

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER
22ND DECEMBER 2005 (6PM)

PRESENT:

Councillors: M J Hart (Deputy Leader), J-P Campion, J W Dudley, and Mrs A T Hingley

OBSERVERS:

Councillors Mrs J Fairbrother-Millis, M A W Hazlewood, M J Kelly, Miss S C Meekings, C D Nicholls, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs J L Salter J A Shaw and K J Stokes.

CAB.150 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: S J M Clee (Leader) and N J Desmond.

CAB.151 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M J Kelly declared a personal interest in agenda item number 15.1. relating to Sports and Leisure Centres as he is a member of the Wyre Forest Community leisure Association Limited Local Partnership Board.

CAB.152 MINUTES

DECISION:

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 24th November 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.153 CALL INS

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

CAB.154 ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.155 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Casino in Wyre Forest

The Deputy Leader was in the Chair as the Leader was away. He referred to articles that had appeared in the Kidderminster Chronicle and the Express and Star regarding the possibility of Wyre Forest having a Casino. He confirmed that the Council had contacted the Department for Culture, Media and Sport regarding this matter. A response had been sent to them to register the Council's interest in possibly having a casino. It was anticipated that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport would contact the Council again in a few months time and a Casino in the area may or may not be taken forward.

CAB.156 WORCESTERSHIRE'S LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA) 2006-2009

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that provided an update on the development of Worcestershire's Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2006-2009. The Local Area Agreement would be supporting the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership to build additional capacity and focus resources to meet the needs and priorities of local communities.

DECISION:

- 1. The progress made by the Worcestershire Partnership in the development of the first draft Local Area Agreement (November 2005) for Worcestershire 2006 - 2009 be noted.**
- 2. Authorisation be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to endorse the Final Local Area Agreement for Worcestershire 2006-2009, for sign off by the Worcestershire Partnership Board on 18th January 2006.**
- 3. The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, as the Council's representatives on the Wyre Forest Matters Strategic Board, continue to engage in, and influence the development of, the Local Area Agreement for Worcestershire 2006-2009.**

CAB.157 WORCESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURES

A report was considered from the Chief Executive on the revised structures for the Worcestershire Partnership which was Worcestershire's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

It was noted that Worcestershire County Council had established the Worcestershire Partnership in 1999, in order to improve the quality of life for Worcestershire residents through joint working between partners from all sectors.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

The revised structures for the Worcestershire Partnership as set out in Appendix A to the report to Cabinet be endorsed and that regular reports on the work of the Partnership be received from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, as this authority's representatives on the Worcestershire Partnership Board.

CAB.158 DEVELOPING A PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that reported the results of the Council's third partnership audit and the development of a framework to guide the Council's approach to, involvement in and evaluation of partnerships.

There was a need to review the Council's approach to partnership working stemmed from the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2004, which recommended that a Corporate Governance Framework be developed.

The benefits of partnership working in assisting the Council to achieve its key commitments were recognised. It was noted that by applying the partnership framework it should help to provide a more effective and consistent approach to the Council's involvement in partnerships.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The Partnership Framework, as set out in Appendix B of the report to the Cabinet, be adopted with immediate effect, and that over the next 12 months the Council's officer membership on all partnerships be reviewed with a view of rationalisation.

CAB.159 COMMUNITY STRATEGY - SIX MONTH PROGRESS REPORT

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that reported on progress made by Wyre Forest Matters, the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in the delivery of the Community Strategy since June 2005.

It was noted that Wyre Forest Matters, the Local Strategic Partnership was established in March 2002 to develop and implement a Community Strategy for the Wyre Forest District. The production and implementation of a Community Strategy was a statutory requirement placed on all Councils under the Local Government Act 2000 and should aim to improve the social, economic, health and environmental wellbeing of the area and its inhabitants.

DECISION:

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1. **The progress made by Wyre Forest Matters (LSP) since June 2005, in the implementation of the Community Strategy (2004-2014), be noted.**
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CAB.160 FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2006-2009

DECISION:

The Financial Strategy was considered as the last item in the open section of the agenda. (Minute CAB.173 below refers).

CAB.161 SECTION 136 GRANT AID TO STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN TOWN COUNCIL

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that asked the Cabinet to give consideration to a request from Stourport-on-Severn Town Council for payment of their £20,774 Grant Aid for 2005/2006 under Section 136 of the Local Government Act 1972..

The Town Council were expected to report to the Cabinet on how it intended to use the grant money. The proposed usage was as follows:

£20,000 to be spent towards a CCTV scheme for Stourport -on- Severn and £774 yet to be determined.

It was noted that the request by Stourport-on-Severn Town Council was in accordance with the criteria agreed by the former Executive on 20th March 2003 i.e. Grant aid should be used for projects that benefited the local community.

DECISION:

The Grant Aid Application from Stourport-on-Severn Town Council for 2005/06 be approved.

CAB.162 DRAFT WORCESTERSHIRE STANDARD FOR SHARING PERSONAL DATA

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that sought endorsement of the Key Principles within the draft 'Standard for Sharing Personal Data' before it was adopted by the Worcestershire Partnership in 2006/07.

A Steering Group had been set up to develop a standard for sharing personal data with a key set of principles for this information sharing to be legal. The Steering Group had developed a tool kit that would enable agencies to set up local arrangements that would meet the standard.

DECISION:

- 1. The Key Principles within the draft 'Standard for Sharing Personal Data' be endorsed (See Appendix A of the report to the Cabinet).**

2. **The toolkit (as detailed in Appendix B of the report to Cabinet) that has been developed as a framework for the legal, secure and appropriate sharing of personal data between public sector agencies in Worcestershire be noted (See Appendix B of the report to Cabinet).**
3. **The Litigation and Licensing Solicitor and the Information and E-Government Officer be standing consultees wherever Wyre Forest District Council is involved in the development of a new Information Sharing Protocol.**

CAB.163 DRAFT AIR QUALITY STRATEGY

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that advised Members of the completion of a Draft Air Quality Strategy and sought approval for its use as a consultation draft.

It was noted the DEFRA had asked Councils to develop a long-term strategy on air quality. Since 1998 this Council had published 4 air quality review and assessment reports and two progress reports. The next update and screening assessment report would be due in April 2006.

Two air quality management areas had been declared within the District:

The Horsefair in Kidderminster and Welch Gate in Bewdley.

DECISION:

The draft Air Quality Strategy be agreed for consultation.

CAB.164 GRANT SCHEDULING LIMIT INCREASE

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that asked the Cabinet to update and improve the current mechanism for ensuring reasonable costs in Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) work carried out. The report also sought an amendment to that mechanism to enable quicker and more efficient processing of DFG grants.

It was noted that the provision of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants as well as discretionary grants were detailed in the existing Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy. This policy was last formalised and approved in 2003, at which time the existing limit of £5,000 was formally confirmed.

Requiring two quotes for Wyre Forest Community Housing DFGs under £10,000, but above £5,000, inevitably delayed the grant process and therefore the provision of essential works by approximately one-month. Revising the current limit from £5,000 to £10,000 would enable quicker processing of grants.

DECISION:

The current limit of £5,000 for DFG grant costs, above which two independent quotes are currently asked for, be raised to £10,000. Further that the existing system of control for DFG grants under £5,000 whereby a set schedule of approved costs for items is referred to, be extended up to the revised limit of £10,000.

CAB.165 **PETITION - FREE CAR PARKING - STOURPORT SPORTS CENTRE**

A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services that provided the Cabinet with the background to the Petition that was received at Council on the 16th November 2005 requesting free parking provision at Stourport Sports Centre.

It was perceived that if the Cabinet tried to support free parking for leisure activities in Stourport they would also have to offer it in other towns and this would be difficult to arrange and would lead to unfairness. It was possible that those who received free parking might abuse the system. The Cabinet had asked officers to explore the possibility of varying the qualifying criteria for the Senior Citizens' Season Ticket Scheme that was currently in operation under the Car Park Places Order.

DECISION:

- 1. No Action be taken on the request for the provision of free car parking at Stourport Sports Centre.**
- 2. The Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services includes in the Reviews of Fees and Charges for Off Street Car Parking which are due to be presented to Cabinet in January 2006, options for the possible variation of the qualifying criteria for the Senior Citizens' Season Ticket Scheme currently in operation under the Car Park Places Order.**

CAB.166 **BLACK COUNTRY STUDY CHOICES CONSULTATION REPORT**

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that informed Members of the publication of the Black Country Consultation report and sought approval for the submission of representations on the choices outlined in the report.

The Chairman of the Environment and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel presented her Panel's views on the Black Country Study Choices Consultation report which had been considered at its meeting on 12th December 2005. The Panel recommended that Cabinet endorsed the proposed response (as contained in the report to Cabinet).

It was noted that the Black Country Study was being prepared by the Black Country Consortium on behalf of the West Midlands Regional Assembly. The Study would form a Phase 1 revision to the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy which was originally approved in June 2004.

The purpose of the Study was to provide sub-regional guidance on spatial planning and transport matters for the City of Wolverhampton and the Boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall. The Choices Consultation Report identified a range of questions relating to different land use and transport patterns for the Black Country and responses were required by 6th January 2006.

DECISION:

- 1. The Comments set out in Appendix 2 to the report to Cabinet be submitted to the Black Country Consortium as the Council's response to the Black Country Study consultation.**
- 2. The recommendations from the Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel as set out below be agreed:**

To endorse the proposed responses to the Black Country Study Choices Consultation.

CAB.167 HIGHWAYS AGENCY : PROPOSALS TO DETRUNK THE A449 AND A456 AND REVOKE THE KIDDERMINSTER BLAKEDOWN AND HAGLEY BYPASS AND SLIP ROADS ORDER

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that appraised the Cabinet of the background to the Highways Agency's proposals to detrunk the A456 and A449 trunk roads and to revoke the Kidderminster Blakedown and Hagley Bypass and Slip Roads Order and sought approval for a response.

The Chairman of the Environment and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel presented her Panel's views on the above proposals that were considered at its meeting on 12th December 2005.

She commented that the Panel hoped that the Highways Agency would get the roads into a good condition before the hand-over. Concern had been raised at the Panel meeting about trees on the highway. Of particular concern were the amount of trees that bordered the A456 and on the A449 through Kidderminster. She was aware that the County Council had only budgeted a few pence per tree for maintenance. The Panel were concerned of the budgetary implications for the County if they were taking on responsibility for trees without additional funding from the government.

DECISION

- 1. Subject to the Highways Agency reaching an agreement with Worcestershire County Council concerning appropriate arrangements for the completion of necessary maintenance, safety and other small scale improvement and environmental enhancement works, together with arrangements for longer term maintenance, that the District Council raise no objection to the A456/A449 detrunking proposals.**
- 2. No objections be raised to proposals to revoke the A449 and A456 Trunk Roads (Kidderminster Blakedown and Hagley Bypass and Slip Roads Order 1996).**
- 3. The recommendations from the Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel as set out below be agreed:**

The Highways Agency's proposals to detrunk the A449 and A456 and revoke the Kidderminster Blakedown and Hagley Bypass and Slip Roads Order be endorsed, subject to an appropriate agreement being reached with Worcestershire Council to cover arrangements for long term maintenance, safety and small-scale improvements and environmental enhancement works.

CAB.168 DECriminalISATION OF ON STREET PARKING

A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services that asked the Cabinet to consider proposals for the Decriminalisation of parking enforcement (DPE) within the Wyre Forest District.

The Chairman of the Environment and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel presented her Panel's views on the report to Cabinet that were considered at the Panel's meeting on 12th December 2005.

She commented that the final recommendation as contained in the report to Cabinet from her Panel should be deleted as it had been included in error.

She was disappointed that the Town Centre Partnership Manager's views had been published in the paper stating that decriminalisation would turn people away from Kidderminster. It was perceived that decriminalisation actually increased the turnover of car parking spaces and increased the income in car parks.

The Panel had been impressed by the unanimous views of Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council who had been opposed to multi-tasking enforcement in the first years of operating decriminalisation. The Panel recommended a staffing level of approximately 8 was rather than the 11 that had been suggested by the Council's consultants.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

1. The Council instruct the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services and Head of Legal and Democratic Services to appoint consultants to review, measure and map the existing orders and to make an application with the Highways Authority, to the Secretary of State to decriminalise On Street Parking in Wyre Forest in accordance with existing provision.
2. **The financial model shown in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet be noted and Council be asked to incorporate the funding in the base budget.**
3. **The Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services, the Head of Financial Services and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Economic Regeneration commence formal negotiations with:**
 - (i) **Wychavon District Council to provide administrative support for the operation of the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement.**
 - (ii) **Worcestershire County Council to accept this Council's proposals for DPE and enter into the required agency and funding agreements.**
4. **The recommendations from the Environmental and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel as set out below be agreed:**
 - (a) **A dedicated team of On Street Parking Supervisors be established for the decriminalisation of On Street Parking and Off Street Parking enforcement. These supervisors would also have the power (but not the primary function) to exercise enforcement powers in respect of littering, dog fouling, fly posting, graffiti, sales of cars on the highways and other related environmental protection and enforcement matters.**
 - (b) **The Scrutiny Panel agrees, in principle, with moving towards the Decriminalisation of on-street parking. The Panel recognises the potential advantages of working in partnership with other authorities such as Wychavon District Council to help administer the scheme.**

- (c) **The Panel note the need to employ additional staff and recommend that a staffing level of approximately 8 additional patrol officers (2 of whom would be on temporary contracts would be prudent in the first instance, rather than the 11, as suggested in the consultant's report. This would be on the basis of the experiences of other Councils who have employed fewer patrol officers than originally recommended by their consultants.**

CAB.169 STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING : REVISED PROCEDURES AND POLICY NOTE

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that apprised Members of the background and procedures relating to Street Naming and Numbering functions of the District Council and sought approval for a revised Street Naming and Numbering Policy Note.

The Chairman of the Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel commented that her Panel had considered this matter at its meeting on the 12th December and had recommended the inclusion of an additional sentence to the Policy (as set out in the recommendation below):

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 1. The Revised Street Naming and Numbering Procedures as Policy as set out at Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet be approved.**
- 2. The recommendation as set out below from the Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel be approved:**

The proposed Street Naming and Numbering Revised Procedures Policy Note be endorsed subject to the inclusion of additional text under Section 6: to ensure that Ward Members are consulted on all developments over 10 dwellings and receive the postal changes circular setting out all changes on a monthly basis.

CAB.170 WYRE FOREST COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY - PROGRESS REPORT

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that reported on progress made by the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership (WFCSP) since April 2005 in the delivery of the Community Safety Strategy for the Wyre Forest District (2005-08).

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Economic Regeneration commented that the Community Safety Partnership in Wyre Forest was doing extremely well and was shortly to receive a letter proclaiming it as one of the best in the country.

DECISION:

1. **The progress made by the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership since April 2005, in the delivery of the Community Safety Strategy (2005-2008) be noted.**
2. **The Council continue to fully support the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership in its role as a 'Responsible Authority,' as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.**

CAB.171 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

In the absence of the Chairman, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Affairs presented the recommendation of budget priorities as set out in the report to Cabinet.

DECISION:

The recommendations as set out in the report to Cabinet be agreed.

CAB.172 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL, 12TH DECEMBER 2005

DECISION: The recommendations be agreed

(note: the recommendations were considered in tandem with the reports to Cabinet see CAB.166/167/168/169)

CAB.173 FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2006 - 2009

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Affairs introduced his administration's second budget.

He thanked the Chief Executive and his corporate team for their support and professionalism in assisting the Cabinet in achieving their budget strategy.

He stated that the Cabinet intended to develop the 17 annual priorities that they had inherited. The priorities were meaningful, measurable, and gave the Council strategic direction. The Administration would focus on three strategic areas: service, efficiency and prosperity.

Members noted that the role of the District Council had grown and it was now responsible for further services. The requirement to provide additional services had been reflected in the settlement that the Council had provisionally been allocated. An increase of 8.6% had been received as an increase to 2006/07 and this was fair and just.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The Cabinet's proposals as contained in the report to Cabinet be agreed.

CAB.174 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 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 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB.175 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 24th November 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

(ii) Sports and Leisure Centres - Request to Spend Contingency - Sports Hall Floor at Stourport Sports Centre

A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services and approval was given to spend a sum from the contingency for the Sport and Leisure Centres management contract.

The meeting closed at 6.45 p.m.