

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Thursday 17 March 2011 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor JP French (Vice Chairman)

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

In attendance: Councillors PA Andrews, WLS Bowen, TM James, RI Matthews and WU Attfield

94. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council, LO Barnett, Cabinet Member Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing and PJ Edwards, Chairman Overview and Scrutiny.

95. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

96. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

97. HEREFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Chairman for the meeting, Councillor JP French, introduced the Herefordshire Partnership Engagement Framework to Cabinet and advised that this item and the report on the Locality Strategy for Herefordshire were interlinked and would be dealt with together by the director.

The following points were made:

- The locality strategy for Herefordshire was the overarching document and the key objectives were:
 - Better engagement
 - Localised services
 - Empowered communities
- Further detail on the engagement strategy was emerging, however, considerable work had already been done through the Hearts of Herefordshire project and it is proposed that this style of working in the communities is rolled out across the county.
- Consultation has been carried out through the Herefordshire Partnership, Local Strategic Partnership and HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils). Any

parishes that were not part of HALC were to receive documentation providing a full explanation of the engagement strategy in the post.

- It was noted there were some misgivings on the part of the Parish Councils, as it was felt there was an expectation that parishes would be expected to take on additional responsibilities, without additional support or funding. It was agreed that closer communication was needed with the parishes to allay any concerns.
- The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the power to delegate additional responsibilities to Parish Councils was not reliant on the forthcoming Localism Bill, as the ability for local authorities to do this had been in place since the 1972 Act. Cabinet was reminded that for Parish Councils to take on additional powers would have to be done through agreement and was not something that could be enforced upon Parishes.
- The Parish Council Charter was being refreshed and was due to be consulted on. The Charter would set out protocols in light of emerging legislation.
- In discussing issues around community led planning meetings in Parishes, Cabinet agreed that planning terminology was an area that could be easily misunderstood. It was agreed that a glossary of terms should be compiled, which would be informative and easily understandable for all.

It was noted that it was proposed to have nine localities for community engagement. Members in attendance felt that it was important that these localities were based on communities and it was believed there were more district communities than the nine localities.

RESOLVED:

- THAT:**
- a) **Cabinet approved in principle the draft engagement framework; and**
 - b) **Delegated to the Chief Executive final approval, taking account of the views expressed by Parish Councils.**

98. LOCALITY STRATEGY FOR HEREFORDSHIRE

The Director of Sustainable Communities presented the report on the Locality Strategy for Herefordshire and reminded Cabinet there had been an all Members' Seminar on the proposals in the strategy and that the strategy was the overarching document for the engagement framework.

The following points were made:

- A question was raised on where a central property was to be located in the Golden Valley as a locality centre where meetings could be held. Cabinet was advised that this was work in progress. However, once the staff structure was in place the geographic teams would focus on their relevant localities. Additionally the geographic partner organisations would be represented in the area which would enable all representatives to work together.
- Additionally it would provide the opportunity for working with the police and the fire service in the localities.
- Concern was raised regarding Hereford City being seen as a single locality, as it was viewed by some Members as not just one community but at least two due to the division by the river.

- It was reiterated that staffing groups would be delivering services in and as close to communities as they possibly could. It was added that the savings on the budget were dependent on the locality teams working successfully together.
- There was some concern by Members that it could be seen, with a partnership organisation such as this, that there could be a need for a lead officer for each area of the organisation who would be accepted by all partners.

RESOLVED That: Cabinet approved the Locality Strategy.

99. INFORMATION AND ICT STRATEGY

The Cabinet Member ICT, Education and Achievement introduced the report to Cabinet and emphasised how important the strategy was in relation to savings being made across the organisation. He added that he was aware of concerns about how information was stored and who would have access but reassured Cabinet that these issues had been dealt with.

The following points were discussed:

- The ICT provision covers both Hereford Council and NHS Herefordshire (PCT) and is proposed to cover other partner organisations in the future.
- When considering the objectives Cabinet was reminded that the strategy was about making the best use and value for money out of the current systems by working with staff and customers.
- The importance of delivery of electronic services was emphasised and the need to preserve and make data available to all relevant staff. There were high ambitions for the improvement of broadband across the county with national and local support and the strategy set out the future aims.
- The strategy was for five years and would be refined on a yearly basis. Data would be stored at three data centres and data would be available to anyone with the correct authorised access.

RESOLVED

- THAT:**
- a) **the importance of information and ICT as being critical to delivering the Council's objectives be acknowledged; and**
 - b) **the strategy be approved.**

The meeting ended at 2.45 pm

CHAIRMAN