

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Thursday 17 June 2010 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor RJ Phillips (Chairman)

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

In attendance: Councillors

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr TM James, Liberal Democrat Group Leader.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

35. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36. DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2009

The Director of Public Health presented the annual report to Cabinet, which had been made in light of the current economic climate and the needs of Herefordshire. The main points made were:

- This was a long term appraisal, looking at the priorities that could be achieved now as well as in five years time, with some elements requiring immediate investment.
- The report looked at the work of the partnership and bringing all providers together on issues of health and well being.
- The report highlights the areas of need and has been circulated to GPs, hospital doctors and health practitioners.
- GPs are working with families and with HALO Leisure to instigate healthy practices to help change people's lifestyles.
- The report outlines the support provided to patients prior to their going home after a stay in hospital.
- The report looks at the current level of demand in hospital care and at the work being carried out at hospitals across the country in order to examine what Herefordshire might wish to do differently and subject to transition board agreement.
- It was emphasised how essential it was that the community work in collaboration on health and wellbeing issues and that ways were being investigated as to how to reward and encourage people to practice healthy living.

Cabinet was advised that the report was launched at the recent health and wellbeing board conference and focused on the key achievements over the past year. It was

emphasised that wellbeing was an issue for communities and that communities needed to develop their own leaders for this role.

Cabinet noted that HALO were key to the joint work proposed and that local authorities across the country had just been advised that the grant funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for free swimming for the under 16s and over 60s had been withdrawn. Cabinet referred to the financial implications on page 7 of the report and the need for the partnership to consider the recommendations and to agree which recommendations could be taken forward to the budget meetings.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) **the 2009 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health be received; and**
- b) **Cabinet noted that the implementation of the report's recommendations and the proposed approach and actions highlighted in the report would inform service development and commissioning during the next planning cycle and in the medium term.**

37. ANNUAL CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2009/10

The Cabinet Member Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources presented the report and reminded Cabinet of the loss of grant funding that was expected due to the current economic situation. The Cabinet Member advised that it would be difficult to achieve targets, but it was important to continue to monitor performance.

The Head of Policy and Performance stated the year end report measured progress achieved against the annual operating report. He referred to the key points summary and advised that the rate of improvement was slowing and the authority had to get better at setting challenging yet intelligent targets. Cabinet reviewed the key considerations in relation to each of the themes and noted paragraph 8 Local Area Agreement and the childhood obesity target which had previously been miss reported and the figure was increasing rather than decreasing.

In referring to the summary of progress Cabinet was advised that it was a mixed picture and the figures lacked consistency or steady improvement. The weakest indicators were in organisational improvement. The report would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 July 2010.

In discussion Cabinet noted:

- The affect the loss of Local Area Agreement grant funding would have on some areas. However, targets were still relevant and the authority was still looking to achieve targets even though funding was no longer available.
- National Indicators for the unemployed, the Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services advised that this must be viewed in context as there had been 75,000 jobs lost in the West Midlands region.
- Stronger Communities – affordable housing it was noted that officers were looking for innovative ways to gain European funding.

- To monitor the Key Stage 1 and 2 SATS results for improvement or decline as there had been a decline in recent years. It was noted this was a general decline and not particular to any one area.

The Director of Children's Services informed Cabinet that performance overall nationally and in the counties had risen, therefore, the results were significant for Herefordshire. He added that results had improved over the last 12 months but more work was required.

THAT:

- (a) Cabinet noted performance for 2009-10;**
- (b) Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and make recommendations on the Local Area Agreement targets and priorities;**
- (c) Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to consider and make recommendations on improved performance at Key Stages 1 and 2.**

38. FINAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2009/10

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented the report to Cabinet and advised on the overall position stating that a balanced year end had been achieved despite pressures from severe winter weather resulting in an additional £1 million spend. In addition there was pressure on the social care budget resulting in use of the social care contingency requirement of £772k.

Cabinet was reminded:

- Of the £70 million that had been spent on capital schemes in 2009/10 such as flood alleviation and schools' projects funded from various sources including government grants.
- A review of the 2010-11 capital programme had taken place and unallocated funds had been allocated to the refurbishment of the Hereford Leisure Pool and to disabled facilities grants.
- As of 2010/11 that there was a £5.4 million general reserve.

The Group Leader for the Alliance group referred to the use of £10 million in prudential borrowing utilised in 2009/10, Members were reminded that this was within the budget. The Group Leader for the Independent group referred to the Connects programme and the original savings expected. Cabinet was reminded of the strategic pause that had taken place which had resulted in not being able to deliver on both the expenditure and the savings timeline. Since July 2008 the programme had recommenced and savings of £700k were achieved in 2009/10. In referring to mileage claims, Cabinet was advised that all claims were now paid on the basis of the shortest route.

THAT Cabinet approved:

- (a) The final outturn for 2009/10;**
- (b) The movements to new reserves outlined in the report;**
 - **Insurance Reserve**

- **Pool Car Reserve**
 - **Local Development Framework**
 - **Area Based Grant**
- (c) **The allocation of £1.5m from the capital programme for the maintenance & refurbishment of Hereford leisure pool; and**
- (d) **The allocation of £0.25m for disabled facilities grants.**

39. 2010/11 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SAVINGS

The Director of Resources presented the report on 2010/11 Local Government Savings but advised that since writing the report there had been further changes made by government. He informed Cabinet:

- The government's decision to withdraw grants for free swimming for those under 16 and over 60 years of age.
- Advised Cabinet that there were to be public sector savings of £6.2 billion of which local government savings were to be £1.165 billion from which £805million would relate to revenue grants, the rest reduced from capital grants.
- That government had indicated that council tax increases could be "capped" at 2.5%.
- That Formula Grant for local authorities is to remain at £29 billion and similarly the Dedicated Schools Grant would not be reduced. However, there was a general lack of clarity on Department of Education grants.
- Revenue grants had been reduced or fall within area based grants.. It was noted that the majority of the reduction would come from the Department of Education, although as the grant was not now ring-fenced other services may deliver the saving requirement.
- Ring fencing has been removed on some grants which affected five Herefordshire grants totalling £1.148 million.
- £836k in grant funding that had not been included in the budget (because of uncertainty about receipt) would not be received. This meant the approach adopted to exclude these grants from the budget had been correct.
- Cabinet was reminded that potential cuts had been anticipated when setting the budget in 2009/10. It was also noted that the decision on which items of grant would be reduced within the overall revised grant would be made locally and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to seek recommendations from his committee.

Members noted the points made and expressed concern over:

- Possible reductions in funding for highways particularly the Integrated Transport Plan (ITP).
- Members were reminded that the overall ITP amounted to £12 million and had been topped up by an additional £1 million from the capital programme.
- It was anticipated that highways would be an area the government would make savings.

- Following reference to the Outer Distributor Road proposals, Cabinet was reminded that government was encouraging authorities to look to the private sector for funding.
- The Stroke Strategy grant was no longer ring fenced funding and there was concern over the impact on the Adult Social Care budget. Members were reminded of the partnership with the PCT and how the budgets would be used to allow new investment in treatment for stroke patients.

Finally Cabinet thanked the staff in the resources directorate for their work and how well prepared the Council had been when closing the accounts.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the position outlined in the report.

The meeting ended at 3.20 pm

CHAIRMAN