

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>16 December 2016</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Leader's report</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Leader of the council</b>

## **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: 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 cabinet and cabinet members since the last report to Council (covering the period between 16 September and 30 November) is provided at appendix 1; three were taken under the general exception provision (less than

---

Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Councillor T Johnson, leader of the council on Tel (01432) 260494

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 As is usual at this period in the corporate planning cycle the cabinet have been focussed on the ongoing development of the medium term financial strategy and in particular detailed budgets for 2017/18. I welcome the engagement of all members in the process and in particular the members of the scrutiny committees for their input. Its easy to feel despondent when contemplating the continued financial challenge for the country and the county but I would like to take this opportunity to remind members of the significant achievements of this council in recent years, which have been delivered in the context of those continuing challenges and should give us confidence in our ability to deliver in the future. These include:

- Children's safeguarding services in the county coming out of special measures, with recognition of positive direction of travel and ambition for the county.
- Approval of a school capital investment strategy guiding £100m of public/private investment over 20 years – and securing £7m of that within the first year.
- Development of 'New Horizons' to enable young adults with learning disabilities to stay in Herefordshire to build their independence rather than have to go to out county residential colleges
- An increase in local foster carers by 9%, against a national backdrop of reducing numbers
- Reduction in use of agency staffing in the past year by 50% - and in the last three years from 60 to 16 in children's social care.
- Commitment to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children despite wider financial pressures.
- Development of family based short breaks for children with a disability to give parents more choice.
- Reduction in adults and wellbeing spend of around 9%, despite pressure from demographic trends and increasing unit costs in delivering care (such as introduction of the national living wage)
- External peer challenges in 2014 and 2015, both of which concluded that the adult social care service was improving and on the right trajectory
- 2016/17 being the fourth successive year that we have worked within the agreed budget whilst building reserves to meet the pinch-points and pressures we know are yet to come
- Following the adoption of the core strategy and the local transport plan, plans for a new city bypass coming to fruition after decades of debate.
- £45m funding secured through the local enterprise partnership for investment in essential infrastructure
- Following delivery of a new, high quality livestock market, the opening of a major new retail centre in Hereford.
- With our partners in Worcestershire, delivery of a new energy-from-waste plant, ahead of time and on budget.
- In the context of an agreed corporate property strategy considerable progress made in rationalising our corporate accommodation, disposing of high cost or inappropriate property, and developing plans to share accommodation with public sector partners including DWP, police and fire and rescue bodies.
- Delivery of public realm improvements in Hereford's centre to improve the shopper and visitor experience and connect the historic core to the new retail development

- Filled over 200,000 pot-holes in the past three years
  - Roll out of Fastershire broadband to over 80% of county, by the end of 2016/17
  - Completion of the replacement of all council owned street lights with 12,000 street lights now being LED creating significant saving on running costs and reducing light pollution
  - With support from our communities, retained the library network across the county without significant closures, investing in self-serve, and with new models of delivery including community run libraries
  - Using capital investment to ensure leisure facilities can thrive without public subsidy
- 5 In addition to these activities and achievements, we have also seen a year on year improvement in a number of education outcomes, particularly for our youngest children, setting them up for the best start in life.
- 6 All of this whilst delivering savings of £59m over the past six years. I am not suggesting that everything is easy and certainly there is more work to be done – but we should recognise the progress made to date and build on that progress with confidence so that the resources of the council and the county continue to be directed to improving outcomes and quality of life for our residents.
- 7 We will undoubtedly have more difficult decisions to take in the future, not least about how best to work with partners in the wider local government family and in health in order to maximise resources available to Herefordshire and to operate as efficiently as possible. In taking those decisions we must continue to keep the future wellbeing of Herefordshire residents in the foremost of our minds.

## **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 1 – Executive decisions taken

## **Background papers**

- None identified.