

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Thursday 30 June 2011 at 3.00 pm

Present: Councillor JG Jarvis (Chairman)
Councillor (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: AJM Blackshaw, PM Morgan, RJ Phillips and PD Price

In attendance: Councillors LO Barnett, WLS Bowen, RB Hamilton, MAF Hubbard, TM James, RI Matthews, NP Nenadich, GJ Powell, SJ Robertson, A Seldon and J Stone.

100. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning and JA Hyde, Cabinet Support Member.

101. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

102. MINUTES

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

103. FINAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2010/11

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Education presented the report. The Cabinet Member made the following points:

- A balanced budget had been delivered for 2010/11. The general fund reserve was at £6.4m.
- Specific reserves totalled £17.9m of which £6m was ring fenced schools reserves.
- Adult services care budget was still an area of financial risk.
- Budgetary recovery plans and control of discretionary expenditure had significantly contributed to the year-end position.
- The Council's financial position was regularly reported to Cabinet for review.
- There had been a number of projects delivered successfully amounting to £2.696m.

The Chief Officer Finance and Commercial made the following points:

- There had been considerable pressure in all directorates which had led to an overspend of £2.6m. The reduction in discretionary spend had significantly reduced this.
- A considerable contribution has been made in the way funds are borrowed for the capital programme through the use of revenue instead of reserves where appropriate.
- Currently the authority is on target to deliver a balanced budget.
- Winter maintenance reserves are to be included in the general reserves.

- Integrated Commissioning directorate had a £4.3m overspend.
- Children's Services, overspend was considerably less than had been previously.
- There was a slight underspend in the Deputy Chief Executive's directorate and equally in the Sustainable Communities directorate.
- The Capital outturn funding through grants was £4.5m.
- The end of year position showed a gross borrowing of £140m.

Cabinet made the following comments:

- There had been good financial management by the authority in reacting early to avoid service problems in adult social care.
- There was a potential additional cost to the council relating to any school staff being made redundant.
- Cabinet noted the number of schools converting to academy status and that the academies were choosing to buy back services from the local authority rather than get services elsewhere.

RESOLVED

That:

- a) the final outturn for 2010/11 be approved; and**
- b) the movements to new reserves outlined in paragraph 12 of Appendix A to the report be approved.**

104. INCOME PROPOSALS AND CHARGING PROPOSALS

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Education presented the report and made the following points:

- A consistent approach to cost recovery and increasing income generation needed to be adopted through corporate charging principles.
- Work undertaken on traded services to schools had identified proposals of £1.9m relating to existing income streams. There was a need to mitigate against the risk of lost income from academy schools.
- Benchmarking against other authorities indicated that Herefordshire was in the lower quartile in terms of income generation, indicating there was scope to generate additional income to offset budget pressures.

The Chairman invited the vice-chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to address cabinet. The vice-chairman stated it was important the report reflected the true cost of services across all areas as they currently were.

The Independent Group Leader and the It's Our County Group Leader both raised concern over the increase in charges to the public and were advised that car parking charges had not been increased in three years. The issue of council staff car parking was raised in relation to public perception. Cabinet was advised that this was already under review.

Cabinet noted that in a benchmarking analysis Herefordshire was in the lowest quartile for income generation through chargeable services and also for salaries. Cabinet

agreed that any changes proposed would need to be considered carefully and that a county-wide parking policy was required.

RESOLVED

That:

- a) **the charging principles contained at Appendix 1 to the report be approved;**
- b) **the proposals in relation to car parking and planning advice charges contained in the report be approved and authority be delegated to the Director for Places and Communities to finalise the schedule of fees and charges to be applied within the principles agreed;**
- c) **the proposals in relation to school transport and adult social care charges contained in the report be approved and authority be delegated to the Director for People's Services to finalise the schedule of fees and charges applied within the principles agreed; and,**
- d) **Overview and Scrutiny Committee, through the Vice-Chairman Corporate Services, undertake a review to identify options for the development of budgetary policy to support further income generation.**

105. INTEGRATED CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2010/11

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Education reminded Cabinet that the report reflected performance for the last 12 months.

The points raised were:

- The performance report was part of the quarterly review of the joint corporate plan.
- The rate of improvement was slightly better than the previous 12 months and Cabinet was referred to pages 42-44 of the report which outlined each directorate.
- Currently progress on performance was being measured through the Performance + performance management system.
- Due to a change in national policy Appendix 2C had been added, which outlined the indicators that were no longer reported on nationally.
- Hereford Council's collection of council tax was still in the top quartile nationally.
- In referring to the number of 16/18 year olds not in education it was stated that the figure was unknown but it was estimated at 250, which was a reduction on last year's estimate of 300.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet considered performance for the operating year 2010/11.

106. JOINT CORPORATE PLAN

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Education reminded Cabinet that the Joint Corporate Plan was for Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire setting out the measures, targets and projects which formed the basis for joint working.

Cabinet made the following comments:

- 1.6 improved access to superfast broadband and wider use of technologies – targets were being revised to reflect those of government and national requirements. For the superfast phase I & II broadband project, 30 companies had expressed interest.
- 3.2 improved intervention and support for children and young people and keeping them safe. It was noted this was an area it was difficult to have a fixed budget for as a child might need to be moved into care at short notice.

RESOLVED: That the measures, targets and projects (as shown at pages 2-8 of Appendix 1 to the report) be approved.

107. REDESIGN OF DELIVERED LIBRARY SERVICE AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY LIBRARY SITES

The Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture presented the report and informed Cabinet:

- That the policy for market towns was to link services to libraries to ensure continued viability.
- The provision of community based libraries could extend the number of library opening hours across the County.
- Concern for the vulnerable and house bound would see the extension of the home delivery service to those whose needs match the criteria for the service. The home delivery service to nursing homes would continue.
- The provision of the service was part of the core values to retain main libraries.
- The viability of community based libraries was being assessed on a case by case basis linking to the overall strategy.

It was noted that positive support had been received from customers. Discussions were being held with Parish Councils on community based libraries but there was no set model and officers were looking at models used by other authorities. With the advent of electronic books a digital approach was also being investigated.

RESOLVED

That:

- a) the redesign of the delivered library services in favour of a home delivery service based upon the needs of the users and the withdrawal of a universal mobile library service be agreed; and**
- b) local groups and organisations be invited to consider operating community based libraries.**

108. OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF WEST MERCIA SUPPLIES

RESOLVED That: under section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of this item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12(A) of the Act namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and it was considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

Summary of Proceedings during which the Public and Press were excluded

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Education presented an exempt report to Cabinet on the options for the future of West Mercia Supplies.

Cabinet considered options for the long term future of this procurement partnership and agreed a preferred course of action.

The meeting ended at 4.25 pm

CHAIRMAN