

MEETING:	COUNCIL
MEETING DATE:	17 JANUARY 2014
TITLE OF REPORT:	LEADER'S REPORT
REPORT BY:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To receive a report from the Leader on the activities of Cabinet since the meeting of Council in October 2013.

Recommendations

THAT: the report be noted.

Alternative Options

- 1 There are no alternative options; it is a requirement of the council's constitution.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 To ensure members are aware of the activities of Cabinet.

Key Considerations

- 3 A list of the decisions taken by the executive since the last report to Council on 18 October is provided at Appendix A; none were dealt with under the urgency provisions within the constitution.

2014/15 Budget

- 4 During the autumn the Cabinet has continued to formulate its budget proposals, which will be put before Council at its meeting in February. We held a public consultation to improve our understanding of the likely impact of our proposals with the community, businesses and other partners. We continue to engage with specific groups of people, on individual proposals which affect them directly and I am grateful to all those who have and who continue to make their views known to us.
- 5 The views put forward will inform the decisions we must take about how Herefordshire taxpayers money is to be spent to support the most vulnerable in our community, and deliver essential services in the most cost effective way possible both now and in the future. One of those results was a clear rejection of the prospect of raising Council Tax above the proposed 1.9% to help retain some non-statutory services; the budget proposed will therefore include a recommendation to raise Council Tax by 1.9%.
- 6 As a result of savings involving difficult decisions and the work of the Chief Finance Officer the council is in a much better position going into this budget than was the case last year. Additional savings of £33m still must be made over the next three years, but plans are in place to secure them. The items will be dealt with as part of the rolling programme during the coming financial year.

Waste Project.

- 7 I met with the Minister in early December when remaining outstanding issues were discussed in a frank and very helpful manner. The Minister agreed to have his officials meet with our joint Herefordshire/Worcestershire team to resolve final details. Joint and separate meetings of the two councils' Cabinets were held in early December, and agreement with DEFRA was subsequently reached on 20th December.
- 8 Despite claims to the contrary, alternative solutions had been considered and rejected in favour of one which had all necessary conditions in place including control of a site, planning permission, proven technology and finance. It was disappointing that via social media, some councillors continued with the inaccurate claim that the proposed technology was "dirty". The proposed technology complies with the strictest Environment Agency and European Union requirements.

Summit Meeting

- 9 As part of plans to encourage economic growth in Herefordshire it is proposed to hold a meeting of the major organisations and employers in the county early in 2014 to discuss our respective and collective views and contributions to growth over the next 5 years on a rolling basis. The council recognises that its role in this process is that of a facilitator rather than provider of opportunity. This initiative is consistent with the council's corporate plan priority to create and maintain a successful economy for present and future generations. Plans emerging from this initiative will be published in due course.
- 10 Further to the temporary allocation of Cabinet member portfolios reported to Council in October, substantive arrangements have been confirmed. Whilst these have were communicated at the time, for completeness they are attached to this report at Appendix B.

Community Impact

- 11 The community impact of any decisions of the executive have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken.

Equality and Human Rights

- 12 Cabinet have paid due regard to the public sector equality duty in their decision-making as set out in the relevant decision reports.

Financial Implications

- 13 The financial implications of any decisions of the executive have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken.

Legal Implications

- 14 The legal implications of any decisions of the executive have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken.

Risk Management

- 15 The risks associated with any decisions of the executive have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken.

Consultees

- 16 None.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Executive Decisions
- Appendix B – Cabinet Portfolios

Background Papers

- None identified.