

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Thursday 10 March 2016 at 2.00 pm

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

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

In attendance: Councillors WLS Bowen, JA Hyde, TM James, RI Matthews, AJW Powers, FM Norman, D Summers and CR Butler

136. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

137. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

138. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

139. MUSEUM AND ARCHIVE SERVICES

The cabinet member contracts & assets presented the report on the initial options for the future operation of the museum and archive service. The report addressed the first two years of budget reductions and a further one on longer term options would be developed.

The assistant director communities provided an overview of the initial operations of the museum and archive service.

In response to questions from cabinet members, the following points were noted:

- That the archive budget had not been reduced substantially over the period as the service was a statutory function and was housed in a new building in order to reduce costs.
- That consultation with external bodies over the plans had been positive.

In response to questions raised by members in attendance, the following points were made:

- That the proposed charging structure for the Old House was not a commercial decision, but was designed to defray costs to the council. Disabled access to the building had always been an issue, but the ground floor displays would highlight the interpretation of the rest of the building.

- Whilst there was a statutory obligation to store archaeological finds in the Museum Resource and Learning Centre in Friar Street, there was no obligation to display the objects.

Resolved that:

- (a) the savings and income plan (outlined in paragraphs 17 to 29 of the report) be implemented;**
- (b) £80k be invested in improvements to the Old House, stock and marketing as outlined at paragraph 44;**
- (c) a further report on longer term options for future sustainable delivery of the service be developed to include exploration of trust, transfer and shared service arrangements with suitable heritage partners; and;**
- (d) the principles of allocating library and museum support fund (outlined at paragraphs 30/31 of the report) be agreed.**

140. APPROVAL OF STRATEGIC HOUSING DOCUMENTS

The joint commissioning manager provided cabinet with an overview of the strategic housing documents.

In response to questions from members in attendance, the following points were noted:

- That whilst the numbers on the Housing Register had fallen from 5000 to 500, they currently stood at 1,160.
- That there was a strict view taken on provision of housing for those with local connections. Changes to policy had been driven by case law in this area which meant that those with no local connections were now given a low priority on the list. This also applied to those not living in the county but with the offer of a job in Herefordshire.
- It was unclear as to where the 4000 people who had previously been on the register were now, but some who were being re-introduced to the housing register had some housing needs.
- That bed and breakfast accommodation had not been used since November 2012 and it was hoped that there would be no recourse to this position. It was expected, however, that more people would present as homeless.
- That the Syrian refugees that the county had offered to house would not have an impact on the housing register, as they would be placed by central government with private landlords.

Resolved that:

- (a) the allocations policy for Herefordshire 2016 (at appendix 1 to the report) be approved;**
- (b) the homelessness review and prevention strategy for 2016 to 2020 (at appendix 2 to the report) be approved; and;**
- (c) the interim housing strategy for 2016 to 2020, incorporating the tenancy strategy for 2016 to 2020 (at appendix 3 to the report) be approved.**