

MINUTES of the meeting of CABINET held at THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD on Thursday, 16 October 2008 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor RJ Phillips (Chairman)

Councillors: LO Barnett, H Bramer, JP French, JA Hyde, JG Jarvis, PD Price and DB Wilcox

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cabinet Member Councillor AJM Blackshaw.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: ACR Chappell, Labour Group Leader, GFM Dawe, Alliance Group Leader and PJ Edwards, Strategic Monitoring Committee Chairman.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

55. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

56. COMPREHENSIVE EQUALITY POLICY AND ASSOCIATED EQUALITY SCHEMES

Cabinet considered a report which gave details on progress on the work that the Council has done with regard to its Comprehensive Equality Policy and Associated Equality Schemes (CEP and ES).

The Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources expressed the view that the report was well written and clear to understand. She highlighted the recognition the Council had received at regional and national level and the visit of Shropshire County Council to receive training from Herefordshire Council officers. Cabinet noted the work of officers and Council partner organisations on the CEP and ES and the progress that had been made.

The Equality and Diversity Manager, referred to paragraph four of the report and to the external assessment which was due to be confirmed in November 2008 but would now not be confirmed until February 2009. Although this was later than expected, it was still on target. In referring to the MeWe film on Race Equality, she advised the film had been used for the training of officers and Members and would now be going out to all schools. She added that the Disability Equality Scheme was now in its second year and a review was being carried out regarding disability

access with information on this being available shortly. She also added that there was an international day for disability coming on the 3 December 2008.

The Vice-Chairman of Strategic Monitoring Committee agreed that the report was good and important and hoped it would be adopted by the Herefordshire Primary Care Trust. He also drew attention to the problem of ageism and was advised it was an area being focused on. Cabinet was informed that although the CEP and AES had not yet been adopted by the PCT, discussions around joint working were underway.

The Leader referred to the ageing population who would need to continue to work longer to compensate for not having a final salary pension scheme. He recognised the democratic practice in moving to eradicate ageism particularly with the increasing unemployment levels.

The Independent Group Leader asked how complaints received in relation to equality issues were dealt with. Cabinet was informed that all complaints were investigated and would either result in specific action being taken or that the investigation would show there was no complaint to answer.

RESOLVED

That:

- (a) progress in implementing the Comprehensive Equality Policy and associated schemes be noted;**
- (b) the continued work of the Corporate Diversity Team and its implementation of the Equality Standard and the transition to the new Equality Framework be endorsed; and**
- (c) the importance of maintaining the progress and commitment to equality schemes to ensure compliance with its statutory requirements be recognised.**

57. DATA CENTRE/MODERN RECORDS UNIT (MRU) RELOCATION AND CORPORATE ICT STRATEGY UPDATE

The Cabinet considered a report regarding the phased relocation of the data centre currently at the Thorn Office Centre and the relocation of the Modern Records Units currently at Merchant House and Blueschool House to a co-located facility at Wallbrook Court, Rotherwas. The report also requested Cabinet to note the update and follow-on actions from the Corporate ICT Strategy.

The Cabinet Member for ICT, Education and Achievement stated that the report sets out clearly the situation regarding the need to move from the Thorn Office Centre as the lease would expire in two years, the capacity issues in the current Modern Records Unit and that the current units were not fit for purpose.

A question was asked on the financial implications. The Leader informed Cabinet that funding for the project was contained in the 2009/10, paragraph 22 of the report refers. He also drew Members attention to the cost to the Council if these measures were not taken.

The Vice-Chairman for Strategic Monitoring Committee informed Cabinet that the Scrutiny Review Group had endorsed the need for ICT to move from its current location and he strongly commended the proposal.

The Cabinet Member for ICT, Education and Achievement referred to the anticipated timescale of November 2009 for the combined move, although he hoped that an earlier date of June might be feasible.

The Leader stated that by placing the Data Centre at Rotherwas would provide a broadband service capable of supporting Herefordshire Council and the businesses at Rotherwas currently suffering from a poor or no broadband service. The Cabinet Member for Resources asked about the likely speed capability of the broadband service.

The Programme Manager for Hereford Connects stated that the new data centre would give an option at a later stage to offer help to other businesses at Rotherwas however, this was dependent on British Telecom (BT) and talks were currently in progress with BT.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources in agreeing with the proposals, took the view that this was an important opportunity to work in partnership and that every effort should be made to fast track the relocation.

RESOLVED

That:

- (a) the Thorn Office Centre Data Centre and the Modern Records Units at Merchant House and Blueschool House be relocated to a co-located facility at Wallbrook Court, Rotherwas;**
- (b) approval be given to begin work on the relocation project;**
- (c) approval be given to fund the project; and**
- (d) the Corporate ICT Strategy update be noted.**

58. HEREFORDSHIRE CONNECTS PROGRAMME

The Cabinet considered a report which gave an update on the progress of the Herefordshire Connects evaluation of ICT system solutions, which has been managed in compliance with the Council's Procurement Policy. It also recommended a new system for Environment and Planning.

The Deputy Chief Executive (Interim) drew Members attention to the Joint Management Team's recommendations that had been approved by Cabinet at 31 July 2008, paragraph two of the report refers. With regard to two significant risks, he informed Cabinet that the short term upgrade of the finance system had been carried out which would address imminent service continuity risks and that the upgrade of the Customer Relationship Management System was in progress. He also emphasised that the approach would operate entirely within the procurement process and that a report would be submitted to the next meeting with the next set of proposals following the report presented to the Cabinet meeting on 31 July 2008.

The Vice-Chairman of the Strategic Monitoring Committee expressed concerns that the proposals might struggle as a link with the NHS systems.

The Deputy Chief Executive (Interim) informed Cabinet that the recommendation to approve Civica did not require any links to the NHS systems. NHS nationally specified systems were mainly clinical and, with the exception of the NHS Electronic Staff Record, there were no links with regard to the integrated support services and performance risk management systems. The officers would however be looking at ways in which the Council can potentially integrate its systems with Herefordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT).

In response to a question from the Independent Group Leader regarding efficiency savings, the Deputy Chief Executive (Interim) reported that there significant savings had already been delivered and that the overall business case reported to Cabinet on the 31 July 2008 set out the future efficiency savings. The savings were being tracked and would be reported to Cabinet at the next meeting. They were also being quality assured on a regular basis to insure benefit.

The Director of Resources reminded Cabinet that the Council had a good record on efficiency targets and that the Hereford Connects Programme was a plan which would continue that record.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Strategic Housing referred to integrated solutions for Environment and Planning and in particular quality of Management. He requested confirmation that quality of information to Members would be improved and asked when the improvement would be in place.

The Programme Manager for Herefordshire Connects reported that quality of management was key. The out of town scanning arrangement was timescaled to be in place at the end of summer 2009. One of the key issues was the Primary Care Trust aspect. The two remaining companies from the original shortlist of five were both capable of providing the specified technical integration with other systems for the Council and the PCT.

The Deputy Chief Executive (Interim) informed Cabinet that the remaining two companies for the provision of the Integrated Support Services system were going through a very intensive scrutiny exercise, compliant with the procurement policy.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources reminded Members that currently the Council has 900 systems which would be reduced to 30 at the completion of this work.

The Cabinet Member Social Care Adults congratulated the officers for the work which had currently been carried out.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet approves:

- a) Civica as the technology system for an integrated solution for Environment and Planning;**
- b) the Joint Management Team concluding negotiations with Deloitte, within the Framework Agreement between the Council and Deloitte, to plan and commence the implementation of this system by November 2008;**

That Cabinet notes:

- c) the progress made in the selection of a system for Integrated Support Services and Performance and Risk Management and the timescale for recommending a preferred supplier for both to Cabinet is by 20 November 2008;**
- d) that the Joint Management Team conduct a strategic assessment based on the evaluation of the two Integrated Support Services system solutions; and**
- e) the Finance System Upgrade has been completed and the Customer Relationship Management System Upgrade is to commence in October 2008.**

The meeting ended at 2.50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN