

INTRODUCTION

This Cabinet Bulletin covers the meeting held on 6th September, 2007 and reviews the agenda for the forthcoming meeting to be held on Thursday, 20th September, 2007.

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

CABINET MEETING – 6th September, 2007

- (a) **Rotherwas Archaeology: Options for Preservation of the Ribbon and Completion of the Rotherwas Access Road** – Cabinet received a report outlining the approach to the completion of the Rotherwas Access Road in the context of the advice received from English Heritage as to the best method of preserving the archaeological remains. Cabinet examined the options available with Option F being the one that would ensure the completion of the road to the original time scale and at the lowest cost whilst preserving the Rotherwas Ribbon in a manner approved by English Heritage. Cabinet was advised that Planning Guidance PPG16 was rigorously followed and compliance with PPG16 has been examined through an independent peer review under taken by officers of the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers. Cabinet also discussed possible options for tourism or education/heritage centre at the site or for an on line exhibition at the museum. Cabinet considered all the options put forward and agreed that the Rotherwas Access Road should be completed and the Rotherwas Ribbon preserved in accordance with Option F of the report.
- (b) **Building Schools for the Future: Rebuilding the Minster College Leominster** – The Cabinet Member (Children Services) presented the report to cabinet and congratulated all the schools of the county for the exam results achieved and the progress they are making. Cabinet were advised that the proposals for Minster College had the support of the Head Teacher and staff. The College serves the town of Leominster plus a large rural area with further extensive housing development to come into the area in the near future. Cabinet discussed the youth service provision within Leominster and requested that a review of youth provision across the county be carried out. Cabinet were advised that the College, as with most schools across the county, would provide extended services with opportunities to provide adult education and possible work training for teachers. Cabinet agreed that the Minster College should be rebuilt as a 6 form entry, 11-16 high school with a sixth form of 120, as a single school pathfinder under the Building Schools for the Future Initiative. Cabinet also agreed that on completion of the new facilities for the Minster College the existing technology block should be converted in part for use as a youth centre subject to a review of youth service provision and funding availability.
- (c) **Wyebridge Sports College Academy Project** – Cabinet received a report on proposals for Wyebridge Sports College becoming an academy. Cabinet discussed the proposals to agree the Council's role in delivering the academy, namely the granting of a 125 year lease to the sponsors, the closing of Wyebridge Sports College as a community high school and the creating of an academy serving 900 11-16 students with an additional 200 post 16 places at the appropriate time, if the feasibility study concludes with an outcome satisfactory to DCSF, the sponsors and the Council. Cabinet were advised that even with the falling rolls significant investment was needed to ensure the long-term success of Wyebridge Sports College. With the absence of other funding, the academy initiative

provides the means to achieve this. Cabinet was reminded of the success that Wyebridge had achieved with the recent GCSE exam results. Cabinet agreed the in principle recommendations for Wyebridge Sports College to become an academy serving 900 11-16 students with an additional 200 post 16 places, the granting of the 125 year lease to the sponsors on terms to be agreed subject to a satisfactory conclusion to the feasibility stage and the issuing of the public notices for the closure of Wyebridge Sports College and the creation of an academy.

- (d) **The Financial Position Arising From July 2007 Floods** – Cabinet received a report on the financial implications of the recent flooding in Herefordshire in July 2007 and praised the work of a large number of individuals, officers, voluntary and partner organisations that assisted during this time. Cabinet were aware of the considerable disruption and damage that the flooding caused across the county and were advised of the circumstances in which such incidents could receive financial assistance from central government. Cabinet were informed that it had been confirmed that this incident would be covered by the relevant regulations under the Bellwin Scheme and were advised that the terms of the scheme had been improved because of the extent of the flood damage. This had resulted in an increase in the proportion of costs local authorities could claim above the threshold to 100% from the previous 85%. Cabinet were advised that since the writing of the report Herefordshire had received an additional £30,000 and it was proposed that these additional funds would be distributed in December. Cabinet noted the report and financial implications outlined due to the flooding and requested that further updates be brought back to Cabinet.
- (e) **Policy Statement for the Use of the Rivers Wye and Lugg** – The Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation) presented the report to Cabinet and recommended the adoption of the revised policy statement as the basis for responding to proposals advanced in relation to the rivers Wye and Lugg, with particular regard to the Environment Agency in relation to their implementation of the Wye Waterway Plan. Cabinet were advised that the policy statement would enable the Council to work more effectively with its partner and other organisations to promote uses for the rivers, which are sustainable and benefit local communities and the wider public. Cabinet approved the revisions to the policy statement for the rivers Wye and Lugg and the promotion of partnership working with the relevant organisations.
- (f) **Response to the Review of How to Retain 18-35 Year Olds in Herefordshire and Attract Them To It** – Cabinet received a report on the retention of young people aged 18-35 in the county and congratulated officers on the report. The purpose of the review was to establish why 18-35 year olds leave the county and to focus on measures that could be put in place to retain the age group and attract more to the county. It was noted that even with predicted increases in the age range of 12-24 year olds in the county, the county would still be under represented in comparison to the population figures for England and Wales. The recommendations of the review were for young people to be involved in the shaping of major regeneration schemes such as the Edgar Street Grid. Other methods of retaining and attracting college graduates other than through universities were explored, particularly in connection with the development of the learning village. That available resources are concentrated on improving what the county has to offer both with regard to social and economic development for young people. Finally a business start up programme is promoted to support entrepreneurship and the Council continues its programme of affordable housing linked to major developments. Cabinet endorsed the response to the review and the action plan as set out in the report.

- (g) **Response to the Review of Hereford City Partnership** – Cabinet received a report on the Review of Hereford City Partnership and the recommendations put forward. Cabinet thanked the Members and officers involved in the Community Services Scrutiny Committee for their hard work. The Scrutiny Committee undertook an examination of the Hereford City Partnership, which is made up of several partner organisations. The company was set up in May 2000 and brings together both the public, private and voluntary sector that have an interest in the economic and environmental wellbeing of the City. The report considered 16 recommendations, as outlined in the report, with the majority of the recommendations accepted and some needing to be passed to the City Partnership for consideration and action. Cabinet endorsed the recommendations and Action Plan as set out in the report.
- (h) **Ombudsman Letter and Complaints and Compliments Monitoring 2006/07** – The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the report to Cabinet and advised this was an annual letter from the Local Government Ombudsman reflecting on any complaints they had received with regards to Herefordshire Council and any action they might recommend to be taken. Cabinet were advised that there were no reports of maladministration against the Council. It was added that favourable comments had been received on the Council's complaints procedure and that there was a 10% decrease in complaints compared to last year. It was also found that planning complaints had fallen 35 in 2005/06 to 21 in 2006/07. Cabinet were pleased with the improvements been made and noted the report.
- (i) **Action Plan for the Cultural Service CPA Review** – Cabinet received a report on the Action Plan for the Cultural Service CPA Review and were advised that the Audit Commission Inspectors were on sight from the 5th – 9th February 2007 to meet a range of Members, officers and partners and judge the quality of cultural services provided in Herefordshire. In addition to interviews there was a review of over 100 documents, which had been previously forwarded to the inspectors. The judgement is looked at in two ways, how good the service is varying from poor, fair, good or excellent to what the prospects are for improvement, which can be from poor, uncertain, promising or excellent. The result for Herefordshire was a “fair service that has promising prospects for improvement”. The previous evaluation in 2002 based on the library services gave a rating of a “fair service with uncertain prospects”. Cabinet noted that this inspection was based on a harder test and covered the full range of cultural services. Cabinet thanked officers for the considerable improvements that had been made in the service and endorsed the action plan.

FORTHCOMING CABINET MEETING – 20th September, 2007

- (a) **Integrated Performance Report** – to report performance to the end of July 2007 against the Annual Operating Plan 2007/08, national performance indicators used externally to measure the performance of the Council, together with performance against revenue and capital budgets and corporate risks, and remedial action to address areas of under-performance.
- (b) **Comprehensive Equality Policy and Equality Schemes** – To advise the Cabinet on progress regarding the Council's commitment to and delivery of the Council's statutory obligations to the diversity agenda.
- (c) **Employee Opinion Survey 2007** – To note the contents of the Employee Opinion Survey report.

- (d) **Local Government Pension Scheme Rule of 85 Protections - Response to Statutory Consultation** – To endorse the proposed response to the statutory consultation being undertaken by the Communities and Local Government (CLG) Department to extend the current protections in place for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in England and Wales. This would affect older scheme members following the removal of the rule of 85 with effect from 1st October, 2006.
- (e) **Hereford Children's Centre** – To seek approval to establish a Children's Centre for North Hereford City on the site of Wide Marsh Workshops by converting the current building, and relocating the present services to leased premises.
- (f) **Public Service Trust Progress for Herefordshire** – To note the outcome of the public consultation in relation to the proposal and to consider recommendations from the Public Service Trust Steering Group in relation to the next steps. The report will be sent to follow the meeting of the Public Service Trust Steering Group which will consider the report to both the Council and Herefordshire Primary Care Trust which is due to be held on Friday, 14th September, 2007.
- (g) **Special Report From the Director of Resources** – To receive a Special Report from the Director of Resources. Report to follow.

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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*

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