

9 July 2015

7. REPORTS OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH RESPONSIBILITY - CONTINUED

(a) REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Previously circulated

(b) REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOCALISM AND COMMUNITIES

Introduction

43. It is my pleasure to submit my report as Cabinet Member for Localism & Communities to full Council on the work that has taken place in my areas of responsibility in the past year.
44. The role of Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Localism and Communities is a cross-cutting one covering a number of services from across the Council, with a particular remit on taking forward Act Local as an approach by which we are working in partnership with communities and volunteers in shaping future delivery of services, helping us to achieve our Future Fit programme.
45. I am pleased to report that over the last 12 months, there has been significant progress in all areas of my portfolio, both in terms of transforming service delivery and also in achieving the challenging targets set within our Future Fit programme.

Libraries

46. The Libraries & Learning Service continues to be at the forefront of taking forward our Act Local approach. In many of our libraries the local community have come forward to form a Community Interest Organisation (CIO) that is responsible for managing the library building as a local asset. This involves local people as volunteer trustees or volunteering to help run the library service. This approach has delivered savings and has helped us to avoid closing libraries. Examples include:
 - Working with Upton & District Together (a CIO) to deliver a sustainable Upton library service on the existing premises with local parishes in the

area joining together to help fund the project of taking on the building through donations as well as increases in precepts.

- Working with Hagley Parish Council on delivering sustained library services in the existing building but with support from Hagley Parish Council and local community volunteers.
- In Broadway, working with Broadway Library Limited (CIO) to deliver a wider range of services from the library building at less cost.
- The future opening of a new Bewdley Library in a medical centre.

New Libraries

47. We have recently opened the new Stourport Library as part of the Civic Centre partnership in the newly refurbished Civic Centre building. The library is now co-located with the Police, Registration and Coroner's Court.
48. Wythall library will move from the old library building to the newly built integrated public/school library in the new Woodrush High School building in the autumn. The background to this was that our existing library building was of very poor quality with high revenue costs and would eventually have needed to close.
49. Bromsgrove library will move into the newly refurbished Parkside building later this year.

Adult Learning

50. The Adult Learning Service, part of an integrated service with libraries has recently had its accreditation with Matrix for high quality information, advice and customer care reviewed and renewed for the second year. The Service is the only integrated Libraries and Learning Service to receive this accreditation. The report recognises strong leadership and management in the service and demonstrates a 'customer first' attitude throughout all levels of the organisation and I would like to offer my congratulations to all involved.
51. The Adult Learning Service is working more closely with 16-18 education (Children's Services) following the Ofsted Inspection report in January 2015 to provide a joined up approach towards quality assurance in terms of teaching and qualifications gained.

The Joint Museum Service

52. The Joint Museum Service, working in partnership with Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust, has succeeded in securing an award of £4.97 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund to acquire the site from the Church Commissioners and complete the first phase of refurbishment and activities, creating a new visitor attraction in the north of the County. This is an exciting example of Act Local in action in the heritage sector and work has already begun to recruit volunteers to support the programme.
53. New plans have also been drawn up with partners Worcester City Council to promote the theme of *Worcester, the Civil War City* through the development of new displays at the Commandery and the promotion of Civil War trails around the City. The resilience of Museums Worcestershire has also been

given a boost by a second grant from the Arts Council, £261,000 over three years, enabling greater promotion of heritage tourism in the city and county in the years ahead.

Arts Service

54. The Arts Service continues to operate on a tight budget. It has successfully developed the schools arts project, Voices and Visions and in 2015 over 80 schools took part in a large scale Visual Art exhibition as well as three performance events. It continues to grant fund arts organisations and this money help lever in significant investment.
55. It drives the Worcestershire Arts Partnership which is a broad based partnership which places arts at the centre of public and private sector agendas including health, children and young people as well as the promoting the local economy.

Archives and Archaeology Service

56. The Archive Service has recently achieved the new accreditation standard set by The National Archives and was one of the first six archives in the country to do so. It has remodelled its front of house archive service at The Hive in order to achieve Future Fit savings with the minimum possible impact on customer services provided at The Hive. Over the past few months, we have met twice with the Senior Managers of The National Archives who were most interested to see how the service was being delivered as it is recognised as an example of good practice
57. The Historic Environment Record and Archaeological Advisory service is a high profile archaeological service, seen as one of the best in the country, which provides information and advice on the management and conservation of Worcestershire's historic environment. It has taken forward a number of strategic projects funded by Historic England in areas such as neighbourhood planning, flood risk and strategic planning and works closely with the County's planning and landscape and ecology teams.
58. All parts of the Archive and Archaeology Service have greatly increased their external income (grant-funded and commercial) since the service was formed in 2012. This has enabled them to continue to deliver a high quality service to Worcestershire residents and businesses and deliver Future Fit savings. The Archaeological Field Unit is 100% externally-funded, the Learning and Outreach team and Collections teams are 70% externally-funded and the Historic Environment Record and Advisory team is over 50% externally funded. The service is the lead organisation for the Worcestershire World War 100 project partnership which was successful in winning the largest lottery bid for WWI projects outside London.

Worcestershire Youth Music Service and the Music Education Hub

59. A new Strategic Music Education Manager was appointed in September 2015 with a remit to further develop the work of the Music Service and Music Education Hub

Music Service

60. A range of reforms have been put in place many in response to the comprehensive Needs Analysis of music education in the county that was commissioned in 2013.
- A new Service Level Agreement developed for schools
 - An improvement of the marketing of the offer to schools
 - Whole class instrumental delivery for primary schools reformed and extended
 - Development of joint working with the Arts Service and Worcestershire Arts Partnership, e.g. Voices and Visions
61. A formal partnership has now been ratified with the University of Worcester with WYM and the University working in partnership to initiate a range of music developments for the young people of the county. An early collaboration has been the joint staging of a Big Sing event for 2,000 young singers at the University Arena in June 2016.
62. Progress is being made towards the spinning out of the Service to become a social enterprise by September 2016. Extensive on-going work is being undertaken with support from colleagues from the Commercial Team with meetings having taken place with the Future Fit Steering Group and the Director of Commercial and Change. The proposals will be brought to Cabinet by September 2015.

Music Education Hub

63. WYM is the lead organisation of the Music Education Hub and, in this capacity, has reformed the partner membership with a greater representation from external organisations e.g. University of Worcester, English Symphony Orchestra, Elgar School of Music, Yamaha (Europe), Artrix, Malvern Theatres, Armonico, Consort, Kidderminster Choral Society.

Corporate Information Management Unit (CIMU)

64. CIMU has been focussing this year on reducing our physical storage of records to ensure that we are not retaining information beyond the required timescales and also reducing our financial outlay for storage. This has slowed in recent months as an additional requirement to relocate storage from the basement is now a priority in preparation for DEFRA/HMRC relocation to County Hall later in the year.
65. The unit has also been working with various departments across the County to act on the recommendations following the ICO audit last year. The ICO will revisit the Council later this month.

Registration and Coroner Services

66. Registration Services have recently been re-structured to best meet the demands on the Service. This will be reviewed annually as part of the requirement of the governance arrangements with the General Register Office. A recent survey carried out with customers of the Registration Service achieved a 98% satisfaction rating and the General Registry Office are very happy with the services provided in Worcestershire.

67. We have relocated the Coroners Court to the new Civic centre in Stourport earlier this year along with the library service. The new facilities have received many positive comments from court users.
68. It is hoped that the Coroner's Officers, employed by the police, will also relocate to Stourport in the autumn. This move will enable the service to streamline processes and make the day to day operation considerably easier.

Countryside Services

69. Three of our flagship green spaces; Waseley Hills Country Park, Worcester Woods Country Park and St Wulstan's Nature Reserve have retained the nationally recognised Green Flag Award, evidencing the high standard of management for visitors and the natural environment.
70. The Team has secured funding for a further three years to support the Community Payback project. This high profile project is jointly funded by the Countryside Service, Worcestershire Highways and Warwickshire and West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company and continues to carry out important work with offenders on countryside sites and Public Rights of Way across Worcestershire.
71. The Greenspace Team continues to work towards self-financing and delivering its Future Fit programme by generating income from its countryside sites, securing external funding, delivering chargeable services to others and reducing core costs. Volunteers via Parish Tree Wardens, Countryside Sites volunteers and Health Walk Leaders deliver considerable work across the service.
72. In addition, the service is constantly looking for new partners to work with, for example the National Trust are taking an active role in managing Kingsford Forest and Wyre Forest District Council are possibly taking on a management role at Hartlebury Common.

Gypsy & Traveller Services

73. This self-financing service provides important accommodation for gypsies and travellers via its 8 residential gypsy sites and works closely with communities and partners to reduce and manage unauthorised encampments within the county. The Gypsy Service is now part of the wider Countryside Service.
74. Work continues in partnership with Police and District Councils to address illegal horse grazing. New legislation, as well as a regional partnership project currently being developed, will allow more co-ordinated action to remove illegally grazed horses.

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

75. The Changing Futures Fund has entered its fourth year and has received 285 applications from organisations around the county. It is predicted that the £750,000 investment will be spent by December 2015 and an independent review is about to commence seeking to identify the impact of

this investment. Funder User feedback has been obtained for every package of support provided by the Fund and reveal satisfaction levels of 99.4%.

76. Volunteering is a key deliverable for the Council's Future Fit programme and the Council is working closely with the Worcestershire Voices Board who are leading the development of a countywide, cross-sector volunteering strategy.
77. Excellent progress on Digital Inclusion is being made with the GoOn Partnership and the development of Digital Champions to support residents of Worcestershire to become digitally enabled. Recruitment is under way for a Partnership Development Coordinator.

Regulatory Services

Trading Standards & Animal Health (Regulatory Services)

78. The Trading Standards and Animal Health Team at WRS continues to deliver work against the County Council's statutory functions and is seeking alternative funding streams where it can, given reduced resources available. The team uses the National Trading Standards Intelligence Operating Model as its business tool for planning/delivering work to ensure its activities focus on the most serious issues.
79. Over £40,000 has been secured for animal feed inspection work at farms and animal feed suppliers during 2015/16 as part of a Food Standards Agency (FSA) scheme being administered through the National Trading Standards Board. Funding is on a year-to-year basis, but the FSA has committed to a further round of funding in 2016/17. Also, a wider WRS project has secured £120,000 of funding over 2015/16 and 2016/17 from the Worcestershire LEP to look at business support options including the viability of an accreditation scheme for food businesses within the County. This will require some input from the Trading Standards and Animal Health team. Officers continue to look at income generation from businesses for advice and support, with previously free advice now only being provided on a charging basis.
80. With advice work for County Council functions now being provided for a fee, the focus of other work is very much on enforcement. The main areas targeted are rogue home improvement traders, suppliers of counterfeit and illicit goods and the more problematic end of the car trade. These areas are either linked to organised criminal gangs or cause high levels of economic detriment to consumers and businesses, by either targeting the most vulnerable in society or taking work away from legitimate businesses and undermining the local market. The service also continues to undertake limited monitoring of food products, working with the public analyst at Worcestershire Scientific Services. Following the recommendations of the Elliott Review into the horse meat scandal, the service continues to target food substitution and food fraud where it can, taking a zero tolerance approach to non-compliance, as indicated in the report by Professor Elliott.
81. Recent results in Court have been excellent for all County Council functions, with custodial sentences or significant fines frequently being awarded, as well as Banning Orders for several company directors. Our team in WRS is

ably supported by the legal team at Bromsgrove, who deliver the County Council's legal advocacy requirements under contract.

The Hive

82. The Hive during 2015 became the second most visited library in the UK with just under one million visitors. The Hive continues to be one of the most successful libraries in the country, attracting approximately 2,500 visitors each day. To give some comparison to the old Worcester library; the average number of items of stock issued by members of the public (these figures do not include students) for adults has increased by 96.4% and for children is an increase of 248%.
83. Room bookings are high and there is a wide range of business events, adult learning courses, lectures, exhibitions and professional theatre productions. There is even a well-attended film club each month.
84. The business centre hosts quarterly business breakfasts supported by commercial partners (Haines Watts, Growing Cyber, Harrison Clark) with approximately 40-50 local employers attending each time.
85. The Hive will be the Midlands regional venue for BBC's Children in Need in November 2015.

Act Local

86. Although Act Local is not a direct delivery model for projects, it does continue to be the overarching mechanism to hold the work streams of Act Local together. Directorates and service areas drive through their individual projects such as:
 - DASH & COaCH Digital Inclusion – Digital Champions and Go On Worcestershire
 - Legal & Democratic Services – Empowering Parish & Town Councils by working with CALC to encourage Parish Clerks to take up the General Power of Competence, share good practice on Act Local initiatives and develop the Parish Lengthsman Scheme further. In addition, an annual Parish Conference is held to share good practice across all Parishes/towns in the County.
 - Legal & Democratic Services - Role of Elected Member – Empowering County Councillors through Member development, ensuring a robust Member induction is in place for 2017 and developing on-line training guides and catalogues for Members.
 - Legal & Democratic Services - Act Local website development – This remains a work in progress with Parish and Town Councils being encouraged to form a focus group to look at the Act Local site and influence improvements. The My Parish Pages are well used and have been promoted as an ideal way to conform with the new transparency rules around publishing expenses. This facility puts Worcestershire well ahead of many other authorities.
 - BEC Project Optimise – County/District/Parish Councils and partner agencies working better together. Initial stakeholder meetings have taken place to identify priorities and areas of better partnership working. Work

ongoing with Redditch Borough Council around optimising green space and street scene work.

- BEC Library Remodelling – Achieving savings within the library service, avoiding the need for Library closures while focusing on the principles of Act Local.
- COaCH Communications around Act Local – A quarterly newsletter is in place along with regular Tweets and updates to the Act Local Face Book Page. Through the Face Book page Parish/Town Councils, community groups and individuals are encouraged to upload examples and pictures of community projects.
- BEC Community Transport – Working with the Community Transport Consortium to take on more local services as a means of supporting bus routes across the County.

87. A further priority for Act Local in the coming months will be to investigate links to demand management.

Conclusions

88. I would like to place on record my thanks to the Chief Executive and the Director of Business, Environment and Community, along with the relevant Heads of Service for their commitment and work over the past 12 months. I believe we have a high calibre of officer within the County Council and the commitment shown by officers at all levels has meant we have made significant progress in all areas of my portfolio.
89. We do recognise that the financial climate facing the Council continues to be very challenging. I see that within my portfolio significant progress has been made in meeting these financial challenges. However, we are aware that this will need to continue through areas such as Demand Management and Active Alliances we hope that within my portfolio we can be a key catalyst and contributor to achieving long term Future Fit goals whilst sustaining services that local communities wish to keep but are delivered in a different way.

I submit this report to the Council. Thank you.

Lucy Hodgson

Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Localism and Communities