

15.09.2016

## HEREFORDSHIRE MARKET TOWNS FORUM

Minutes of the Market Towns Forum meeting held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016 commencing at 7:00pm at the HALC Offices, Berrows Building, Bath Street, Hereford.

**Present:** Cllr Fred Clark and Gary Swinford (Acting Clerk) Bromyard and Winslow Town Council  
Cllr Martin Eager, Ledbury Town Council  
Cllrs Jenny Bartlett, Angela Pendleton, Roger Pendleton and Paul Russell (Clerk)  
Leominster Town Council  
Cllr Bob Widdowson, Kington Town Council  
Cllrs Charles Nicholls and Brian Wilcox, Hereford City Council

As the Chair and Vice Chair had apologies Cllr Bartlett was elected to chair the meeting.

### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ray Whitaker and Peter Andrews (Bromyard), and Sara Robinson (Clerk) Steve Kerry (Clerk) Bob Barnes (Ledbury), Karen Mitchell (Clerk – Ledbury).

### 2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016 were approved and signed as a correct record.

### 3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

### 4. HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL (50 minutes)

Natalie Silver, Assistant Director, Communities, Herefordshire Council was welcomed to the meeting.

The Forum received a presentation on the financial and other challenges facing customer services and libraries over the next few years. The main points raised included the following:

- The Cabinet would be reviewing the 2017/18 budget savings at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016;
- Savings of £780,000 from the service were required. Overall service budget was £1.8 million currently;
- Status quo was not an option so a new service model was being developed which included increasing income and reducing services;
- There was an overall move towards carrying out the majority of customer contact online as the average face to face cost approximately £8.62 whilst web transactions averaged out at 15p per transaction;
- Loans of books averaged out at around 500,000 per annum. Around 17% of the county had at least one item on loan;
- Actions included a revised website by December 2016, the relocation of the DWP in Hereford for 2017, case based approach to address multiple issues, an increase in self service libraries and an improvement to broadband services;
- A consultation was currently taking place.

Councillors raised a number of questions regarding library and customer service usage, the way figures were counted and the way services were costed. It was noted that around 15% of Herefordshire residents had never been online.

Concern was also expressed regarding the way and number of consultations Herefordshire Council was currently conducting.

A copy of the presentation would be provided and sent to Forum members.

Marc Willimont, Assistant Director, Communities, Herefordshire Council was welcomed to the meeting.

The Forum received a presentation on Article 4 and Houses of Multiple Occupancy. The main points raised included the following:

- Current controls included planning application requirements for larger HMOs, licensing for larger HMOs by Environmental Health and HMO inspections;
- Article 4 provided a legal tool to have special control over development, can remove the permitted development rights for HMOs and can be made following formal consultation;
- Supplementary Planning Documents would usually support the implementation of an Article 4 and could set out where an over-concentration of HMOs exist;
- NDPs and the Hereford Area Plan could include specific guidance on HMOs but could not insist on applications for below 7 persons unless an Article 4 was in place;
- All HMOs are subject to a Housing Health & Safety Rating System;
- HMOs with 5 or more people and 3 or more storeys require an HMO license;
- HMOs above 6 occupants require planning consent.

A copy of the presentation would be provided and sent to Forum members.

**5. UPDATE ON CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX (20 minutes)**

An update was received following the proposal tabled by Chris Boot and the request to support the further development of the Herefordshire Advice Model.

There was general support for the continuation of the CAB service, which was a separate issue to the WISH initiative.

Concern was expressed that the Market Towns had not received enough information regarding the development of the Advice Model and each town was requested to consider the information separately.

**6. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (28<sup>th</sup> September 2016) (5 minutes)**

It was noted that Martin Samuels had been invited to address the MTF meeting to be held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Youth provision would also be included.

**7. CONFIDENTIAL SESSION (5 minutes)**

There were no items raised

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at Berrows Building at 7.00pm.

There being no other business the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.06pm.

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**CHAIR**

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**DATE**