

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Thursday 15 October 2015 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor AW Johnson (Chairman)
Councillor PM Morgan (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: H Bramer, JG Lester, GJ Powell and PD Price

In attendance: Councillors JM Bartlett, WLS Bowen, TM James, RI Matthews, AJW Powers, DB Wilcox, CR Butler, J Hardwick, D Summers and EJ Swinglehurst

Officers: Alistair Neill, Jo Davidson, Geoff Hughes, Peter Robinson, Claire Ward

98. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors PA Andrews, JA Hyde, RJ Phillips and P Rone.

99. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

100. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

101. ADOPTION OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN - CORE STRATEGY 2011-2031

Before the item was introduced, the group leader for It's Our County sought assurance that in publishing the supplement to the agenda one day before the meeting the council had acted within the constitution.

The monitoring officer confirmed that no procedural errors occurred as the supplement had merely been provided to aid clarity but that all necessary documentation had been published with the necessary notice. The monitoring officer confirmed that the documents to be considered for recommendation to Council were the core strategy as submitted to the planning inspector taken together with the main and minor modifications published as appendices to the report.

The cabinet member, infrastructure introduced the report. The pre-submission document had gone through the process of examination with the planning inspector. The modifications identified by the inspector as being necessary to ensure the soundness of the plan had also undergone consultation and the inspector's report had confirmed that, having taken account of the main modifications, the core strategy was a sound document. Cabinet was asked to agree the core strategy and modifications to recommend to Council for adoption.

The group leader for It's Our County asked whether his proposed additional recommendation previously provided to the cabinet member had been discussed. The Leader confirmed that the proposal had been noted and would be addressed at Council.

The chairman of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented that it would be useful to have provision to make small amendments to the strategy after it was approved. It was important to have the core strategy in place so that the council was not in a state of limbo. He welcomed the five-year land supply as a protection against developers making additional planning applications. It was noted that this point had been discussed and would be covered at Council.

The group leader of Herefordshire Independents expressed concern about the risks raised by the inspector and sought assurance that amendments will be taken into account over time. The Leader confirmed that, in accordance with good practice, the local plan would be regularly reviewed.

The Green group leader endorsed comments already raised and referred to the five-year land supply and the delivery of the housing supply, where there was a case for ongoing review. The Leader commented that the local plan would be kept under review and evolve over time.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- (a) the local plan inspector's report (at appendix 1) be noted;
- (b) the Herefordshire local plan core strategy 2011-2031 (at <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/core-strategy>), incorporating the recommended main modifications (at appendix 2) and the schedules of minor modifications (at appendix 3) be recommended to Council for adoption; and
- (c) it be recommended to Council that delegated authority be given to the programme director growth to make any further minor modifications, (e.g. typographical) to ensure consistency with other development plan documentation.

102. LOCAL ACCOUNT 2014/15

The cabinet member for health and wellbeing introduced the local account for adult social care. The document represents a snapshot of local performance with an improving picture in adult social care.

The cabinet member, economy and corporate services referred to performance figures contained in the report and noted that year to year comparisons were made on internal performance for the service for two years rather than reflecting good performance against national figures. For example, the service had a lower percentage of admissions to residential care. Feedback from residents reflected this good performance. He noted that staff had done a good job, and offered thanks and congratulations.

The Green group leader commended the report although there was concern that there were pressures improving lifestyles and outcomes. She highlighted that with regard to healthy lifestyle choices, 50% of objectives had been met for people on plans and so there was more work to do in that regard.

Officers explained that there were plans in place to make every contact count and to promote public health awareness and wellbeing. The whole project plan was going live in January with the aim of involving all council services so that all professionals could signpost people to appropriate services and add support to the health and wellbeing agenda. It was intended also to engage children's services to work together more closely.

The cabinet member, economy and corporate services commented that he had experience of shadowing the healthy lifestyle trainers and noted that achieving the 50% rate of completed plans was an achievement and exceeded expectations.

The chair of the general overview and scrutiny committee welcomed the work on direct payments and hoped that it might rolled out further with suitable support. Officers confirmed that the pre-pay card was being rolled out which would make transactions easier. It was noted that this was a challenge to achieve.

The cabinet member for health and wellbeing added that the local account was a snap shot and acknowledged that there was room for improvement and that the intention was to do better next year.

RESOLVED

That the publication of the local account be approved.

103. ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING PLAN 2015-18

The senior adviser, post 16 learning and skills, presented the plan, which is essential for the delivery of the Skills Funding Agency contract. The main points being:

- much of the contract is fulfilled through community and voluntary organisations which enables access to specialist providers and reduces the need to appoint staff directly to the council;
- the plan supports access to those furthest away from the labour markets and success rates were high with people engaging and achieving qualifications particularly in English, maths and ICT;
- learning is in the community to encourage access to learning and over 1000 people have been engaged;
- there was close working with the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus, children's centres and troubled families teams;
- there were many benefits to supporting improved life chances;
- within its small budget, the service was achieving its aims;
- adult and community learning is personal to the individual. However, it was intended to establish an impact analysis and so a follow up survey would be sent out to see how it has helped to improve outcomes. Responses showed that people were able to progress to further learning or to employment;
- the fees policy is in place on the basis that if people can pay for learning, they should pay.

The cabinet member, young people and children's wellbeing, added that this was an important service for people to access and had benefits to the wider community and securing their wellbeing. Officers were thanked and their work was welcomed, and it was evident that it was appreciated within the community.

The Leader thanked officers and acknowledged the value of this work.

In answer to a question from the group leader of the Herefordshire Independents regarding the resilience of small organisations such as Herefordshire Headway, it was explained that as it is hard for smaller organisations to operate, support was available with quality assurance and access to funding streams such as the Big Lottery Fund to support growth of their business.

The Green group leader commended the report and the work of the service and noted the positive outcomes. She noted that the budget has been static and so the number of learners that could be accommodated was dropping. Officers acknowledged that Herefordshire had a small settlement in 2000 which had not changed and which had

prompted debate regarding whether the community learning programme should remain. There were opportunities to look at funding such as European Social Funding and Local Enterprise Partnership.

The leader of It's Our County endorsed the comments and asked about the timing of evaluation surveys which might have shown a better position if learners were tracked over a longer period of time. He also commented on the relationship between fees and cost of delivery and whether this reflected subsidy levels. It was explained that learner evaluation is longer term and personalised with the focus on the most deprived areas. As regards fees, consideration was being given to whether to grow the business and where it could be placed in the market.

The leader of It's Our County asked if the report had been to scrutiny and it was confirmed that it had not.

The Leader thanked officers for superb work.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- (a) the Adult and Community Learning Service's (ACLS) delivery and outcomes for 2013/2014 be noted;**
- (b) the Adult and Community Plan for 2015/2018 be approved;**
- (c) the expenditure of the grant allocation for the academic year 2015/16 from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) against priorities identified be approved; and**
- (d) the Fees Policy for 2015/2016 academic year be approved.**

104. PLANNED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOLS 2015/16

Approval was being sought for allocation of grant funding to ensure it best meets priorities to allow schools to continue running safely. Allocations are included to accommodate special needs and disability.

The cabinet member, economy and corporate services asked about possible backlogs in maintenance and how funding was prioritised for schools that were unable to prioritise from their own reserves. Further detail would be provided for scrutiny in terms of how to keep up to date with maintenance. In terms of schools' contributions to schemes, this would be on the basis of their making best use of their resources alongside the council. The schools forum budget working group was considering how the scheme could be embedded; the investment strategy also looks at accessing support and funding from a number of funding sources.

In answer to a question from the chair of the general overview and scrutiny committee regarding conditions surveys and concern about keeping up to date with building regulations, it was confirmed that the current arrangement for condition surveys was on a five-year rolling programme. Work under the capital investment strategy was designed to address this in relation to all schools in Herefordshire including academy and free schools to ensure all children received good quality education. The budget working group was looking at prioritising funding with governors working closely with the council. Consideration was being given to strengthening the education structure over the next few years and discussions with the education funding agency had been positive.

In answer to a question from the leader of Herefordshire Independents regarding Section 106 money it was confirmed that it was allocated to capital and further information could be provided on this.

Assurance was given to the cabinet member for contracts and assets that specific references to fire safety precautions were there as routine items in the condition survey rather than to identify particular issues.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) that £1.9m of school building improvements and maintenance works, be approved; and
- b) adjustments to the programme of works and budget allocation based on detailed quotations be delegated to the head of education development.

105. FUTURE DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS FOR WEST MERCIA YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE (WMYOS)

The cabinet member, young people and children's wellbeing introduced the report. It was a sensible proposal for the Police and Crime Commission (PCC) to host the Youth Offending Service (YOS) as a joined up approach.

Responding to the cabinet member, economy and corporate services, regarding transition costs and retained profits, it was clarified that profit would not be retained but would reduce in line with grant funding and that it should be noted that funding was reducing at both a national and local level.

An observation was made by the group leader of Herefordshire Independents regarding key risks referred to in the report and that the current assessment of risks remained high. It was confirmed that there were no risks involved with the transition. Further reassurance was given that there were no plans for the office of the police and crime commissioner to be abolished.

RESOLVED

That the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner acts as the host organisation for West Mercia Youth Offending Service from April 2016.

The meeting ended at 2.58 pm

CHAIRMAN