

MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	20 JULY 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	LEADER'S REPORT

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards affected

County wide

Purpose

To provide an overview of the Executive's activity since the last Council meeting.

Recommendations

THAT: the overview of the Executive's activity be noted.

Report

Planning for the Future

1. In times of increasing financial constraint it is more important than ever to ensure that the resources we have are used as efficiently as possible and are focussed on agreed priorities. Cabinet have received a presentation on 'Understanding Herefordshire' the integrated evidence base from which our needs assessment for the county is drawn. This living resource (available on the council's website at <http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/1922.aspx>) will be used to inform the development of the corporate plan going forward to ensure that our priorities and commissioning decisions are firmly grounded in an evidence based understanding of need.
2. Our Quality of Life survey ended on 9 July and the results of this survey will add to this body of evidence helping us understand whether residents think we are focusing on the right priorities as well as providing the services they believe are needed. It will also allow us to see which services matter to residents most. The survey is the first step in a broader 'Your Community; Your Say' process of engagement and all members will have a role to play in their localities over the coming months.
3. Building on the evidence we already have, Cabinet have considered a number of strategic documents relating to specific priority areas. Members will see elsewhere on Council's agenda today 'Yes We Can' the county-wide strategic plan for children and young people in Herefordshire. Cabinet have also agreed a strategic delivery plan for transforming adult services. Both these documents reflect not only the priority given to supporting the most vulnerable in the county, but also demonstrate that we cannot do things alone. Our partners in health, in wider public services, in the voluntary and community sector, and in the private sector all have key roles to play in improving the health and wellbeing of our residents; individuals too can make a real difference to the quality of their own lives often by making very small changes and we need to ensure that they have the information and advice needed to help them take those decisions.

4. Cabinet has agreed changes to the timetable for finalising the Local Development Framework which, subject to outstanding matters being sufficiently resolved, provides for a further report to Cabinet in December 2012 before consultation on the draft plan (and sustainability assessment, strategic environmental assessment and habitat regulations assessment reports). Following analysis of the consultation responses Cabinet will recommend the plan to Council for adoption in July 2013.
5. Cabinet has also agreed to the development of a Local Transport Plan covering the period to 2014/15. The timetable agreed by Cabinet sees consultation on proposals being undertaken in the autumn of this year with Cabinet recommending the plan to Council for adoption in February 2013.
6. Our 'Root & Branch' Review process is underway with all four of the first phase reviews well in hand. All but one of the remaining reviews has been scoped and member interest has been registered with the programme, identifying members who want to actively support and influence a particular review. Review leads will work directly with these members to ensure meaningful engagement on a more detailed level for each review. We have committed to undertaking a 'Lean Systems' thinking approach to the reviews and a programme of training and engagement has begun; senior managers received an inspiring session recently with a similar session planned with members for September 2012.

Herefordshire's People

7. As part of the ongoing focus on protecting vulnerable people, particularly the elderly, two successful prosecutions of rogue traders have taken place resulting in one prison sentence and one fine. Such prosecutions do have a deterrent effect and tend to ensure those particular rogue traders avoid targeting Herefordshire in the future. Protection of our vulnerable residents from doorstep conmen is a priority for the council.
8. Following last year's successful pilot, the weekend out-of-hours Noise Response Team has been put back in place for 10 weekends from 22 June to the August bank holiday weekend.
9. Between 18 and 29 June over 1,400 Year 6 pupils from a total of 66 primary schools across Herefordshire, including 4 Special Educational Needs schools, took part in Crucial Crew at Herefordshire Racecourse. This interactive programme of activities, provided by a wide range of agencies, developed the skills of children to help them keep healthy and safe as they make the transition into secondary education. This year's event was organised by the joint public health team in partnership with the Police, the Red Cross, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, school nurses and Herefordshire Housing. Both the Chairman and I attended some of this event and were hugely impressed by the enthusiasm of the young people attending. I'd also like to extend my thanks to all the officers and partners who helped make the event so successful.
10. NHS health checks are now being offered to the eligible population of Herefordshire by invitation from their GP Practice. This covers the age range of 40–74 year olds and will be offered every five years. People identified at high risk of vascular disease are offered support to make lifestyle changes, provided by Halo, as well as primary care services to reduce or manage their risk. This year the offer will be made to 34% of the eligible population; it is pleasing to note that April and May performance has been positive and the number of health checks delivered has been three times higher than planned.
11. Following a request from the school's governing body as a result of very low pupil numbers, we are currently consulting on a proposal to close Holme Lacy Primary School. Whilst the school's governors have worked very hard to sustain the school, numbers on roll have now fallen to a level at which they no longer feel the school is viable (3 pupils in September). This is in no way a reflection on the standard of educational provision at the school; indeed I am

pleased to say that at the time of preparing this report Herefordshire was in the position of having no schools falling within the OFSTED category of concern. Small and declining numbers of pupils and small class sizes do, however, affect the viability of individual schools and their future sustainability in delivering first class education to their pupils.

12. Members will of course be aware of the current consultation on the adult social care charging policy. Herefordshire Council, like other councils across the country, is reviewing how much people have to pay towards the cost of their adult social care services. These services include home care, day care, transport, meals in a day centre, meals on wheels and carers' services such as short breaks and sitting services; residential services are not affected. In line with our agreed charging principles, the council is proposing that any charges made need to cover the cost of the service provided. We have some ideas about how we should do this in the fairest way possible and I would encourage members and residents to let us know what they think of these proposals. The consultation ends on 20 August.
13. In June, Cabinet affirmed the future direction for provision of youth services taking account of the outcome of public consultation; similarly the future delivery model for provision of children centre services was agreed.
14. I recently attended an engagement event with representatives of the city youth forum, and was very impressed by the young people who attended and who were able to very clearly say what their priorities were. I will be looking to identify member champions to help ensure that the young people's views are taken forward, and I would like to thank those members from across the political groups who attended the day as observers; their interest and support was much appreciated by both me and the young people.

Herefordshire's Economy & Communities

15. Cabinet has agreed the processes by which the land required for the construction of a link road between Edgar Street and Commercial Road may be acquired. This is an essential step towards the overall implementation of our proposals to regenerate the city.
16. In July Cabinet received a progress report on negotiations on the future of the Herefordshire Service Delivery Partnership with Amey, and agreed the next steps.
17. The very unseasonal weather that we have been experiencing lately has led to some parts of our county suffering from flooding; I would like to place on record my thanks to the Resilience Team, ward members, and all our partners who stepped in to help ensure that services continue to operate effectively and that the most vulnerable are protected. We can always learn from these experiences and the Resilience Team is keen to encourage anyone who experienced flooding in their properties to contact the council so that we can work together with the Environment Agency to help plan for the future and see if there is any assistance we can give now. Their contact details are available on the council's website.
18. In spite of some threatening clouds, Herefordshire's Diamond Day was a community event that the whole county can be proud of. The royal visit provided a real opportunity to celebrate what is best about our county and made me immensely proud to be a representative of Herefordshire. My grateful thanks go to all those who gave their time and energy to ensuring the day was so memorable. Diamond Day was preceded by the Jubilee weekend; and the celebration events and beacons arranged throughout the county again provided a perfect demonstration of the strength of community spirit in Herefordshire, a community spirit we must not lose.
19. Following a change in the law giving councils more freedom to decide how they manage their housing waiting lists, Herefordshire Council is reviewing the way affordable housing is allocated to people across the county. Anyone can apply for affordable housing, but demand is

very high: there are nearly 5,000 people currently on the waiting list with approximately 19 properties available each week. The council has to decide how to prioritise access to affordable housing in a way that is fair to everyone. At the same time, we have to make sure vulnerable people and those in most need have somewhere safe and affordable to live. We would like to ask your views on how we do this and I would encourage members and residents to let us know what they think of these proposals. The consultation ends on 1st October.

20. On 11 July, the Cabinet Member for Enterprise & Culture Councillor Roger Phillips, who is interim chair of the Enterprise Zone Board, met in Westminster with the Communities Secretary, the Governor of the State of Washington and representatives from the Get It Group and two aerospace companies. I am delighted to say that we have agreed to work together in the coming months to explore the potential for the aerospace companies to set up development and manufacturing units at the Enterprise Zone in Rotherwas and Model Farm at Ross on Wye. I am meeting with the representatives in Herefordshire on the 16th July. This is a fantastic opportunity for the county and, while there is a lot of hard work now to be done to convert this interest into real investment and jobs for local people, it is an excellent example of what can be achieved by the private and public sectors working together.

Other Issues

21. As I indicated at the annual meeting of Council, I have made some changes to the portfolios of cabinet members. The detail of these revised portfolios is attached at Appendix A for information.
22. In addition, the Executive has considered the following issues:
- a) *Budget and Performance Monitoring Reports* – Cabinet has considered reports on overall 2011/12 performance and budget outturn. Cabinet has also agreed revisions to the way in which performance is monitored and reported to provide greater transparency of performance reporting and improve the quality of the information available to inform decision making.
 - b) *NHS Transition* – Cabinet has received a report on progress in achieving safe transfer of legal responsibilities relating to public health from the NHS to the council. It has also approved the establishment of HealthWatch Herefordshire in line with the requirements of the Health & Social Care Act 2012. This body will play a significant role in improving the health & wellbeing of the people of Herefordshire by acting as consumer champion for NHS, public health and adult social care services.
 - c) *Executive Responses to Scrutiny Task & Finish Reviews* – Cabinet members have approved executive responses to the following Task & Finish Group reviews: Planning System; Tourism & Temporary Signage; Adult Safeguarding; Council Procurement Policy & Local Business & Employment; Income & Charging. The contribution made by the members of Overview & Scrutiny to policy development is welcomed.
 - d) *Hereford Bull* – The council's support for this iconic piece of public art in High Town was approved.

Appendices

Appendix A – Cabinet Portfolio List