

INTRODUCTION

This Cabinet Bulletin covers the meeting held on Thursday, 15th December, 2005 and reviews the agenda for the forthcoming meeting to be held on Thursday, 12th January, 2006.

Please note that all meetings of Cabinet will start at 2.00 p.m. until further notice

CABINET MEETING - 15th December, 2005

- (a) **Local Public Service Agreement Update** – Cabinet has received an update on the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA). It has noted that the majority of the stretched targets have an end date of March 2008, with the exception of the Road Safety target which is measured to December 2008. It has also noted that there is a Performance Reward Grant (PRG) of £4.4 million attached to the achievement of the targets (£366,000 per target).

Cabinet has noted that the Council will be relying on partner organisations and significant investment to achieve many of the ambitions. It has agreed to allocate £1.7 million of Performance Reward Grant from LPSA1 and £0.9 million Pump Priming Grant to fund the second generation Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA2).

- (b) **Implementing Electronic Government 5 Return** – The IEG is an essential part of the national monitoring process for assessing electronic local service delivery capability against central government's 2005 target. It is an important mechanism for assessing progress towards realising benefits from the investment of e-government and the use of IEG funding in individual local authorities. Cabinet has noted that the Council is expected to achieve 99% compliance with the Government's Best Value Performance Indicator 157 (electronic delivery of services) by April 2006. It has also noted that the Council's website is rated the best, technically, of all local authority websites in the country.

Cabinet has approved the Implementing Electronic Government Return (IEG5) for submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

- (c) **Update on the Operation of the Herefordshire Code of Practice for the Temporary Agricultural use of Polytunnels** – Cabinet approved a Code of Practice for the Temporary Agricultural use of Polytunnels in October 2004. That decision provided for the Code to be reviewed after two years ie in 2006. The Environment Scrutiny Committee has received a progress report from the Head of Planning Services, after the Code has been in operation for one year, and has made a number of recommendations to Cabinet.

Cabinet has noted the report and recommendations and has agreed that a further report be made in the event of any significant change in case law which would change the basis of the current Code of Practice. It has endorsed the principle of incorporating the pre-consultation requirements of the Code of Practice into the draft Statement of Community Involvement currently in preparation, and also endorsed the continued operation of the Code of Practice subject to a full review

in October 2006. It has agreed an amendment to the Terms of the Code of Practice by inserting the requirement for a local impact statement specifying, as a minimum, the proposed vehicular routing, volume and type of traffic, and the need for mitigation measure which may include one-way routes, hardening of passing places or surface improvements.

- (d) **Local Development Scheme** – The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a new system of development planning, known as the Local Development Framework. One of its requirements is for local planning authorities to publish a statement of how their forward planning work will be organised over a three year period. This is known as the Local Development Scheme. The first Scheme for Herefordshire came into effect on 1st January, 2005.

Cabinet has approved a revised Local Development Scheme to have effect from 31st January, 2006. The main amendments include: changes to the timetable for the Core Strategy which has been revised to avoid conflicts with the likely Unitary Development Plan (UDP) timetable; timetables for new Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) including those for the Edgar Street Grid and for planning obligations; and for Parish Plans to be adopted as further planning guidance to the UDP rather than as Supplementary Planning Guidance or SPDs. There are no changes to the programme for the Statement of Community Involvement. In addition Cabinet has noted that the issue of affordable housing may be addressed more easily under the Local Development Scheme than had been the case with the UDP.

- (e) **Annual Monitoring Report 2004-2005** – The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced new provisions and requirements for development planning. The regular review and monitoring of development plans through mandatory Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) is a fundamental feature of the new planning system. AMRs are to be based on the period 1st April - 31st March and submitted to the Secretary of State no later than the following 31st December. The AMR largely follows the thematic division of the chapters in the UDP, such as housing and employment. Objectives for each topic area are identified and appropriate policies linked to these are set out. In many topic areas the extent to which UDP policies are being implemented has been difficult to gauge, principally because the UDP has not yet been adopted. Subsequent AMRs will enable more accurate assessments to be made which will be used to develop future planning policies.

Cabinet has approved the first Annual Monitoring Report 2004-2005.

- (f) **Herefordshire Housing Post Transfer Improvement Programme** – The Council's Housing Stock was transferred to Herefordshire Housing Limited (HHL) on 26th November, 2002. Prior to that, in the consultation document for tenants, HHL promised to undertake a programme of repairs, improvements and planned maintenance to the housing stock if the transfer went ahead. At the point of transfer, HHL entered into a legally binding contract with the Council committing the company to honour the promises made within the consultation document.

Cabinet has now received a second progress report on improvements to housing stock transferred to HHL. It has noted that, in the final year of the initial five year programme, HHL's programme of works will concentrate on rewiring and the replacement of external doors. There was some concern about the quality of the work and about disruption, not just to tenants but also to their neighbours, while extensive programmes of work were being carried out. It has asked for a further update following the end of the 2005/06 financial year and asked for the Improvement Programme to be included in the workplan of the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee.

- (g) **Community Equipment/Independent Living** – The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 places a duty on Herefordshire Council for the provision of equipment for those who are disabled or have a chronic illness. The Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) is managed by Herefordshire Council in partnership with Herefordshire Primary Care Trust and has a pooled budget. Services include assessment of need; the ordering, supply delivery and subsequent collection, cleaning and recycling of equipment to meet those needs; and where necessary, on-going monitoring of changing needs. The Service provides equipment, on loan, to assist with the maintenance of independence (aids to daily living) and for home nursing and also funds minor adaptations in the home.

Cabinet has endorsed the plans for the Integrated Community Equipment Service to meet the growing demands arising from local, regional and national strategies by developing and expanding the in-house service. However, it has asked that a business plan, with properly identified targets and timescales be submitted to Cabinet for approval before the end of the current financial year.

FORTHCOMING CABINET MEETING – 12th January, 2006

- (a) **Comprehensive Performance Assessment: Corporate Assessment and Joint Area Review** - Cabinet will receive a formal report on the receipt of the Corporate Assessment and Joint Area Review and the timetable for addressing the Improvement Plan.
- (b) **Integrated Performance Report** - Cabinet will receive a progress report on the arrangements now in hand to integrate the performance and other management activity necessary to successfully implement the Corporate Plan.
- (c) **Comprehensive Equality Policy** - Cabinet will receive a progress report on the implementation of the Comprehensive Equality Policy.
- (d) **Herefordshire Housing Needs Assessment 2005** - Cabinet will receive a summary of the key findings following the publication of the Herefordshire Housing Needs Assessment 2005.

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*Copies of the agenda are available on the Council's website www.herefordshire.gov.uk,
at the meeting or on request from
Mrs. Christine Dyer, Members' Services Manager and Executive Officer on (01432) 260222.*