

MEETING:	Council
MEETING DATE:	18 December 2015
TITLE OF REPORT:	Leader's report
REPORT BY:	Deputy leader of the council

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To receive a report from the leader on the activities of cabinet since the meeting of Council in September.

Recommendations

THAT:

- (a) 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 (covering

the period between 1 September and 1 December) is provided at appendix A; three were taken under the general exception provision (less than twenty-eight but more than five days' notice) and the relevant overview and scrutiny committee chairman was notified. None were taken under the urgency provision (less than five days' notice). No decisions were subject to call-in.

- 4 The Chancellor's autumn statement confirmed the budget reductions we expected, and we were pleased to hear of investment in the county in the form of a new university focused on engineering. Pressures on social care costs have been recognised, currently at £76m annually for Herefordshire. Local authorities will be given an additional 2% flexibility on their current council tax referendum threshold to be used entirely for adult social care, potentially £1.7m for Herefordshire. If charged this would be used to protect existing services. The government will introduce the first ever national funding formula for schools, high needs and early years. A detailed consultation will be launched in 2016 and the new formulae will be implemented from 2017/18.
- 5 Detail of how the proposals included in the autumn statement are to be implemented are gradually emerging and will be considered as we refine our own budget proposals and draft medium term financial strategy, which is due to be approved by Council in February 2016.
- 6 I welcome the launch of the Marches growth hub, which brings together local and national products and services available to support businesses whatever their sector, size or stage of growth, in one place for the first time. The virtual hub, www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk offers advice, guidance and a directory of support services for businesses. It is supported by three hub sites; the Herefordshire hub is based in the Wolverhampton University business centre at the enterprise zone and provides hot-desking, incubation space, and networking facilities. A member of the economic development team is based at the hub Monday through to Thursday, to meet with businesses and answer queries on various subjects including, training, access to finance, and business start-ups.
- 7 Whilst there are significant budget challenges ahead, there will be plenty of opportunity for Herefordshire to continue to establish itself as a prosperous county.

Community impact

- 8 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 duty

- 9 Cabinet and cabinet members have paid due regard to the public sector equality duty in their decision-making, as set out in the relevant decision reports.

Financial implications

- 10 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

- 11 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

- 12 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

- 13 None.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Executive decisions taken

Background Papers

- None identified.