

INTRODUCTION

This Cabinet Bulletin covers the meeting held on Thursday, 24th March, 2005 and reviews the agenda for the forthcoming meeting to be held on Thursday, 14th April, 2005.

Please note that meetings of Cabinet will start at 2.15 p.m. until further notice.

CABINET MEETING – 24TH MARCH, 2005

- (a) **Budget 2005/06** - Cabinet has determined that the £1 million provided within the approved revenue budget for developing Older People's Services and ICT infrastructure should be split equally between the two services with each receiving £500,000. A further report is expected detailing the proposed re-allocation of resources within the current Social Care budget and the measures necessary to ensure that spending is contained within the budget approved by the Council.
- (b) **Herefordshire Primary Care Trust - A Strategy for Success - A statement of Intent 2005/06 to 2007/08 and beyond - "Choosing Health - DoH White Paper** - Cabinet has received a report summarising the Department of Health's paper "Choosing Health" and the Herefordshire PCT's "A Strategy for Success: A Statement of Intent". Cabinet has
- approved a response to the Strategy for Success;
 - agreed to invest 50% of the salary costs involved with the post of the Director of Public Health to indicate the Council's commitment to the Government White Paper "Choosing Health". In so doing the Council seeks to be equal partners with the PCT in the work programme to be undertaken by the Director in this respect.
 - welcomed the PCT commitment to strengthen the current Section 31 arrangements and to work with the Council in agreeing LPSA2; and
 - requested Section 31 reports back on how the Council will deliver the six priorities set out in the White Paper.
- (c) **Progress towards the Equality Standard** - The Council has statutory and moral duties in respect of diversity and equalities to reflect the needs of the County's population through both its service provision and as an employer. In particular it must meet the Local Authority Equality Standard requirements, including fulfilling the Council's statutory duties under the Race Relations Amendment Act, the Sex Discrimination Act, the Equal Pay Act and the Disability Discrimination Act. Cabinet has noted that although the Council had adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government in 2002 and has had the Equal Opportunities Policy since 1998 (reviewed in 2002) the latter was not sufficiently comprehensive to meet all the detailed requirements of the Standard. It has approved the Comprehensive Equality Policy which will replace the Equal Opportunities Policy and committed to the process of Corporate Equality Planning by means of a Corporate Equality Plan to implement the Policy, including consultation, community development and scrutiny.

- (d) **Amalgamation of Hunderton Infants and Junior School** - Cabinet has approved the publication of a statutory notice to close Hunderton Junior and Infants Schools, and open a new three form entry Community School serving the 3-11 age range. The merger of the two schools is proposed to improve primary school provision in one of the most deprived wards of the County.
- (e) **Carbon Management Action Plan** - In July 2004 the Council was chosen to take part in the development of a Carbon Management Action Plan (CMAP) that defines the steps that the Council will take to secure emissions reduction of at least 1.25% per year from 2005 to 2012. The CMAP forms an important stage in addressing issues of climate change introduced under the revised "key lines of enquiry" within the CPA Corporate Assessment from 2005/06. The CMAP also provides an important contribution to the emerging Herefordshire Partnership Climate Change Strategy and generates bankable financial savings contributing to the Council's obligations to generate efficiency savings. Cabinet has approved the adoption of the CMAP allowing the Council to sign the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, thereby joining 74 other local authorities in England who have signed to date.
- (f) **Public Rights of Way Strategy** - Cabinet has approved the Public Rights of Way Strategy. The production of the strategy was one of the actions arising from the 2001 Best Value Review of the Public Rights of Way Service. It details where resources should be focussed; how to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act; business plans with targets; an enforcement policy and strategy; the creation of an Asset Register and how to promote Public Rights of Way. The strategy targets the Council's principal priorities which contribute to the Herefordshire Plan. The strategy will guide the Rights of Way service to become proactive and more able to meet the pressures placed upon it by new and existing legislation.
- (g) **Local Transport Plan Programme Budgets 2005/06** - In December 2004, the government allocated Herefordshire a total of £10,459,000 for Local Transport for 2005/06. This is made up of allocations for Maintenance (£7,559,000) and integrated transport projects (£2,900,000). These funds will be spent in accordance with both local and national priorities.
- (h) **Herefordshire Five Year Supporting People Strategy** - The Council is the Administering Authority for the Supporting People Programme in Herefordshire and is required to submit a Five Year Supporting People Strategy to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) no later than 31st March, 2005. The Strategy has been developed with reference to ODPM guidance. It sets out to critically examine current service provision and focus services and investment on local need and strategic priorities. In doing so, the Strategy also aims to illustrate how the Council and its partners plan to meet the identified needs and priorities and how it proposes to fill gaps in knowledge and understanding of needs. Cabinet has noted that the strategy has been developed against a background of considerable challenge to the future funding of the programme nationally and, more specifically, within Herefordshire, which could see a loss in Supporting People Grant of around £1,850,000 over the five year strategy period and further losses beyond that. It has endorsed the approach to managing the implications of the distribution formula and approved the Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010 for Herefordshire, for submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by 31st March, 2005.

- (i) **Leominster Industrial Estate Access Road** - Cabinet has received a confidential report and noted the analysis of cost increases for the construction of the Leominster Industrial Estate Access Road. It has agreed that provision be made to meet the shortfall in funding from the Capital Programme, incorporating the underspend from the construction of Twyford Court Industrial Units on the Rotherwas Industrial Estate and noted that a Close Down report for the scheme will be presented to the Major Projects Board and that the report will be used to inform ongoing and future major schemes.
- (j) **Corporate Voice and Data Network Business Case for Improvement and Development** - The Council is facing a growing demand for, and investment in, new ICT solutions to both enable and improve the delivery of services. Council has already approved significant capital funding for this key project and the consideration of future voice and data communications. The business case focuses on the additional investment required to enable the implementation of the new network and realisation of the considerable ICT efficiencies and savings identified. Some of the means of addressing this investment have been addressed earlier by the identification of £500,000 additional revenue for ICT Services. Cabinet has endorsed the proposed direction for the new network and approved the detailed investment required.
- (k) **Herefordshire Council: Review of Senior Management Organisational Structure** - Cabinet has approved new senior management arrangements and agreed that Directorates be organised in the following major blocks:-
- (i) **Children's Services** - The role of this Directorate is defined by the Children Act 2004.
 - (ii) **Corporate and Customer Services** - This is a new Directorate combining the support services of Legal and Committees, ICT and Information Services, Customer Services, Service Improvement Programme and the wider policy support role within the Council.
 - (iii) **Adult and Community Services** - This Directorate would fulfil the role spelt out in the Children Act for Adult Social Services and would continue to cover the Strategic Housing function as well as many of the services provided direct to the community through the current Policy and Community Directorate.
 - (iv) **Environment** - There is relatively little change to this service block from that of the existing Environment Directorate apart from the transfer of responsibility for Property to the new Resources Directorate.
 - (v) **Resources and Property Directorate** - This is a new Directorate designed to cover the existing financial support to the Council but bringing into this direct responsibility for the Gershon efficiency agenda and procurement and responsibility for Property Services.

The Head of Human Resources has been authorised to take immediate steps to establish and resolve any arrangements for "ring fencing" and to advertise and fill the remaining vacancies.

FORTHCOMING CABINET MEETING - 14TH APRIL, 2005

- (a) **Annual Efficiency Statement** - Cabinet will be asked to approve the Council's forward looking Annual Efficiency Statement.
- (b) **Risk Management Report year end 2004/05** - Cabinet will receive a summary of the key risks faced by the Council and the mitigating actions being applied to control them.
- (c) **Local Area Forums** - Cabinet will receive a report on feedback from the January 2005 round of meetings and consider renaming the Forums.
- (d) **Corporate Health Performance** - Cabinet will receive an update on the Council's corporate performance in relation to its national and local Best Value Performance Indicators from 1 April 2004 to 31 January 2005, reported on an exception basis where there is a variation on the target of at least + or - 10%.
- (e) **Strategic Audit Plan 2005/06 - 2008/09** - Cabinet will receive a report on the process used to develop the Strategic Audit Plan for 2005/06 to 2008/09 and the Annual Plan for 2005/06.

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*Copies of the agenda are available at the meeting or on request from:
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