change in approach would be required with the Council replacing the Statement on Internal Control with an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The AGS would be produced alongside the annual statement of accounts. Cabinet agreed the proposed framework for preparing an AGS as set out in the appendices to the report.

4.2 Supporting Governance Improvement

4.2.1 Cabinet noted the progress made in implementing actions agreed following the Special Report by the Director of Resources and the subsequent Independent Review of Herefordshire Council's ICT Financial and Contractual Governance Arrangements (Crookall Review). It was agreed that future monitoring and reporting would be included within the Integrated Performance Report.

4.3 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2008

4.3.1 Cabinet considered and noted the Annual Audit & Inspection Letter which provided an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council following their audit, inspection and performance assessment work over the last year. The Audit Commission had identified eight issues that it considered required action, and as a result the overall star rating had decreased from 3 to 2. It was reported that this was largely due to financial irregularities highlighted in the ICT Department and a low score in respect of Housing Services. It had been confirmed that the Audit Commission had been satisfied that the Crookall Report had been thorough and independent and therefore whilst it would not be conducting its own review, the Audit Commission would be monitoring progress.

4.3.2 The Cabinet approved the draft response to each of the action points raised in the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for 2008, in light of comments made by the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, which will be reviewed after six months and would be incorporated into the appropriate Directorate and service plans for 2008/09. Additionally, Cabinet requested that the Chief Executive arrange for the District Auditor to present the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter to a joint meeting of the Cabinet and Strategic Monitoring Committee in future years, and that the meeting also be open to all Members of the Council

4.4 Use of Resources Report 2008

4.4.1 Cabinet noted the Audit Commission's Use of Resources report for 2008, which outlined that the Council's overall score for the Use of Resources had fallen from 3 to 2. Cabinet approved the response to each of the opportunities for improvement identified in the Use of Resources report for 2008 (outlined in appendix 2 of the report) and noted the comments made by the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee.

4.5 Race Equality Scheme

4.5.1 The Race Equality Scheme 2008/2011 and its Action Plan were agreed by Cabinet.

5. CHILDREN'S SERVICES
(Cabinet Member: Councillor JA Hyde)

Report on Decisions Taken

5.1 Wyebriidge Academy

5.1.1 Cabinet approved, for submission to the Secretary of State, a draft outline Business Case for the creation of an Academy at Wyebriidge Sports College. The approval was given on the strict understanding that all capital costs associated with the project were to be met from with the DCSF grant of £21,939,195, and that the Academy would be funded after the initial start up period on the same basis as other schools in the county. Additionally, the Cabinet approved; in principle to the relocation of a temporary unit on the Wyebriidge site as an alternative provision for Redhill Residents Association, subject to a successful bid to secure the necessary funding, estimated at £80,000; to the authorisation of the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council & Partnership for Schools, thereby agreeing the use of the National Academy Framework for the procurement of the construction of the buildings; and the engagement of Navigant Consultants to implement the next stage of the project and associated risk at the cost of £107,000.

5.2 Staunton on Wye Replacement Aided School Project

5.2.1 Cabinet considered a report in respect of the provision of a new build replacement school of Staunton on Wye and were advised by the Chairman of Governors, Mr S Grist, who had been invited to the meeting, that existing accommodation was substandard in terms of its physical condition and suitability of teaching spaces. The Cabinet approved the provision of a new build replacement school for Staunton on Wye which would accommodate 70 pupils.

6 CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES
(Cabinet Member: Councillor JP French)

Report on Decisions Taken

6.1 Performance Improvement Framework and Cycle

6.1.1 Cabinet considered a report on the revised Council's Performance Improvement Framework (PIF) and associated improvement cycle for the next two years. Members were informed that the PIF required updating to take account of a number of changes in respect of; data quality assurance, tightening of performance management within Herefordshire Partnership and the new Local Area Agreements, and the emerging Public Service Partnership arrangements.

6.1.2 Cabinet approved the updated Council performance improvement framework and an associated performance improvement cycle for the next two years, and specifically agreed; those elements of the updated PIF (appendix 1 of the report) which related to Cabinet's own role and those of the Leader, Lead Cabinet Members, and the scrutiny function; the two-year performance improvement cycle (as appendix 2 of the report), which included public consultation in the Autumn of 2008 to inform future priorities, plans and budgets.

6.2 Data Quality Policy

- 6.2.1 Cabinet was informed that following the annual audit for 2007/08 of the authority's data quality, the anticipated score of 2 had been achieved in an overall ranking of 1-4 (4 being the best score). It was emphasised that data quality systems and processes should continue to be improved across all Directorates. Members considered and approved the data quality policy, and specifically noted the actions being taken by the Chief Executive to improve data quality and those elements of the data quality policy that related to the role of the Cabinet and those of the Leader, lead Cabinet Member and all Members.

6.3 Renewal of Contract : Microsoft Enterprise Agreement

- 6.3.1 Cabinet discussed and approved the renewal of the corporate Microsoft Enterprise Agreements to the sum of £645,000 over a three-year period. Additionally, the Chief Executive was formally requested to correspond with Government to raise the issue that the Council could not use the cheaper NHS PCT software agreement (under a Herefordshire Public Services banner) as this would break licensing laws.

7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (Cabinet Member – Councillor AJM Blackshaw)

Report on Decisions Taken

7.1 Rights of Way Improvement Plan

- 7.1.1 Cabinet considered and adopted a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for Herefordshire, a statutory document, which outlined existing countryside access provision and the future needs of users. The Plan provided details on how all the proposals would be implemented and the benefits in respect of tourism, social and economic wellbeing as well as being an integral part of the Council's integrated Transport Plan.

8 ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC HOUSING (Cabinet Member: Councillor JG Jarvis)

8.1 Report on Decisions Taken

- 8.1.1 There were no decisions by Cabinet relating to this portfolio during the reporting period.

9 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION (Cabinet Member – Councillor DB Wilcox)

9.1 Report on Decisions Taken

- 9.1.1 There were no decisions by Cabinet relating to this portfolio during the reporting period.

10 RESOURCES (Cabinet Member – Councillor H Bramer)

Report on Decisions Taken

10.1 Budget Monitoring

10.1.1 Cabinet considered a report on the Council's performance against revenue capital budgets (as at 29 February 2008) and were provided with an update of the corporate risk register. The report outlined information relating to the remedial action being taken to address areas of underperformance, the details of which were noted.

10.2 Council Asset Management Plan

10.2.1 Cabinet considered the Council's Asset Management Plan 2008/09, which set out the focus of activity for the Asset Management and Property Services team over the next 12 months and outlined how those activities supported the authority's corporate priorities. Cabinet approved the Council's Asset Management Plan for 2008/09 and it was noted that the Plan would form part of the Resources Directorate's service plans for the year with performance managed in line with the Council's performance management framework.

10.2.2 Additionally, Cabinet endorsed the view expressed in discussion that asset management requirements should be considered across the County's public bodies and a culture developed with public partners jointly achieving best use of property assets.

10.3 Draft Capital Programme 2008/09

10.3.1 Cabinet considered a report which identified for consideration three further spending proposals which related to projects in Hereford, Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye, all of which supported corporate priorities for promoting regeneration and improving accessibility and quality of services to the community. Cabinet agreed to the;

- (i) Additional capital resources of £440,333 be allocated to the scheme which brought together Ross on Wye Library and Info Services on one site;
- (ii) Allocation of Capital resources of £2.92m to the Masters House scheme in Ledbury;
- (iii) Additional capital resources allocation of £751,000 to the Hereford City Centre refurbishments, and to the:
- (iv) Holding of the balance of the additional funding, pending greater certainty about funding of other major projects.

10.4 Integrated Risk Management

10.4.1 The Cabinet considered the use of a joint management strategy, policy and toolkit to be used by both the Council and the PCT, together with the use of an Assurance Framework for reporting jointly all high risks previously reported separately as the council's corporate risk register, the PCT's strategic risk and the high risks association with the Herefordshire Public Services project. Following consideration, the Cabinet agreed to adopt the combined risk management strategy, policy and toolkit for use through out the Council, additionally it was agreed to use the Assurance Framework to report corporate high risk.

11 SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH (Cabinet Member - Councillor LO Barnett)

Report on Decisions Taken

11.1 Assessment of 18-64 Year Olds' Future Needs and Services: Mental Health and Physical Disabilities

11.1.1 Cabinet was presented with a report which had been considered by the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee and the Health Scrutiny Committee, and agreed to:

- i) approve the proposed patterns of high performing mental health and physical disability services and for these to be put in place between April 2008 and March 2012;
- (ii) That they be achieved by means of detailed joint commissioning plans of the Council and the Herefordshire Primary Care Trust;
- (iii) that the adequacy of the new patterns of services be subject to a further full review of needs and services by 2012 in the light of better data and of actual demand of modernised service;
- (iv) that the results of the review be used to inform budget planning at that time.

11.1.2 The Cabinet additionally agreed to take into account the other Committees' (as outlined above) resolutions in the course of implementing the new patterns of services.

11.2 Learning Disability Accommodation and Support Partnership Contract

11.2.1 Cabinet's approval was given to authorise officers to finalise contractual terms and conditions and enter into a contract between Herefordshire Council and Midland Heart to provide Accommodation and Support for people with a learning disability (as outlined in the report).

**COUNCILLOR RJ PHILLIPS
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Background Papers

- Agenda papers of the Cabinet meetings held on 27 March, 10 April and 1 May 2008