

CABINET MEETING
26TH JULY 2007

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CORPORATE SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
ON 21ST JUNE 2007

UPDATE ON THE "NO SURPRISES" PROTOCOL

The Committee received an update from the Leader of the Council on the proposed "No Surprises" Protocol, which is intended to ensure that Ward Members are kept informed about matters affecting their wards. Members had before them a copy of the report to the former Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 19th October 2006. This included the suggested form of wording for the proposed protocol, which the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee had recommended to the Cabinet on 26th October 2006.

In his update, the Leader of the Council advised that the Cabinet had deferred consideration of these recommendations so that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee could review them in the light of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill, but the issues covered in the Bill had not proved to be relevant. However, he was aware that the proposed protocol was based on Worcestershire County Council's Ward Members' Communication Protocol, which was working well. The Committee was advised that he would, therefore, take the former Cabinet Scrutiny Committee's recommendation to the Cabinet's July 2007 meeting, with a view to the "No Surprises" Protocol being adopted.

The Corporate Services and Performance Committee endorsed this course of action.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

Approval be given to the following recommendations to the Cabinet from the former Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 19th October 2006:

- 1. "The following Ward Members' Communication Protocol be agreed and be disseminated to Council Officers through means of Team Briefs, Council Intranet, Divisional Management Team meetings, Induction and the Council Communications Strategy:**
 - a) Local Members have a crucial role to play in representing the District Council in the electoral wards, responding to the concerns of their constituents, in meetings with partners and serving on external bodies and organisations.**
 - b) It is absolutely essential for the proper running of the Council that members should be fully informed about matters on which they may be required to make decisions or which affect their electoral wards.**
 - c) It is the duty of each Chief Officer to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the requirement to keep local Members informed and that the timing of such information allows Members to contribute to those**

discussions. Local Members should also be kept informed about matters affecting their wards during the formative stages of policy development.

- d) Issues may affect a single electoral ward but others may have a wider impact in which case numerous Members and, when appropriate, local County Councillors, will need to be kept informed.**
- e) Wherever a public meeting is organised by the Council to consider local issues, all Members representing the electoral ward(s) affected should, as a matter of course, be invited to attend.**
- f) Similarly, whenever the Council undertakes any form of consultation exercise, the local Member(s) should be notified at the outset of the exercise with every opportunity to be involved in helping to form the content of any consultation material.**
- g) Members should also be notified of the outcomes of the consultation.**

2. The Ward Members' Communication Protocol be incorporated into the Wyre Forest District Council Communication Strategy at its next review."