

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER
24TH NOVEMBER 2005 (6PM)

PRESENT:

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

OBSERVERS:

Councillors: G W Ballinger, Mrs P V Hayward, C D Nicholls and M J Shellie

CAB.126 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence

CAB.127 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.128 MINUTES

DECISION:

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 27th October 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.129 CALL INS

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

CAB.130 ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

The Leader agreed to take agenda item number 10.1. regarding the Petition first as there were a number of members of the public in attendance at the meeting to hear the Cabinet's views on this.

CAB.131 PETITION - CAR PARKING - STOURPORT SPORTS CENTRE

The Council, at its meeting on the 16th November 2005, received a petition signed by 262 users of Stourport Sports Centre. The petitioners were seeking a concessionary car parking charge at the centre for sports centre users, who do not qualify for the Wyre Forest season ticket available for Senior Citizens over the age of 63 years. The petition referred, in particular, to difficulties faced by senior citizens aged between 60 and 63 years and parents with young children. Council agreed to refer the petition to Cabinet for consideration in accordance with Standing Order C.12.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Economic Regeneration stated that he would hold discussions with the Council's Car Parking Officers and agreed to bring back a recommendation to the Cabinet's 22nd December 2005 meeting.

DECISION:

Discussions be held with the Council's car parking officers and a recommendation be brought back to the Cabinet meeting on 22nd December 2005.

CAB.132 HONORARY ALDERMAN

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that asked the Cabinet to consider a nomination for the title of Honorary Alderman in accordance with the procedure adopted by the Council at its meeting on 18th April 2005.

Councillor Mrs P V Hayward, Conservative Group Leader addressed the Cabinet. She believed that Mr Wardle was a worthy candidate to be nominated for the title of Honorary Alderman. Such an appointment would recognise his service to the District and the community over many years.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

To confer the title of Honorary Alderman on Mr John William Wardle, MBE, JP, DL, in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

CAB.133 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Skateboarding Facility, Brinton Park, Kidderminster

The Leader was pleased to announce that the skateboarding facility in Brinton Park, Kidderminster was now fully functional.

(ii) Joint Waste & Passenger Transport Open Day , Worcestershire County Council

A Joint Waste and Passenger Transport Open Day would be held on Wednesday 30th November 2005 at Worcester Rugby Club, Sixways, Worcester. All members of the Council were invited to attend this meeting. The meeting would focus on the future plans for transport and waste.

(iii) Night Stop AGM - Wednesday 30th November 2005

The AGM of Night Stop would be held on Wednesday 30th November 2005 at 6.30 pm in Kidderminster Library.

CAB.134 BUDGET MONITORING/FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2206/2009

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that provided Cabinet with information to monitor the revenue budget and capital programme in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 and Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) guidelines. The Financial Strategy outlined the timetable, responsibility, actions, issues and risks of the forthcoming budget process.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Affairs commented that there had been no significant movement in the budget and the situation was stable. This would be reflected in the budget cycle.

DECISION:

- 1. The projected budget variations and comments outlined within this report be noted. Any overspends or projected loss of income will be considered as supplementary estimates or virements on 22nd December 2005, when the Cabinet considers the revised Budget prior to onward approval by Council;**
- 2. Heads of Service continue to monitor closely the Revenue Budget and Capital programme;**
- 3. The updated Capital Programme and Vehicle Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule 2005/2006, brought about by slippage and reassessment be noted;**

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4. **The Prudential Indicators 2005/2008 be noted and**
 5. **The revised Budget Risk Management Matrix be noted.**

 6. **The timetable, process and risks contained in the Appendix to the Financial Strategy 2006-2009 be noted and circulated to all Members of the Council for information.**

CAB.135 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER

A report was considered from the Head of Human Resources that recommended to Council that Wyre Forest District Council agree to sign up to the West Midlands Development Charter - Primary Milestone.

Following a review of Members' development and training, it was recognised that the system should be revised and updated in line with the continually changing role of the local councillor. To commit to the Member Development Charter would be a major step towards achieving this important goal.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

1. **It be agreed that Wyre Forest District Council signs up to the West Midlands Development Charter - Primary Milestone as detailed in the report.**

2. **To agree to the financial implications.**

CAB.136 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

A report was considered from the Head of Human Resources that recommended to Council that the updated Information and Communications Technology Policies and Guidelines dated October 2005 be adopted.

It was noted that the Information and Communications Technology Policies and Guidelines had been reviewed and updated in light of current practices.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The updated Information and Communications Technology Policies and Guidelines dated October 2005 attached as Appendix 1 to the report be adopted.

CAB.137 ALLOCATION OF APPROVED CAPITAL OPTION - BENEFITS WORKFLOW/DOCUMENT IMAGE PROCESSING SYSTEM

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that sought approval of an allocation of up to £50,000 of the approved capital option of ICT investment - Corporate and Benefits Workflow/DIP for the Benefits replacement/upgrade of the Document Image Processing System Project.

It was noted that the current system was showing signs of wear and tear and the Council had made provision within the budget for the match funding of the Department of Work and Pensions monies for this project.

DECISION:

Approval be given to an allocation of up to £50,000 of the approved capital option of ICT investment - Corporate and Benefits Workflow/DIP for the Benefits replacement/upgrade of Document Image Processing System Project.

CAB.138 HOUSING BENEFITS OVERPAYMENTS DEBT POSITION AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2005

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that informed Members of the Housing Benefit Overpayment debt position as at 30th September 2005 and details of the targets that had been set for recovery.

DECISION:

The Housing Benefits overpayment debt level, age of debt and performance against targets, as at the 30th September 2005, as detailed in Appendix 1, be noted.

CAB.139 PROPOSED ALCOHOL RESTRICTION ZONE FOR STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that reported on the results of the recent statutory public consultation exercise for the potential designation of Stourport-on-Severn Town Centre and Stourport-on-Severn War Memorial Park as an Alcohol Restriction Zone, where the drinking of alcohol would be restricted.

In March 2005 the District Council had received a formal request from Stourport on Severn Town Council to designate a number of areas as alcohol restriction zones. Following endorsement by the police, a working party was established and boundaries were agreed for the alcohol restriction zone. A formal consultation process was undertaken. The consultation attracted 58 responses and the majority of respondents supported the scheme. However many of the respondents believed that the zone should be extended to combat anti-social behaviour.

The Cabinet Member for Cultural and Leisure Services commented that the alcohol restriction zone was much needed in Stourport on Severn and was supported by local residents.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

Subject to receiving no significant objections to the statutory consultation on the revised Alcohol Restriction Zone proposal for Stourport-on-Severn, as set out on Map 2 attached to the report, this geographical area be designated as an Alcohol Restriction Zone under the provisions of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, where restrictions to control anti-social drinking in public places will apply.

CAB.140 LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT (LPSA) REWARD GRANT (TARGET 8)

A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services that reported on the Local Public Service Agreement Target 8 grant award.

The principal aims of the grant were to make a major contribution to the social inclusion agenda for young people and to underpin a number of other targets including reducing drug abuse and vehicle crime. The Council would receive a sum of £139,538 and would receive half of this towards the end of 2005/06 and the remainder in 2006/07. The money would be ring fenced and had to be spent on sports development. It was specifically for meeting the rewards in Target 8 of the LPSA. Once the reward grant had been spent the service initiatives would cease as no other funding was currently approved within the Council budget.

DECISION:

- 1. It be agreed to accept the LPSA grant administered by the County Council, totalling £139,538.**
- 2. Agreement be given to the proposals to spend the revenue grant allocation as detailed in Section 5 of the report.**
- 3. It be agreed to delegate to the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure, the allocation of the capital grant, having considered the recommendations of the Task and Finish Groups and that the Capital Programme be amended accordingly for the additional expenditure and grant related funding.**

CAB.141 WORCESTERSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY 2005-2010

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that advised Members of the completion of the consultation process on the Draft Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010 and to request its adoption by the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Rural Affairs commented that a review had been held earlier in the year of the services for supporting people in Worcestershire. There had been a long consultation period and the review had been well received.

The Leader commended the work that had been done. Joint working had taken place between the County Council, Social Services and the Housing Company and this would benefit the area.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010 be agreed and adopted.

CAB.142 WYRE FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2004/05

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that informed Cabinet Members about the production of the Annual Monitoring Report 2004/05.

It was noted that it was a requirement under Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for each local planning authority to make an annual report to the Secretary of State. The report would be required to contain information on the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which policies set out in Local Development documents were being achieved.

DECISION:

It be agreed that the local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2004/05 be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

CAB.143 STC.4 - DRAFT DEVELOPMENT BRIEF - BRIDGE STREET BASINS LINK, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that informed Cabinet of the consultation feedback received in response to the Draft Bridge Street Basins Link Development Brief (supplementary planning document) published on the 5th September 2005.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

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1. The Draft STC.4 Bridge Street Supplementary Planning Document set out in Appendix 5 to the Cabinet report as amended by the schedule of changes contained at Appendix 4, together with the revised Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 6) be adopted as the 'Bridge Street Basins Link Development Brief' Supplementary Planning Document in accordance with Section 23 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
 2. The Head of Planning, Health and Environment be authorised to prepare and publish Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.
 3. Approval be given to the following amendments to the appendices on the recommendation of the Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel at their meeting on the 23rd November 2005:
 - (i) Appendix 3, (Summary of Consultation Responses) - Page 65, Head of PHE recommendation in response to R Clee: Delete "Remove Option B..." and replace with "No further Action."
 - (ii) Appendix 4, (Schedule of changes to the Draft SPD) - Proposed Modifications to Appendix 1 (PM16) on the final page: Delete sub-heading "Remove Option B"... and replace with "Place options in order of preference."

CAB.144 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HOUSING, HEALTH AND RURAL AFFAIRS POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL 22ND NOVEMBER 2005 : CLIMATE CHANGE

The Chairman of the Housing, Health and Rural Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel was in attendance to present his Panel's recommendations regarding Climate Change.

He went through the recommendations in turn. It was noted that the Panel had considered simple things where they might be able to make improvements. However for some things this did not prove as simple as the Panel had hoped. An example of this was looking at the energy efficiency of Council vehicles. The Task and Finish Group had looked at the possibility of vehicles being run on bio diesel. However this would not be feasible as the warranties on the vehicles would be voided if the Council took this action and the quality of some bio diesel was questionable.

Amongst other areas that had been considered was the amount of money spent on staff mileage, travelling between the split sites. Quite a significant amount of money was spent on travelling expenses. However when the Task and Finish Group looked at what this Council spent it was not as high as some other Councils.

The Leader commented that all the recommendations made by the Group concurred with the design brief for the single site.

DECISION:

The recommendations on Climate Change, as set out below be agreed:

- 1. A policy on the use of renewable energy by developers be included in the Core Strategy.**
- 2. Further action be taken with regard to raising awareness of Climate Change by publishing articles in every issue of Newswyre and by providing more information on the Council website so that members of the public are aware of climate change issues.**
- 3. Ensure that members of the public know about current energy saving schemes and grants that are available.**
- 4. Wyre Forest District Council carry out and monitor meter readings at all Council buildings.**
- 5. Discussions with Duke House site owners be carried out regarding the purchase of renewable energy.**
- 6. The suggestions from the Carbon Trust Report be implemented.**
- 7. The implications of climate change be considered when making decisions concerning the long term.**
- 8. The Council promote any effort that is being made within the Council with regard to recycling.**
- 9. The climate change ethos run through everything that the Council does and be made clear to all employees by means of Team Briefings.**
- 10. As a matter of urgency, the travel plan for Duke House and other Council sites be adopted.**
- 11. The Council dispel myths and provide more information regarding household insulation methods to staff and members of the public.**

12. **The Chief Executive of Wyre Forest District Council sign up to the Worcestershire Climate Change Pledge.**

CAB.145 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMERCIAL SERVICES POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL 19TH OCTOBER 2005, RE: EDUCATION ON LITTER AND ENFORCEMENT (FIXED PENALTY NOTICES)

The Chairman of the Commercial Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel was in attendance to present the recommendations of his Panel on Education on Litter and Enforcement (Fixed Penalty Notices).

He commented that it had been a very thorough scrutiny exercise. Advice had also been sought from outside sources.

The amount of litter dropped in Wyre Forest was disgraceful. He was particularly concerned about the attitude of young people regarding the dropping of litter. The fining of those who dropped litter appeared to be the best solution. He believed that the fines would need to be publicised widely and that newspaper articles should highlight instances when people had been fined.

Educating people on litter was an important way forward. It was necessary to start early with young children so that they grew up with the right attitude.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services thanked the Chairman for his presentation. He wished to thank especially all those who had worked on the Task and Finish Group. He found the recommendations to be very comprehensive. He outlined the work Officers already undertake with school children on litter.

DECISION:

The recommendations below be noted and the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services to report back to the next meeting of the Panel:

- a) **subject to:**
 - (i) **the outcome of the scrutiny exercise by the Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel and the future report to the Cabinet on the proposed decriminalisation of on street car parking and**
 - (ii) **the decriminalisation of on street car parking being ultimately implemented by means of a combined work force to enforce the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, Wyre Forest Car Park Places Order, the Dog Fouling of Land Act and any other relevant legislation in relation to environmental and parking enforcement:**

Staff be appointed in accordance with the consultants' advice contained within the report to the Cabinet on 28th July 2005.

b) The following Action being taken:

1. Issue fixed penalty fines on the basis of third party evidence, where the Enforcement Officer has not personally witnessed the offence.
2. When recruiting Enforcement Officers, the advertisement/JD should state: "It is desirable that applicants have a minimum 12 months experience in an enforcement role e.g. law enforcement, and are capable of dealing with all sections of the community in a sympathetic but firm manner."
3. Treat fixed penalty fines as a way of improving the environment, rather than a means of fundraising.
4. Make greater use of the District Council's Media and Marketing Officer in relation to environmental enforcement matters.
5. Publicise some cases of fixed penalty fines to act as a deterrent.
6. Display an eye-catching advertising poster on Council vehicles to highlight action against fly tipping, the design of the poster to be on the lines of a leaflet previously used to discourage fly tipping on Redstone Nature Reserve.
7. Organise a competition for schools to design a screen saver and a poster about litter, with a prize for the best idea in each case.
8. Promote school pupils' awareness of litter issues through waste recycling initiatives.
9. Encourage Head Teachers to introduce litter picking duty as a privilege rather than a punishment and to appoint litter pickers as "Eco-warriors," and given them a badge of office.
10. Seek approval from relevant Head Teachers to enable the Council to focus on a school "pyramid" , rather than on a whole area. Target, for example, a First, Middle and High School (and later include primary schools). Include an emphasis on waste recycling and "Eco warriors." Monitor progress and demonstrate improvements. Point out that this would be a source of good publicity for schools.

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11. **Write to all schools in the District at the start of the school year pointing out that it is an offence to drop litter.**
 12. **Ask secondary school head teachers to allow the Abandoned Vehicle and Enforcement Officer to speak to pupils, within school premises, when he sees them drop litter, in order to point out the consequences in terms of fixed penalty fines.**

CAB.146 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION

"Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "exempt information" as defined in paragraphs 7, 8 and 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB.147 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) Minutes

The Exempt Minutes of the Cabinet held on 27th October 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

(ii) Education on Litter and Enforcement (Fixed Penalty Notices)

The Cabinet considered and noted an 'exempt' recommendation from the Commercial Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel on Education on Litter and Enforcement (Fixed Penalty Notices) from their meeting held on 19th October 2005.

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm.