

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Thursday 15 September 2011 at 3.00 pm

Present: Councillor JG Jarvis (Chairman)

Councillors: AJM Blackshaw, PM Morgan, PD Price and DB Wilcox

In attendance: Councillors H Bramer, MAF Hubbard, JA Hyde, TM James, RI Matthews, NP Nenadich and GJ Powell

119. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor RJ Phillips, Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture.

120. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

121. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

122. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK REVISED PREFERRED OPTION: CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY POLL

The Leader of the Council introduced the Local Development Framework report and emphasised that the report was for the consideration of the most appropriate way forward for the consultation process and the community poll, and was not about debating the Local Development Framework itself. That would be discussed at the Council meeting considering the final Core Strategy. He added that it was proposed that the consultation would be held between 26 September and 28 November 2011.

The main points discussed by cabinet:

- A relief road for the county was one of the biggest decisions for the Council and any decision needed to have the will of the majority of residents / businesses supporting, it was believed there was the support in the county.
- Statistics presented at a recent seminar stated 79% of respondents wanted a relief road, with only 21% not wanting the road.
- An extensive schedule of consultation meetings was proposed with City, market town and parish councils, the latter on a ward by ward basis.
- A full and thorough consultation would be carried out using established consultation channels
- Consultation with MPs and political group leaders had already taken place.
- The Hearn report states that 14,400 additional homes were needed to maintain the current population of working age. .

- The multi modal model report and the Amey report state that a relief road would be needed to address congestion in the city and support any additional homes.
- The Parsons Brinkerhoff review states the eastern route is not an option for a relief road, leaving the western route as the only option.
- The Highways Agency has stated it believed the county would become grid locked without a relief road.
- The relief road was not a single item but part of an integrated transport plan with a park and ride system and about examining the infrastructure as a whole, including sustainable transport measures.
- A variety of public and private sector organisation are to be invited to a stakeholder seminar.
- It was stressed that the proposed poll was not asking residents to state which route was preferred, but on whether a relief road was wanted to the west of the city. On that basis Cabinet agreed that a poll was not required as it was believed there was no choice over the route to be taken and that the majority residents were in support of a relief road.

The Leader stated that he believed that as a result of the reports provided a community poll would not show good use of council tax money, as he felt there was no choice on which route to use. Therefore, a western route would be the proposal for the consultation.

Comments from political group leaders and backbench Members:

- A no road option had not been considered or consulted upon.
- Cabinet had not considered the issues relating to the environmental capacity of Herefordshire in accommodating the proposed growth.
- Issues around air and water quality and sewage treatment capacity had not yet been resolved and were key issues for the development.
- With regard to the community poll it was stated that a legal challenge might be made relating to the impact to the Special Area of Conservation, the River Wye.
- Concern that the Council had increased the risk that the plan could be found to be unsound as it was believed that the testing of alternative options had been inadequate.
- There was support both for and against an eastern relief road.
- A community poll should be carried out as it would prove that the majority of residents were in favour of a relief road.
- Clarity was sought on whether the relief road was to be a single road.
- Any document provided for consultation must be clear so that everyone is fully aware of the proposals.

The Leader gave an undertaking to provide a detailed response to the questions raised in a statement by one of the group leaders.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) the arrangements for consultation on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Revised Preferred Option be agreed; and**
- b) the final arrangements for the consultation be delegated to the Director for Places and Communities upon legal advice, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members.**

The meeting ended at 4.15 pm

CHAIRMAN