

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Thursday 15 December 2011 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor JG Jarvis (Chairman)

Councillors: AJM Blackshaw, H Bramer, PM Morgan, RJ Phillips, PD Price and DB Wilcox

In attendance: Councillors RB Hamilton, AW Johnson, NP Nenadich, GJ Powell, A Seldon, MAF Hubbard, TM James and RI Matthews

135. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

COUNCILLOR	AGENDA ITEM	DECLARATION
NP Nenadich	Item 4 – Budget Monitoring Report 2011/12	Personal – Director of HALO
RJ Phillips	Item 8 – Youth Service	Personal - Member of Young Farmers

136. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received for Councillor JA Hyde, Cabinet Support Team.

137. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

138. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2011/12

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Education introduced the Budget Monitoring report and referred Cabinet to the key considerations of the report, in particular that at 31 October 2011 the overall revenue budget position for 2011/12 showed a £1.552m projected overspend, which is approximately 1% of the Council's £146.3m revenue budget (excluding dedicated schools grant funding).

The following points were made in discussion:

- Cabinet noted the amendment to be made to the annual budget figures on page 16 of the report.
- In response to a question on service commissioning Cabinet was informed that the care funding calculator was a much fairer way of assessing costs and was widely used by councils across the West Midlands.

- Cabinet discussed the issue of continuing overspend on adult social care and noted it was a national problem. On going work was being carried out to address the issue and to look at other ways of providing services to older residents, with the emphasis was on supporting the elderly so they could stay in their own homes.
- It was noted that there would be extensive monitoring of proposed savings against targets.

RESOLVED

THAT Cabinet:

- a) **note the report and the forecast deficit position;**
- b) **note the Chief Executive's requirement that Directors deliver recovery plans to ensure a balanced revenue budget; and**
- c) **note that the leadership team undertake to discuss a further level of savings for 2011/12.**

139. BUDGET UPDATE 2012/13

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Education introduced the Budget Update report of the Chief Officer, Finance and Commercial and referred Cabinet to the key points summary.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- It is anticipated that the local government finance settlement would include a reduction in formula grant funding of £5.7 m if the grant total announced last year is not changed by government.
- Cabinet was reminded of the government announcement that a one year grant would be paid to authorities that freeze council tax for 2012/13. It is proposed to use the grant funding as a one off source of funding for transformation in 2012/13 with particular emphasis towards adult social care.
- Cabinet congratulated the finance department on the latest figures for the collection of council tax which was a quarter of a percent higher than the target. There was a similar increase for business rates.
- In referring to page 39 paragraph 6 of the report, local authorities to retain their business rates, Cabinet was advised that the change to the system would not come about until after 1 April 2013, would only relate to any new businesses not existing businesses and the setting of business rates would still be carried out by central government and not local government. Under the current system Herefordshire receives more from the national business rate collection 'pool' than it collects. This is likely to continue but the precise position for 2013/14 is not yet known.
- Cabinet agreed that the changes in business rates could have a significant impact on Herefordshire and other rural counties compared to large city areas. This was acknowledged by government office.

RESOLVED

THAT Cabinet:

- a) **noted the current position; and**

- b) confirmed for budget planning that the 2012/13 Council Tax Freeze Grant would be used to fund transformation measures.

140. INTEGRATED CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - TO END OCTOBER 2011

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Education introduced the Integrated Corporate Performance quarterly update report, which refers to performance to the end of October 2011.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Over 54% of the indicators held were on track, with 77% showing an improvement on last year.
- Areas identified corporately for further work include: housing adaptations, safeguarding, repeat incidents of domestic violence and adult social care transformation.
- There was minimal disruption during the day of strike action on 30 November, with schools being affected the most.
- Substantial work has been done on organisational change and the Rising to the Challenge programme is ensuring that changes are being kept within budget.
- Cabinet was informed of the website changes which would provide an easier website for customers to use.
- Employee sickness absence overall is below target.
- Proposed changes to the schools' music service has been in operation for one term with no gaps having been found in the provision of the service across the county. Cabinet noted that a possible reduction in funding nationally could have some effect on service provision.
- Affordable housing provision within the Local Development Framework was a primary consideration for Cabinet and Council land had recently been released for the development of 40 affordable housing units.
- Cabinet was reminded of the refurbishment of the HALO Leisure Pool and the provision of a larger gym and associated facilities.
- The Ofsted report stated that overall schools were performing well and the adoption service was good with outstanding features.
- Cabinet was informed that 2013 would see some disruption in the city due to significant development being carried out on the Butter Market, the Broad Street redesign and the development of the Cattle Market site.
- In discussing apprenticeships Cabinet noted that partner organisation Amey Wye Valley was looking to expand its current apprenticeship scheme from 23 to 50 in 2012 and that discussions had been held with business leaders and college principals. Cabinet congratulated Herefordshire Group Training for their continued support of young people and their encouragement to businesses to take on apprentices.

RESOLVED That: Cabinet considered performance to the end of October 2011 and the measures being taken to address areas of under performance.

141. MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR CULTURAL SERVICES

The Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture presented the report on the Management Options for Cultural Services and reminded Cabinet that the report dealt with future management provision and that there was no proposal for the closure of services.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Cabinet noted there was to be a reduction in both the HALO Leisure and Courtyard budgets and that both organisations had been made aware of this in advance of the proposals.
- Cabinet referred to the three proposed options for the management of services and discussed how other authorities were dealing with the same issues. It was noted that some consultation had been carried out on the three options, but much wider consultation would be carried out in early 2012.
- In reviewing partnership arrangements Cabinet noted the importance of partner organisations having shared values. Additionally, partner organisations had stated they welcomed the opportunity to broaden the services they could provide.
- A key objective of the review was to ensure the provision of service without any noticeable material change to the public.
- Cabinet was informed that the recommendation for final choice of option must be presented by the start of the new financial year.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) delegated authority be given to the Director for Places and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to agree the future management arrangements for cultural services.**
- b) the options be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

142. THE YOUTH SERVICE REVIEW

The Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing presented the report on the Youth Service Review and informed Cabinet that the service was being targeted to young people who might not to achieve to the same extent as their peers. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Group Leaders welcomed the report and emphasised that when consultation was to be carried out it should not be forgotten that Councillors had good links with youth groups in their ward areas. The Cabinet Member reiterated the wish to work with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and stated that the 12 week consultation period would commence in January 2012.

RESOLVED

THAT: Cabinet approved

- a) the policy position set out at Appendix 1 to the report under Vision and Guiding Principles;**
- b) targeted Youth Support Services for the most vulnerable young people in the county are prioritised for funding and are likely to be delivered in the future both directly by the Council and third sector partners;**
- c) positive activities for young people, which can be accessed by all will be delivered through a community engagement route, with local areas having access to Council funding on a formula basis according to numbers of young people and the level of deprivation in the locality. This funding to be used in connection with other partnership resources which may be available in the locality;**

- d) **Outdoor Education Services as set out in paragraphs 39 – 47 of the report to be subject to market testing to determine whether they are commercially viable with no public subsidy; and,**
- e) **a further report incorporating the outcomes of the public consultation and a further review of the position under the Equalities Act 2010 be brought to Cabinet in June 2012.**

143. REVIEW OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Leader of the Council introduced the report on the Review of the Forward Plan and Cabinet considered the items listed. It was noted that at the time of publication the plan made reference to a director making a key decision. Cabinet was reminded that this was under review following Council of 18 November and the current provision for key decisions to be only made by Cabinet or Cabinet Member would be amended when the plan was next published. Discussion was held on the work plan of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) **Cabinet reviewed the Forward Plan;**
- b) **The Leader shall finally determine which matters should be referred for pre-scrutiny, having regard to the views expressed both by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny committee and by portfolio holders in consultation with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Vice Chairman; and**
- c) **The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee retains the right to consider any specific subject matter or Council service for scrutinising as set out in the Constitution.**

The meeting ended at 4.15 pm

CHAIRMAN