

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER
27TH SEPTEMBER 2007 (6.00PM)

PRESENT:

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

OBSERVERS:

Councillors: G W Ballinger, Mrs F M Oborski and S J Williams .

CAB. 67 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB. 68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB. 69 MINUTES

DECISION:

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 30th August 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB. 70 CALL INS

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

CAB. 71 ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB. 72 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Community Fair

There would be a community fair at Kidderminster Town Hall on Tuesday 30th October 2007. A number of sessions would be held throughout the day.

b) Royal Visit

His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester would visit the Severn Valley Railway on 3rd October 2007.

c) District Cemetery - Report – Agenda Item 7.1

The report about the District Cemetery had been marked “Exempt” in error and would be taken at agenda item 7.1.

CAB. 73 TREASURY MANAGEMENT SERVICE AND ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2006/2007

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services which gave details of the treasury activity for 2006/07 and sought approval for the 2006/07 Prudential Indicators, the Treasury Management Service Report 2006/07 and the revised Counterparty List for Investment Purposes.

The Leader was pleased to report that the Council had received a good return on its investments.

DECISION:

- 1. The actual 2006/07 Prudential Indicators detailed within the report be approved.**
- 2. The Treasury Management Service Report for 2006/07 be approved.**
- 3. The revised Counterparty List for Investment purposes be approved as detailed in paragraph 4.11 of the report to Cabinet.**

CAB. 74 SCHEME OF VOTING RIGHTS FOR CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report was considered from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services that proposed the adoption of a scheme to allow the appointment of co-opted Members to scrutiny committees with voting rights.

The Leader commended the scheme as it would enable scrutiny committees to widen their expertise. It would also promote inclusivity in the decision making process and encourage a partnership approach to scrutiny.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 1. The Scheme for co-opted members to have voting rights, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report to Cabinet, be approved.**
- 2. Authority be delegated to the Scrutiny Committees to appoint co-opted members with voting rights in accordance with the Scheme, as and when they consider necessary.**

CAB. 75 DISTRICT CEMETERY

A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services regarding options for the development of a District Cemetery on land which the District Council had acquired off Stourport Road, between Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Operational Services gave a brief resumé of the current position and recommended that the proposals, detailed in the report, should be referred for consideration by the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

DECISION:

- 1. The Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee be informed that the Cabinet's preferred option is to recommend to Council that it proceeds with the office and site works at an approximate cost of £2.3m.**
- 2. The Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee be asked to review the Cabinet's proposals and report back to the next Cabinet meeting.**
- 3. The Cabinet release the balance of the existing £350,000 provision for the purchase and design of the Cemetery layout, to enable the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services to proceed with the detailed design, planning application and tendering of the scheme, in order that the preferred option can be implemented with immediate effect in the financial year 2008-2009.**
- 4. The Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services be requested to investigate external funding options for the potential provision of a chapel and crematorium and his findings be reported to the next Cabinet meeting.**
- 5. The advanced purchase of graves in the existing Kidderminster Cemetery site be discontinued, with immediate effect, in order to protect the availability of graves during the development phase of the new District Cemetery.**

CAB. 76 DATA QUALITY POLICY

A report was considered from the Head of the Chief Executive's Office that recommended the adoption of a Data Quality Policy.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services explained that the production of the policy was required by the Audit Commission, as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process. The policy would ensure that internal procedures and systems produced high quality data which could be relied upon to provide an accurate picture of Council performance.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The Data Quality Policy attached to the report to Cabinet be adopted with immediate effect.

CAB. 77 NEW NATIONAL CONCESSIONARY BUS TRAVEL SCHEME

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services regarding the new national Concessionary Bus Travel Scheme, which took effect from 1st April 2008, under the requirements of the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007. The report sought approval for criteria for free bus travel above the statutory minimum.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services and the Head of Financial Services advised that the financial implications were difficult to predict at this stage. For example, the Council currently paid for the usage of Wyre Forest passes, but under the new scheme, each Council would pay for the cost of concessionary travel for all pass holders boarding buses within their District, no matter which council had issued the pass. (The new pass would be a smart card, but it would not be used electronically, initially, as the current regulations did not require bus operators to install computerised ticket machines.)

Members noted that the Government had made £212million available, nationally, to cover the additional costs of the new scheme, but was still consulting the Local Government Association over the most equitable method of allocation. Information had been received, that day, that the funding would be allocated via a specific grant, but details were still likely to be notified as part of the finance settlement due to be announced in early December 2007.

The Head of Planning, Health and Environment confirmed that concerns arising from the rescheduling of some bus services in the September 2007 timetable could be referred to the Passenger Transport Group.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL :

- 1 Following the Concessionary Bus Travel Bill receiving Royal Assent on 19th July 2007, it be noted that a new national Concessionary Bus Travel Scheme will replace the current Wyre Forest Concessionary Travel Scheme with effect from 1st April 2008.**
- 2 The new statutory scheme be enhanced to include :-**
 - Free Travel at any time for journeys commencing within Worcestershire.**
 - Companion passes for qualifying disabled persons for journeys commencing Worcestershire.**
- 3 Existing local arrangements in respect of Transport Tokens and Dial-a-Ride continue.**
- 4 It be noted that procurement and issue of the new National Bus Pass (smartcards) will be through a National Framework Agreement awarded following a Department of Transport bidding process. Worcestershire County Council will co-ordinate procurement on behalf of the Worcestershire Concessionary Travel Partnership.**

CAB. 78 REVIEW OF THE PROVISION OF SANITARY FACILITIES

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment, which proposed updated standards of provision of sanitary accommodation in premises where the Council had an enforcement role. It was noted that adoption of the new British Standard would bring the Council into line with current best practice.

The Cabinet also considered a recommendation from the Licensing and Environmental Committee of 3rd September 2007 before making the recommendation below.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- 1. Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 of British Standard Sanitary Installations BS 6465 – 1:2006 Part 1, set out in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet, be adopted as the Council's standard for provision of sanitary facilities in premises where the Council has an enforcement role.**
- 2. Authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, Health and Environment and the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager, in conjunction with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, to serve notices under Section 20 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and to have discretion in the application of the British Standard in small premises holding less than 20 persons when it is deemed appropriate.**

3. The Scheme of Delegation to Officers contained in the Council's Constitution be amended to include the delegation at 2 above.

CAB. 79 THE WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment which sought the adoption of the Worcestershire County Homelessness Strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Rural Affairs advised that this was a very comprehensive strategy, which covered a three year period and provided a co-ordinated approach across the county to improve services to homeless people. Its vision for Worcestershire was to ensure that everyone had access to a place they could call home, where they could close the door and feel safe.

The Cabinet complimented the work of the staff in the Planning, Health and Environmental Services Division, who were involved in this county-wide exercise.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The Worcestershire County Homelessness Strategy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report to Cabinet, be adopted.

CAB. 80 REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENCE CONDITIONS FOLLOWING CONSULTATION ON THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT'S 'BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE'

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that recommended changes to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licence Conditions for the District, following consultation with stakeholders.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Rural Affairs reported that the conditions had been revised in the light of Best Practice Guidance for Taxi and Private Vehicle Licensing, issued by the Department for Transport. In accordance with the guidance, the views of stakeholders had been taken into account in producing the amended licensing conditions now presented for adoption by the Council.

The Cabinet also considered a recommendation from the Licensing and Environmental Committee of 3rd September 2007 before making the recommendation below.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licence Conditions for the District of Wyre Forest, as set out in Appendices 13 to 16 of the report to Cabinet, be adopted.

**CAB. 81 BLACK COUNTRY JOINT CORE STRATEGY
ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that sought the Cabinet's endorsement of the representations submitted on the Issues and Options Consultation Paper for the Joint Black Country Core Strategy.

DECISION:

The representations submitted to the Black Country Local Authorities (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, and Wolverhampton) on the Joint Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report to Cabinet, be endorsed.

**CAB. 82 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (BIDS)
SANDY LANE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN**

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that sought approval to work in partnership with the Sandy Lane Business Association, Stourport-on-Severn, to develop a Business Improvement District (BID) project.

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Prosperity explained that the project, the first in the county, would enable over 100 businesses in the Sandy Lane area to contribute additional money, through the rating system, to spend on improvements or additional services of their choice that would not otherwise be provided. This was an opportunity to improve the industrial estate and to pilot the BID proposal, in advance of any possible 'roll out' across the district.

DECISION:

- 1. The Sandy Lane Business Association's proposal to initiate a Business Improvement District (BID) project at Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, Stourport-on-Severn be endorsed and it be agreed that the District Council work with the Association to develop the BID project.**
- 2. A further report be received following the preparation of the Business Plan setting out full justification for the BID and costings associated with implementation.**

CAB. 83 **WYRE FOREST LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME**
“GROW WITH WYRE”

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that sought approval for the Economic Development and Tourism Manager to represent the Council on the Wyre Forest Landscape Partnership Board, formed to manage the "Grow with Wyre" Landscape Partnership Conservation Strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Prosperity informed members that the Council's contribution of £15,000 per year partnership funding for three years had enabled the organisation to obtain approximately £2 million of funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

DECISION:

Approval be given to the nomination of the Economic Development and Tourism Manager to represent Wyre Forest District Council on the Wyre Forest Landscape Partnership Board, formed to manage the “Grow with Wyre” Landscape Partnership Conservation Strategy.

CAB. 84 **PROPOSED KIDDERMINSTER REGENERATION PROSPECTUS**

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment on the purpose and scope of a regeneration prospectus for Kidderminster. The report sought approval for a process and timetable for implementation.

It was noted that a regeneration prospectus would provide a clear vision and framework for delivering physical regeneration that complemented the partnership initiatives in place across the town. It should also help to attract additional external resources into the area. The Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Prosperity also referred to the appointment of a Town Centre Manager.

Members were very pleased with the commitment to the project from key stakeholders, such as the owners of Weaver's Wharf.

The Cabinet also considered a recommendation from the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee of 5th September 2007 before taking the decision below.

DECISION:

- 1. The approach to preparing a ‘Regeneration Prospectus’ for Kidderminster as set out in the report to Cabinet, be approved.**
- 2. Cabinet receive further reports to agree the scoping document for consultation, the results of the consultation and the final draft of the Prospectus and consider the financial situation as part of the 2008/09 budget process.**

CAB. 85 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CORPORATE SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 18TH SEPTEMBER 2007

a) ICT REVIEW PANEL

Councillor S J Williams, the Chairman of the ICT Review Panel, presented recommendations which had been made by the Corporate Service and Performance Scrutiny Committee following the Panel's review of matters relating to Members' use of ICT services, including the under-use of laptops, the reduction of paper agenda copies and the option for members to have a hard copy if required.

He advised that the review had been undertaken with the full support of the ICT Section and the Committee/Scrutiny Officer. It had included consultation with neighbouring authorities over the distribution of agendas and the Senior Committee Officer had demonstrated the CAIRO electronic committee document management system.

The Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Williams and the Panel members for their excellent work. He advised that, as the recommendations had financial implications that would need to be costed, they would be considered as part of the Council's budget process

DECISION:

- 1. The following recommendations from the Corporate Service and Performance Scrutiny Committee be noted:**
 - a) Continued IT training be provided for Members as and when required.**
 - b) Where a Member is on a particular committee, or has been appointed as a substitute, to have the option of having a hard copy of a full agenda (including appendices) if desired.**
 - c) Members of the ICT Review Panel to trial access to Webmail, PDA/Smartphones for receiving emails, CAIRO and the internet via a web browser, which would enable them to access committee documents. If this proved successful, it would be rolled out to all members.**
 - d) The Council provide an allowance towards consumables, e.g. ink and paper for personal computers.**
- 2. The financial implications of the above recommendations be calculated and the proposals be resubmitted to the Cabinet as a costed package for consideration as part of the Budget Strategy 2008/09.**

b) PROGRESS ON BRAND STRATEGY

The Chairman of the Corporate Service and Performance Scrutiny Committee presented the Committee's recommendations on the implementation of the Council's Brand Strategy (2007-2009).

He reported that the Council's current corporate image was out of date and that building a brand for the whole authority was the key to developing a sustainable and measurable reputation, which over time would reinforce the Council's position as a valued and respected Community Leader. To strengthen the Council's brand development, he asked the Cabinet to endorse the Committee's proposal for the Council to sign up to the Local Government Association's Reputation Campaign. This was a major national campaign aimed at helping local authorities improve the reputation of local government.

The Chairman of the Corporate Service and Performance Scrutiny Committee also put forward the Committee's proposal that the Council should hold an annual Red Carpet Citizens' Award event to engage residents in developing the distinctiveness of the District. This event, to be run in partnership with the local media, would recognise and reward local people who had made a real difference to the local community. He suggested that the event could include the presentation of a number of awards, such as awards for the Allotments Competition and the No Barriers awards.

He and the Leader of the Council expressed appreciation to the Officers responsible for developing the brand strategy, including the new logo. The Leader of the Council also stressed the Administration's commitment to the strategy.

The Chief Executive advised that current stocks of notepaper would be used up before new ones were supplied with the new logo.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 1. The proposed refreshed corporate identity, as set out in Appendix A to the briefing paper to the Corporate Service and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 18th September 2007, be approved for a phased implementation from 1st December 2007.**
- 2. The Council sign up to the Local Government Association's Reputation Campaign, as detailed at Appendix B to the briefing paper to the Corporate Service and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 18th September 2007.**
- 3. The Council host a Wyre Forest District Red Carpet Citizens' Award evening during 2008.**

CAB. 86 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE LICENSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE 3RD SEPTEMBER 2007

STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

The Cabinet considered a recommendation from the Licensing and Environmental Committee of 3rd September 2007 regarding a revised draft Statement of Licensing Policy.

Members noted that Section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 required local authorities to publish a statement of licensing policy every three years.

DECISION:

The Revised Draft Statement of Licensing Policy (in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003) for the Wyre Forest District, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report to the Licensing and Environmental Committee on 3rd September 2007, be approved to enable consultation to commence with the relevant stakeholders.

The meeting ended at 6.33pm.