

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
LICKHILL COMMUNITY CENTRE, LICKHILL ROAD, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN
THURSDAY, 27TH OCTOBER 2005 (6PM)

PRESENT:

Councillors: S J M Clee (Chairman), M J Hart (Vice-Chairman), J-P Campion, J W Dudley and Mrs A T Hingley

OBSERVERS:

Councillors: G W Ballinger, C D Nicholls and J A Shaw

CAB.102 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N J Desmond.

CAB.103 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.104 MINUTES

DECISION:

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Thursday, 29th September 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.105 CALL INS

No decisions had been called in since the last Cabinet meeting.

CAB.106 ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.107 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

.(i) Visitor from Lithuania

A visitor from Lithuania - Mrs Vilma Mazeikinee, from Kupiskio had spent over 2 weeks on work experience with Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council.

(ii) **Free Electric Blanket Tests**

Free electric blanket tests were being offered by the Council in partnership with Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th November 2005 between 10 am and 4 p.m. at Kidderminster Fire Station.

(iii) **Fair Trade Event**

A Fair Trade event was being held in Kidderminster Library on the 2nd November 2005. The Leader and Chief Executive had signed a joint letter that stated their intention to move forward towards Fair Trade status.

(iv) **Emails**

Members were asked to note that emails were now only being sent to Members' District Council email addresses. Private email addresses were no longer being used.

CAB.108 REPORT ON THE USE OF MANUAL AGENCY LABOUR

A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services that sought the approval of Cabinet to take advantage of a market testing exercise. The need to undertake a market testing exercise was identified at a meeting of the Worcestershire Procurement Partnership (WPP) after it was established that total spend for all combined participants was in excess of £1.2 million shared amongst more than 21 separate agencies.

The market testing exercise was recently undertaken by the Worcestershire Procurement Partnership (WPP) with the support and guidance of the West Midlands Centre of Excellence (WMCOE). If the Council were to adopt the service outlined in the report it would contribute significantly to the cashable and non-cashable savings required by the Gershon initiative.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

1. **An Exception to Standing Orders allowing Wyre Forest District Council to undertake a pilot scheme for a nine-month period in order that the unique services of Commensurate can be evaluated.**
2. If the Pilot Scheme were successful, Wyre Forest District Council place the required Official Journal of European Union (OJEU) advertisements and carry out a full tender procedure for Manual Agency Labour.

CAB.109 **CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME**

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that recommended to Council that a new Concessionary Travel Scheme be approved for 2006/2007 onwards.

Council, as part of the 2005/2006 Budget Strategy, requested the Finance and Corporate Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel to carry out a full scrutiny exercise to investigate moving to the National Scheme and to a County-Wide Scheme with effect from 1st April 2006. Also HM Treasury budget announcement on the 16th March 2005 stated that it was the Government's intention to introduce free local bus travel for people over the age of 60 and disabled people from April 2006.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Affairs commented that this was an important service for the elderly of Wyre Forest. The questionnaire that had been sent out had been successful in determining what people wanted from the scheme.

The Chairman of the Finance and Corporate Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel commented that the Task and Finish Group that had been set up to look at Concessionary Travel had done a very good piece of scrutiny work that had culminated in the recommendations presented to Cabinet. The proposed service would be a much improved service for all old aged pensioners in the district.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 1. A new Concessionary Travel Scheme be approved for 2006/2007 onwards as detailed below:-**
 - (a) Wyre Forest District Council's local scheme comprise free travel at all times including travel inside and outside of the county, starting or ending only in the District, at an estimated cost of £418,000 per annum.**
 - (b) Subject to a formal offer of grant from the County Council for 2006/07, the Council's local scheme be extended, to include travel starting or ending anywhere in the County and including cross border travel. The estimated additional cost of the extended scheme (£46,000) be met by offer of a contribution from the County of £59,000. This offer is conditional subject to all six Worcestershire Districts accepting the offer by 31st October 2005. This contribution has been calculated to meet additional costs based on £2.50 for each eligible resident aged over 60 years.**
- 2. Discussions continue with Dial-a-Ride to consider the application of the new scheme.**

CAB.110 GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that asked the Cabinet to give consideration to awarding the Hillcrest Resident Association a Pump Priming Grant to assist with the formal setting up of their Association.

The request by Hillcrest Residents Association was in accordance with the criteria agreed by Council on the 23rd February 2005 i.e. that grants should be used to pump prime suitable projects.

DECISION:

A grant of £250 be awarded to Hillcrest Residents Association.

CAB.111 WYRE FOREST EMPTY PROPERTY STRATEGY

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that recommended to Council that the updated Wyre Forest Empty Property Strategy be approved.

The Empty Property Strategy and its associated Action Plan would be another tool that the Council would use to improve access to housing, housing conditions and the built environment generally.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The updated Wyre Forest Empty Property Strategy be approved.

CAB.112 SINGLE HOUSING CAPITAL POT

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that asked the Cabinet to agree the rolling programme of capital funding from the Single Housing Capital Pot.

DECISION:

The three year rolling funding to support affordable housing delivery through the single housing capital pot.

CAB.113 SECTION 106 EXPENDITURE - PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME FOR EXPENDITURE FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services, that appraised Members of the background, procedure and programme of potential projects for capital expenditure on improving sustainable transportation in and around Kidderminster and the Wyre Forest District and sought approval to a programme of projects for implementation.

DECISION:

1. To approve the programme of projects for expenditure of Section 106 monies held on sustainable transportation as outlined at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. The Head of Planning, Health and Environment, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Environmental and Economic Regeneration, to approve the final selection and details of the scheme.

CAB.114 TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES - DFT CONSULTATION ON DRAFT BEST PRACTICE

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that asked the Cabinet to consider the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles DFT Consultation Draft Best Practice Guidance and asked for agreement to a formal response.

DECISION:

Approval be given to the consultation response as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

CAB.115 ALLOCATION OF SECTION 106 MONIES FROM CATTLE MARKET SITE, KIDDERMINSTER

A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, leisure and Commercial Services that asked for the Cabinet's agreement to the allocation to St. George's Park and White Wickets of Section 106 monies received from the Cattle Market Site, Kidderminster.

DECISION:

1. **Allocation of £50,000 of the Section 106 money received from the cattle market site be made to the capital programme and £30,000 to be spent on St. George's Park and £20,000 on White Wickets, Kidderminster.**
2. **The Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services, in consultation with the Head of Financial Services and the Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure Services, be authorised to finalise the allocation of monies with Miller Homes, in accordance with the 106 Agreement.**

CAB.116 OFFICER PLANNING CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that asked the Cabinet to agree an Officer Planning Code of Good Practice.

The updated Code of Practice set out clearly the role of officers where their impartiality might be compromised. It was essential for the transparency of the service that officers involved in handling planning matters were signed up to the code.

DECISION:

The Officer Planning Code of Good Practice be agreed.

CAB. 117 PROVISIONAL LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2 2006/2011 JULY 2005

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that informed Members of the outcome of the District Council's response to the consultation undertaken by Worcestershire County Council on the Draft LTP Document in April 2005.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Economic Regeneration commented that the Economic and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel had scrutinised the proposed response which was required to be submitted to Worcestershire County Council by 31st October 2005. The Panel's comments had been noted and contained within the submission.

DECISION:

The comments and recommendations set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report be approved as the District Council's response to the Provisional Local Transport Plan 2 for submission to Worcestershire County Council.

CAB.118 PASSPORT TO LEISURE/LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services that asked the Cabinet to consider adding the 'Looked After Children' to the eligibility criteria for the Council's Passport to Leisure Scheme.

The Passport to Leisure Scheme was currently available for any resident of Wyre Forest District Council who was in receipt of benefit. However discussions had taken place between Social Services, DC Leisure and the Council regarding the benefits of adding the category of 'Looked After Children' to the current Passport to Leisure Scheme.

DECISION:

The category of 'Looked After Children' be added to those currently eligible to receive benefits under the Passport to Leisure Scheme.

CAB.119 MINERALS AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that informed the Cabinet about Worcestershire County Council's proposals for the Waste Core Strategy and associated consultation with Wyre Forest District Council.

DECISION

The comments and questions listed in paragraphs 5.2 to 5.5 of the report to Cabinet be submitted to Worcestershire County Council as formal representations to the Waste Core Strategy consultation paper.

CAB.120 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING ON 25TH OCTOBER 2005

(i) Concessionary Travel

This item was considered in conjunction with the report at minute number CAB.109 above.

DECISION:

The recommendations made by the Finance and Corporate Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Committee be agreed. (See recommendations at CAB.109 above).

(ii) Neighbourhood Wardens

This item was deferred for consideration at a future meeting of the Cabinet.

CAB.121 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION:

Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of 'exempt information' as defined in paragraphs 7 and 9 of part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB.122 SUMMARY OF MINUTES

The following proceedings were considered after the press and public had been excluded from the meeting. A summary of the minutes relating to these items have been made as 'exempt information' would be disclosed if the minutes were published in full.

(i) Exempt Minutes

The Exempt Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 29th September 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

(ii) Housing Benefits Overpayments - Write Off of Amounts Outstanding

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that enabled members to give consideration to writing off the sum of £1,678.63 in respect of Housing Benefit Overpayment debts.

(iii) Richard Eve Memorial

A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services that asked the Cabinet to consider revising the Capital Budget estimate to achieve the refurbishment of the Richard Eve Memorial in accordance with tenders received by the Miscellaneous Functions Committee.

The meeting finished at 6.25 p.m.,